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HEADLINES: Gunmen kill 44 students in Yobe



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Gunmen kill 44 students in Yobe

MONDAY, 30 SEPTEMBER 2013 00:00 FROM NJADVARA MUSA, DAMATURU

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• 18 others missing after attack on college

GUNMEN defied the emergency rule and all security measures in the northern part of the country Sunday as they were on the prowl again.

At the end of their attack, 44 students of the College of Agriculture, Gijba, lost their lives.

Four students were injured while 18 others were missing after their hostels were torched with Improvised Explosive Devices and petrol-bombs at 1.30 a.m.

Gijba is 30 kilometres south of Damaturu, the Yobe State capital and homestead of the Boko Haram leader, Abubakar Shekau.

In a separate attack, gunmen slit the throats of four persons at Mallumti village on Saturday while returning to Maiduguri in the evening.

According to an eyewitness who is an official of the college, the gunmen stormed the premises in Hilux and Gold Volkswagen vehicles and motorcycles. He said that they killed 44 students after closing all the gates to prevent the escape of the victims from their hostels.

He said about 18 students were abducted by the attackers, before ordering others not to flee. The latter were either shot dead or injured in the three-hour attacks on the hostels and classrooms.

The eyewitness continued: "I cannot tell you the exact number of students injured in yesterday's attacks. I am certain that four of our students were taken to Sani Abacha Specialist Hospital, Damaturu, for treatment, while the 44 bodies of the students are at the hospital morgue for further identification by the college authorities and parents."

Eighteen students of Government Secondary School, Mamudo, were killed by Boko Haram gunmen on July 6, 2013. The Buni/Yadi attacks of last Thursday also claimed the lives of three persons, including the wife of a police officer.

"The students were caught unawares last night when the gunmen shut the gates of the college, and started to shoot at any of the students at sight. The only students that escaped the torching and killings here yesterday were the ones that hid in the ceilings. But the attackers were able to abduct 18 students to an unknown destination," he said.

Confirming the incident yesterday in Damaturu, the spokesman of Three Division Special Operations Battalion, Captain Eli Lazarus, said: "The Boko Haram insurgents attacked a college of agriculture in the early hours of today (Sunday) and shot dead over 40 students sleeping in their hostels. We have deployed our men, based on the information the people gave us, and I assured you that we will get them, as the soldiers are tracing the routes they had taken, after the insurgents' attacks and killings at the college yesterday night."

On preventing similar attacks, he said: "Our men cannot be everywhere in this state to prevent insurgents from attacking or killing. What we do is to rely on the information provided by the local people before the soldiers could pursue the insurgents that have been attacking towns and villages outside Damaturu, the Yobe State capital."

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He said the soldiers were combing the Gujba-Goniri forests, as the locals identified the routes the insurgents had taken to flee at dawn.

The Borno Police Commissioner, Lawal Tanko, also confirmed the attacks on the Maiduguri-Damaturu Road, stating that four passengers and motorists were killed by slitting their throats by 5.27 p.m. on Saturday.

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