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Boko Haram Retakes Borno Border Town



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By Njadvara Musa (Maiduguri) and Ijeoma Opara (Lagos) on May 17, 2015



Boko Haram militants

- Military Source Confirms Recapture
- Female Suicide Bomber Kills Nine In Yobe Blast
- Curfew Relaxed In Maiduguri
- 'No To Abortion For Rescued Girls'

BOKO HARAM fighters have attacked Marte in Borno State, killing 12 residents and recapturing the border town. This comes as a female suicide bomber at about 11.45am yesterday blew herself up at Damaturu Central Motor Park, killing nine people and injuring 27 others.

The Nigerian military, in its wave of victories over the insurgents, had reclaimed Marte earlier this year. Dozens of insurgents Friday evening stormed the town in a convoy of

Toyota Hilux vehicles and motorcycles, deploying Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) and petrol bombs, and slitting the throats of 12 residents who had tried to protect their houses and shops from the ensuing inferno.

Having overrun the town the insurgents hoisted their black and white flag at the town square near the country home of the Secretary to the State Government, Ambassador Ahmed Baba Jidda.

"The insurgents burst into the town through the Dikwa-Marte Road with gunshots and explosions that lasted half an hour," said Borno State Deputy Governor, Alhaji Zannah Umar Mustapha.

He said: "The report I am receiving indicates that these mad boys have retaken one of the border towns between the axis of Dikwa and Gambouru again.

They did not only recapture the fishing and herding community, they also slit the throats of a dozen people on Friday night." According to Mustapha, there were "no soldier or security personnel deployed to those border towns including Kerinoa, Dikwa and New Marte reclaimed by the military early this year."

He said that although some of the residents, before now, had fled and relocated to camps for displaced persons in Maiduguri, the aged and others who could not travel long distances had stayed back in the town.

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Confirming the incident, yesterday, a military source at 7 Division of Nigerian Army said that besides last Wednesday's attempted attack on Giwa Barracks and the twin villages of Bale and Kayamla, there were reports of attack on one of the border towns in northern Borno State.

The source said: "I cannot give you any further detail on this town. But it is certain that the insurgents sneaked into the affected town and destroyed some of the houses and shops."

Nine persons lost their lives while 27 others sustained injuries when a suicide bomber blew herself up in Damaturu yesterday.

Eyewitness Ibrahim Musa said the woman dashed through the gate of the park, as several people waited to board vehicles, and detonated an explosive device strapped to her waist.

Medical Director of the Abacha Specialist Hospital, Damaturu, Dr. Garba Musa Fika, said 37 people were rushed to the hospital with various degrees of injuries and burns.

"We have confirmed that 37 people were brought to this hospital. Nine have been confirmed dead. The injured are being treated for burns and shrapnel wounds," he said. Fika added that seven of the wounded were in critical conditions and may be referred to the Federal Medical Centre (FMC) in the state, or Azare in neighbouring Bauchi State.

Governor Ibrahim Gaidam, who visited the hospital, sympathised with the victims and pledged that the state government would foot their medical bills.

The military yesterday again relaxed the curfew it slammed on Maiduguri. The move comes 24 hours after it allowed a five-hour reprieve on Friday.

Residents would now be allowed to move freely between the hours of 8am and 5pm. Spokesman of 7 Division of the Nigerian Army, Col. Tukur Gusau, in a statement in Maiduguri yesterday said: "Unlike the five-hour temporary lift of curfew of Friday, residents and motorists can as from Saturday, May 16, 2015 (yesterday) move and commute with vehicles, tricycles and bicycles without hindrance between 8am and 5pm daily, until the security situation improves for a total lift of the curfew."

A coalition of non-governmental organisations in Lagos, Foundation for African Heritage (FACH), meanwhile, has described as unconscionable, inhuman and scandalous suggestion by the United Nations Population Funds (UNFPA) and some foreign NGOs that rescued pregnant girls should be sent to abortion clinics and that the procedure should be legalised in Nigeria.

While making a cash donation on behalf of the group for rehabilitation of the girls at the office of the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) in Abuja, Director of FACH, Mr. Sonnie Ekwowusi, said that having experienced unspeakable trauma, dehumanization and violence in the hands of their Boko Haram captors, it is unreasonable and illogical to subject the girls to a traumatic, violent and life-threatening abortion process.



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