

# Violence rages in Borno, Gombe, Plateau

From Isa Abdulsalami (Jos),  
Ahmad Muhammad (Gombe),  
Njadvara Musa (Maiduguri),  
Joseph Wantu (Makurdi) and  
Odita Sunday (Lagos)

## Inspector dies, vehicles burnt in police barracks blast Soldier, vigilance group leader killed Army chief claims mass arrest of *Boko Haram* members

CARCASSES of burnt vehicles and roofing sheets littered the area. The charred remains of a victim, who was identified as a police officer welcomes visitors to the facility. The entire vicinity was in ruins and looked like a war zone. The scene is the base of 34 Mobile Police Squadron, in Kwame, Gombe State, which came under heavy bombardment by suspected gunmen

yesterday morning. The bandits, who stormed the barracks at 2.20 a.m., allegedly bombed a section of the armoury and razed the entire administrative block into ashes. Fourteen of the police operations vehicles parked in the premises were not spared as they were all burnt. In Jos North, a soldier with the Special Task Force (STF)

was matcheted to death on Saturday night while two suspected members of the *Boko Haram* group struck in Maiduguri and killed the leader of the state's vigilance outfit. The police authorities did not give the identity of the Inspector who was burnt during the attack on Kwame station, 12 kilometres from the state capital, but they confirmed the incident.

Assistant Inspector-General of Police (AIG), Mr. John Moronike, said three of the invaders were shot dead by his men.

Moronike, who said minimal damage was done to the armoury, however, explained that the entire administrative block was set ablaze by the bandits.

He hinted that a special squad of the police bomb dis-

posal unit had begun combing the area to clear it of some bombs allegedly planted by the bandits during the raid.

The police boss said he had ordered a thorough investigation into the incident and promised to make the details of the findings known to members of the public. He appealed to residents of the state to provide useful information on the attack, especially on hideouts of criminals to the police.

The state Commissioner of Police, Mr. Orubebe Ebikeme, also confirmed the bombing

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# Army chief claims mass arrest of *Boko Haram* members

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of the Mobile Police base. He said three persons were killed during the attack.

The assailants allegedly carted away arms and ammunition from the armoury. According to the *News Agency of Nigeria* (NAN), two bodies were seen outside the perforated wall while the scene was cordoned off by armed mobile

policemen, who searched both the inside and outside the premises.

Ebikeme said he had invited officers and men of bomb disposal unit from Yola to investigate the incident and promised to give details of the incident after the bomb disposal experts have completed their job.

The commissioner said the

base was cordoned off because "there are still unexploded bombs in the area."

The soldier serving with the STF in Jos, identified as Sgt. Baba Wuya, was killed along Lasisi Street in Ali Kazaure area of Jos North. His weapon was taken away by the assailants, who attacked him at his duty post. Spokesman of the STF, Captain Charles Ekeocha, told journalists yesterday evening that the soldier was killed "ostensibly by the same people he was trying to protect. His murder borders on criminality and that is why his rifle, which is the target of the killers was taken away. The weapon will in turn be used to perpetrate crimes on innocent residents of Jos and its environs.

Ekeocha said: "The Special Task Force wishes to use this medium to draw the attention of the residents of Plateau that any individual or group of persons, who are bent on fomenting trouble with the sole aim of truncating the peace of the state are not welcomed. Any information that will help in unraveling this case will be highly appreciated."

No arrest has been made yet but he advised the people to go about their businesses as the STF and other law enforcement agencies were on top of the situation.

This incident was the first major casualty since the arrival of Maj.-Gen. Oluwaseun Olayinka Oshinowo as STF Commander two months ago.

The two suspected *Boko Haram* gunmen, who killed the leader of the Borno State Vigilance Association (BOVA), Ali Banga, 48, struck at his Mairi residence in the Maiduguri metropolis on Saturday night.

His death came 24 hours after a policeman were shot dead by armed men at his Gomari Airport home.

The police authority said Ali had been trailed to his residence on three occasions by his killers without finding him in the house until last Saturday at 7.36 p.m. when he was killed by the gunmen in the presence of his family members.

The state Police Commissioner, Simeone Midenda, told *The Guardian* yesterday that "the report we have received on the vigilance's association leader was that suspected *Boko Haram* sect members came to his house in Mairi ward on three different occasions without meeting him. Ali might have faulted the sect and entered its hit list just like the group has made the police, soldiers, traditional and religious leaders its targets."

Midenda said no arrests had been made but investigation

started into his murder.

Meanwhile, the Minister of Interior Abba Patrick Moro has expressed concern over security challenges arising from suicide bombing, and urged Nigerians to join the Federal Government to tackle the menace.

He told journalists yesterday in Makurdi, the Benue State capital that inadequate funding had contributed to the current frightening situation and invited the private sector to be involved in security matters. "The Presidency only recently convened a retreat with the private sector, which idea is to make the economy private sector-driven. They were tasked to, in addition to creating jobs, to collaborate with the Federal Government in the area of security," Moro said.

The minister described as "misplaced suggestion" that dialogue and not force should be used to curb the excesses of terrorists in the country. Moro said it is absurd to think that government will negotiate with terrorists, noting that even though the government will not fold its hands and allow some individuals to take the laws into their hands, it will be meticulous in sifting information and will not apply arbitrary force in dealing with the issue.

Also, the Chief of the Army Staff, Lt.-Gen. Azubuike Ihejirika, has assured Nigerians of adequate security in any part of the country they live, disclosing that the Army had set up intelligence network to curb the activities of *Boko Haram*.

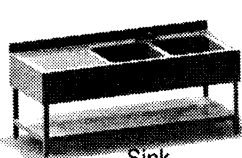
At the 2011 Regimented Sergeant Majors (RSM) Convention at the 81 Division Army Auditorium in Victoria Island, Lagos at the weekend, Ihejirika said: "We are really curbing the menace of *Boko Haram*. Hundreds of them have been arrested and they have acknowledged our impact. So, we have made tremendous achievements. We are putting a lot on intelligence. A lot more has been achieved. Nigerians should have confidence in the Army and we shall definitely prevail and ensure that there is an atmosphere of peace for businesses and development in the country to thrive."

He also pledged to punish any unprofessional behaviour by any soldier during any operation in the country.

"We have sent the message that every soldier must do his job professionally while tackling *Boko Haram*, we will not tolerate any form of laxity or any misconduct by soldiers carrying out their duties, whether it is against *Boko Haram* or any other party for that matter."

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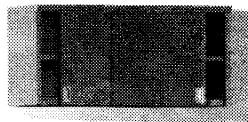
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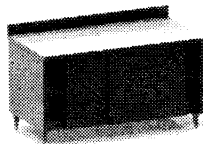
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