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SUSPECTED BOKO HARAM GUNMEN KILL 18, INJURE 12 IN BORNO

Category: National Published: Wednesday, 23 October 2013 21:49 Written by From Abosede Musari (Abuja) and Njadvara Musa (Maiduguri)
Hits: 343



'Why getting insurgents to dialogue is difficult'

VIOLENCE rages in Borno State as suspected Boko Haram sect members attacked Goniri village at dawn, killing 18 residents and injuring 12 others who fled into the nearby bush and farmlands, before troops of 7 Division of Nigerian Army rushed to the scene and repelled the insurgents on Tuesday.

Meanwhile, a member of the Presidential Committee on Boko Haram Insurgency, Dr. Bello Hakeem Baba Ahmed, has said though the panel raised to find a way of getting the insurgents onto the negotiating table with government has submitted its report to the Presidency, there are still indications that having the insurgents to lay down arms

may be a herculean task.

The injured villagers, according to chairman of Bama Local Council of Borno State, Alhaji Baba Shehu Gulumba, were taken to a hospital for treatment.

An eyewitness and resident of Goniri village, Isa Ibrahim, who fled to Bama with a fractured limb gave an account of the incidents: "We were praying in the mosque at dawn when gunmen stormed our village with Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) and petrol-bombs and set them on some of our houses and shops before we started to run helter-skelter. But some of us were shot dead, as the attackers continued to chant God is great in Arabic for two hours, before the soldiers rushed to the village at 10.35 a.m. on Tuesday."

He said some of the children and women who could not flee got killed among other villagers who are farmers and fishermen.

Speaking at the funerals of the slain villagers, Gulumba said: "The attacks and killings in Goniri village were very unfortunate, but government would assist the family members of the killed residents. I also pray that God will give the family members the fortitude to bear the irreparable loss.

"Besides, security will be beefed up to protect the life and property of villagers and other residents in Bama Council."

Spokesman of Borno State Police Command, Gideon Jibrin, confirmed the incident yesterday in Maiduguri, stating that investigation has commenced. None of the suspects has been arrested.

The member of the government's panel on Boko Haram, who spoke in Abuja yesterday, said the fact that the insurgents do not have a political structure will make negotiation difficult. According to him, about 90 per cent of their leaders have been killed with others in incarceration thereby making the process of negotiation difficult.

"When you are killing those you are supposed to negotiate with, there is a problem," he said.

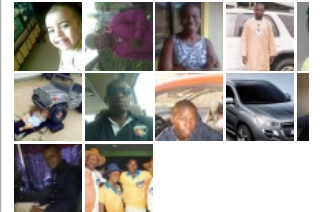
Ahmed spoke at a symposium on the AU Democracy Day organised by the Centre for Democracy and Development. He traced the history of insurgency in the North Eastern Nigeria to the past 400 years. He said the Sahel region comprising of north east Nigeria, Mali, Chad and Sudan down to Senegal, had been known for insurgency for centuries including the insurgency that brought up Usman Dan Fodio.

He noted that the Boko Haram insurgency which is purely a Nigerian issue and unconnected with any other international terror group is rooted in deep sociological and ideological issues. These ideologies rooted in religious beliefs, he said must be addressed through the use of Bulamahs who can address these ideologies.

"At the time negotiation was put on the table, a lot of their leaders were already killed or incarcerated so nobody wants to come out. About 90 per cent of their leaders had been killed so the rest want to fight and die. Now, probably they are working to replace Shekau," he said.



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Ahmed advised that despite military success against the insurgents, the country still needs to negotiate and address the ideology issue of the members.

"The insurgency is dispersed and crippled but has the capacity of regrouping. The military capacity of the insurgents is broken but some works need to be done," he submitted.

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