

Gunmen kill eight in Borno, Plateau

From Isa Abdulsalami (Jos) and
Njadvara Musa (Maiduguri)

RENEWED violence in Borno and Plateau states have claimed eight lives in different tragic circumstances.

In Borno State, gunmen suspected to be *Boko Haram* members shot dead an oil marketer, Alhaji Abubakar Girgir (68) at the Bolori Stores, Maiduguri at about 4.30 p.m. yesterday.

Three security guards and two other residents were also killed by slitting their throats in their houses in the early hours of yesterday in the Gambouru ward of the metropolis.

Besides, a mobile policeman attached to the Special Task Force (STF) Operation Safe Haven and one woman were killed by unknown people on Wednesday night at Bachit village in Barkin Ladi Local Council and Riyom Local Council in that order in Plateau State.

An eyewitness said: "We were terrified and woken up by the sporadic gunshots, thinking that the soldiers were patrolling the deserted area of Gambouru. But I heard some people next door wailing for help. And there was no soldier or policeman sighted in

the area."

The bodies of the deceased, he said, were carried away by the police yesterday morning to the Specialist Hospital, Maiduguri at about 7.30 a.m.

On the assassination of the business mogul, a Bolori resident and trader at the West End Bolori Stores, Bukar Aisami said: "We were about receiving our allocations of provisions for distribution and sale, when three gunmen walked to the office of Alhaji Abubakar Girgir at the Bolori Stores at about 4.30 p.m. today (yesterday) and fired several gunshots into his head and chest. He slumped on the ground before men of the Joint Task Force (JTF) rushed to the scene at 4.40 p.m.

"We had to run for safety and our shops and market stalls were hurriedly closed, as we didn't know who would be the next target of the gunmen in Maiduguri. These armed men kill by either shooting you in the head or chest or slit your throats in your house in the night, when there are no patrols in the affected areas of Maiduguri."

Confirming the killing of three security guards yesterday, spokesman of JTF, Lt.-Col.

Sagir Musa, in a statement said: "This is to confirm to you that three security guards were killed in Gambouru ward of Maiduguri metropolis in the early hours of today (yesterday) by suspected members of *Boko Haram*."

On whether arrests were made, he however, said: "Efforts are on to apprehend the culprits."

Eyewitnesses from Bachit village in Barkin Ladi Local Council and Riyom Local Council in Plateau State said the victims who were killed separately were just working on the streets on Boxing Day when they were pounced upon and murdered by attackers who immediately escaped.

They added that the murderers ran away before the STF men could get to the scene, adding that the villagers were too scared to immediately go to the scene of the events.

Attempts to get the spokesman of the STF, Captain Salihu Ibrahim Mustapha to confirm the killings, failed as he was not picking his calls. But the Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), DSP Abuh Emmanuel, promised to confirm the development and come out with full details.

On December 13, two women were killed by unknown people in Riyom. They were said to be going to a local market on the outskirts of Riyom town when the gunmen opened fire on them and killed them instantly. The STF spokesman who had confirmed that incident, said

that before the soldiers of the STF could get there, the hoodlums had disappeared.

Before the Christmas, the new Commissioner of Police in the State, Mr. Chris Olakpe, said the State Police Command would be involving the "Rapid Response Squad and the Special Intelligence Bu-

reau (SIB) to each all parts of both Riyom and Barkin Ladi councils to get the identities of miscreants."

Olakpe said the police were coming out stronger through visibility and intelligence policing, urging residents to furnish them with useful information.



Sympathisers at the scene of an accident that killed a boy at Oshodi, Lagos...yesterday.

PHOTO: AYODELE ADENIRAN