

# JTF kills suspected arsonists in Borno

From Njadvara Musa, Maiduguri

**T**HREE suspected Boko Haram gunmen were yesterday in Maiduguri, Borno State capital, shot dead by the Joint Task Force (JTF) in an exchange of gunfire, after the suspects attempted to torch Lamisula Primary School in the early hours of the day.

The JTF also arrested two other suspects who came in an unmarked vehicle with petro-bombs and explosives to set the school ablaze.

Confirming the incidents, Spokesman of JTF, Lt.-Col Hassan Mohammed, said: "We have carried out another successful operation last night precisely at about 3:30 a.m. when the JTF operatives in secret vigilance over Lamisula Primary School in Maiduguri, spotted a group of armed sect members driving into the school with gallons of petrol attempting to again set it ablaze.

"Fortunately, our operatives opened fire and killed three of them while two others with minor injuries were also arrested and are currently with us".

Mohammed said the JTF had to remove the remains of the three sect members "in the interest of the school pupils who would be resuming today (Monday) after the weekend break".

He said rifles and weapons were recovered from the scene.

Residents living around the school confirmed hearing gunshots in the area early

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yesterday morning.

"My family members and I were woken by rapid sounds of shooting some hours to the time of morning prayers. But it stopped after about 15 minutes. It was later, at daybreak, that we got the news that JTF had killed some arsonists attempting to burn Lamisula Primary School", said an anonymous resident of Lamusila ward.

Boko Haram spokesman, who goes by the nom de guerre, Abul Qaqa, recently told journalists in a telephone conference, that they were responsible for the burning of schools in Maiduguri in reprisals to alleged raiding of local Quranic schools by JTF operatives.

Qada warned that if the government failed to stop JTF from raiding Quranic schools, the group too would frustrate progress of Western education by attacking primary schools.

Seven public and private schools have so far been torched in Maiduguri in the past two weeks.