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29 feared killed in Borno, Benue violence

Monday, 20 January 2014 21:10 Written by From Njadvara Musa (Maiduguri) and Msugh Ityokura (Lafia)

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NO fewer than 29 persons have been feared killed in two separate attacks in Borno and Benue states

In Borno State, insurgents on Sunday night attacked Alau Ngawo Fate village in Jere council, killing 18 persons and torching several houses and shops.

In Benue State, 11 people were feared killed, several others injured while property worth millions of naira were destroyed by suspected Fulani mercenaries in Makurdi and Gwer West councils of the state respectively.

But the police denied there was any death in the Benue incident, adding that only one person was injured.

Meanwhile, the Borno Elders Forum (BOEF) has condemned last Tuesday's Maiduguri bomb blast that killed over 43 people and destroyed 19 vehicles on Shehu Laminu Way of the metropolis.

Alau Ngawo Fate is about 35 kilometres east of Maiduguri, the state capital.

The gunmen, according to an eyewitness, Isa Yakubu used Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) in

setting several houses ablaze, after slitting the throats of nine persons.

Yakubu said: “We were shocked and terrified with the attack by suspected Boko Haram gunmen, as some of us were asleep when the attackers set our houses ablaze. My neighbours fled into a nearby bush, but the gunmen chased some of them and tied their hands to the back, before slitting the throats of three of them.

“I cannot tell you the exact level of casualties of Sunday night multiple attacks, but the truth of the matter, was that these insurgents don’t want us to live here in peace. We had been hearing of attacks on other villages bordering Alau Dam, where we do fishing and farming fishing. Now that everything is destroyed by these gunmen, how do the surviving ones continue with life here in this village?”

The village head of Alau Ngawo Fate, Mallam Ibrahim also confirmed the incident to The Guardian yesterday in Maiduguri, stating that the attackers invaded the village at about 10 p.m. on Sunday, and starting burning many houses and shops with explosives.

He said most of the insurgents communicated in Kanuri language, while setting the houses on fire for over 30 minutes without the intervention of soldiers and policemen from Maiduguri.

“We are at the mercy of these insurgents, as there was no security provided for us here in this village that had peace for many decades.

But yesterday (Sunday), I have lost 18 of my people in the most violent attack.”

The Borno State Police Commissioner, Lawal Tanko confirmed the incident, but said he was yet to get casualties figures from the Divisional Police Officer (DPO) of Jere council.

The Benue State Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), Daniel Ezeala confirmed the development, but said there was no death recorded as only one was injured in Adaka village, a community about 25 kilometers to Makurdi.

Ezeala added that the situation was under control as a team of police men was dispatched to the area.

The armed mercenaries, according to investigations, were camped at the industrial lay out on Naka road, where they were said to have moved out in the night to sack residents of the affected community, shooting sporadically, torching homes and other property in the commercial area.

The timber market, popularity called timber shield, was closed on Saturday, for fear of being attacked even as activities at the industrial layout which plays host to several manufacturing companies were abruptly brought to a halt, given the intense nature of the attack.

It was gathered that most of the victims took refuge at the E Division police station at timber shield, while safer communities a little away from Adaka also played host to a number of fleeing residents.

Sunday night also witnessed a massive influx of fleeing residents into Makurdi as mostly women and children were seen in their numbers trekking in their desperate bid to locate the homes of the relations.

“We trekked all the way from Adaka to Makurdi for safety without carrying any property as you can see, I don’t know the where about of the parents of this children yet, but we were fortunate to have found a way out of the place,” said a lady in her 30s who was seen walking with teenagers numbering about 20 on Jonah Jang crescent on Sunday night.

In the same vein, Monday morning saw residents parking out in numbers for fear of being killed as police men took control of the area.

The elders forum’s condemnation was contained in a statement by its chairman, Amb. Usman Gaji Galtimari on Sunday

Galtimari who was the chairman of the Presidential Committee on Security Challenges in the Northeast, also said that members of the elders’ forum, were seriously “disturbed and frustrated” over the insecurity of people’s lives and property in the state.

The statement reads in part: “This forum has thoroughly diagnosed the events preceding last Tuesday’s bomb blast and feels highly disturbed and frustrated. For nearly one year, Maiduguri had almost regained absolute peace and harmony. Our hitherto devastated people had started

picking up their lives. That bomb blast therefore; came to us as the rudest shock. We condemn it in the strongest possible terms.

“The Forum, therefore, appeals to President Goodluck Jonathan for an

immediate and thorough investigation of the blast. The culprits involved should be brought to book. We have had gone through extremely traumatic times for long and any further hardship on our people must

be curtailed at all costs. What most of all must do at this point in time is to continue consoling our devastated people and cushioning the effects of the long period of insurgency.”