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Gunmen raid police station, kill DPO, Borno official

MONDAY, 10 DECEMBER 2012 00:00 FROM SAXONE AKHAINE (KADUNA), CHRIS IREKAMBA (LAGOS) AND NJADVARA MUSA (DAMATURU) NEWS - NATIONAL



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DARING gunmen on Monday killed a divisional police officer (DPO) as they attacked a police station and a branch of Unity Bank in Potiskum, Yobe State.



The suspected members of Boko Haram who also struck in Borno State killed Peter Hamidu of the state Agricultural Development Programme at his Maiduguri mechanical workshop.

The gunmen, according to an eyewitness and resident of Potiskum, Hamisu Yusuf, came in unmarked tricycles and vehicles and torched the police station and the bank, before attempting to attack the emir's palace at about 3.00 a.m.

He said the gunmen operated for over six hours, before men of the Joint Task Force (JTF) and the police rushed to the separate scenes of attacks on Idriss and NPN roads.

Another eyewitness told The Guardian that the gunmen used Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) and petro-bombs in torching the divisional police station, the bank and several vehicles, adding that the two buildings continued to burn, until yesterday morning, when fire fighters put out the fire by 7.00 a.m.

Confirming the incident Monday in Damaturu in a statement, the Yobe State JTF spokesman, Lt. Lazarus Eli, said a gang of Boko Haram gunmen attacked the police station and a commercial bank on NPN Road, Potiskum around 2.00 a.m.

He said the gunmen were, however, repelled from torching the divisional police station, stating that 10 bodies of the killed suspects were carried away by their colleagues, leaving only three in the custody of the JTF and police for autopsy and identification at the mortuary.

The statement reads in part: "The hoodlums attacked the Potiskum Area Police Command Office, as JTF reinforced, the police promptly repelled the terrorists. Three of them were killed, but the DPO later died in the hospital, because of the gunshot wounds he sustained in the exchange of gunfire yesterday.

"Ten other bodies of the hoodlums were also carried away by the terrorists during the attack which started at about 2.00 a.m. Monday."

The statement also assured residents of adequate security of lives and property, as well as appealed for calm as measures were being taken to restore normalcy in the state.

The killing of the Borno State official at his mechanical workshop in Ruwan Zafi ward, according to the spokesman of the Borno State Police Command, Gideon Jibrin, occurred yesterday afternoon.

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He said that some gunmen on a tricycle trailed the slain official to his workshop on Dikwa Road, and shot him dead, before men of the JTF rushed to the scene to prevent further killings.

Besides, because of the increased level of insecurity in Kaduna State, the people of Dogon Dawa Community in Birnin Gwari Local Council Area have again urged Governor Patrick Ibrahim Yakowa to intervene in their situation.

Already, Yakowa has assured the community members that his government has taken the issue to the Presidency with a view to finding a lasting solution to the problem.

Yakowa said that the state government was liaising with the Federal Government and the four states bordering Kaduna in tackling the issue. He named the states to include Zamfara, Katsina, Niger and Kebbi.

Yakowa also assured the inhabitants of the area that the problem facing the communities would be exhaustively discussed at the next 19 governors' meeting in Abuja.

"We are not resting on our oars; all measures are being taken to curtail the phenomenon. I can't say more than that now," he said.

The complaints of daily attacks and killings by armed hoodlums in Dogon Dawa came when Yakowa kicked off the rehabilitation of the 31-kilometre Dogon Dawa-Sabon Layi-Old Birnin Gwari road.

The District Head of Dogon Dawa, Musa Ibrahim Yerima, told the governor about their ordeal, saying that marauders sneak into the area at night, maiming the inhabitants, killing and stealing animals before retreating into the forest.

Yerima said the situation had become too alarming, while people hardly sleep with their two eyes closed.

He explained that the Federal and the state governments would live up to their responsibilities of providing security for the people who were now at the mercy of gunmen.

To check insecurity, Governor Kashim Shettima of Borno State has advocated the involvement of traditional rulers in the policing of various communities and towns in the North.

According to him, traditional rulers are best suited for community crime prevention if supported by the Federal and state governments.

The governor spoke in Kaduna while inspecting the completion of the Shehu of Borno's palace on Doka Crescent and shopping complex on Kano Road.

To the Bishop of Remo Diocese, Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion), Rt. Rev. Michael Olusina Fape, the government should be blamed for the insecurity in the country, adding that politicians were largely responsible for the insurgency of Boko Haram.

In an exclusive interview with The Guardian in Ogun State, Fape said Boko Haram was not the only security problem facing the country. He identified cults, factions fighting one another and traditionalists with their festivals, as part of the security threats destroying the foundation of the country. He warned politicians to be very careful with their utterances.

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