

NEWS.

Three feared killed, others injured in Borno suicide bombing

Written by Isa Abdulsalami Ahovi (Jos), Njadvara Musa (Maiduguri) and Chuks Collins (Awka)

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- **'Terrorists plan attack in hijab'**
- **Anambra Hausa community alerts on arrival of strangers**

BARE-FACE assault on the nation continued Sunday as a suspected Boko Haram suicide-bomber hit a military

post in Gwoza, near a secondary school in Borno State Sunday morning, killing three soldiers and wounding three others.

The bomber, according to an eyewitness, Yakubu Haruna, came speeding through Wala and Warabe villages and hit the military post, which let out a deafening sound that rocked the town and sent people scampering for safety.

"We were woken up this morning by a bomb blast on the road near the school," he said. "Some of us ran for safety, while others fled into the school and to Gwoza hilltops.

"I cannot tell the exact number of casualties, but three soldiers fell on the roadside by the post, while others took to their heels for safety, as the car that contained the explosives spewed crater near the post. No civilian was killed, as many people were still asleep when the explosives were detonated."

Meanwhile, as fears mount about the spread of Boko Haram insurgency in parts of the country, the leadership of the Hausa community in Anambra State has alerted on the infiltration of their ranks by unknown herdsmen and the sudden appearance of other strange faces from outside the state, especially from Kogi and Enugu states.

They accused the strangers of destroying crops and farmlands in both Enugu and Anambra states. To ensure harmonious co-existence between indigenes and other residents, consequently, Governor Willie Obiano has set up a committee to coordinate the activities of genuine cattle herdsmen in all parts of the state.

The heightened fears followed the recent arrest of 486 suspected terrorists in Abia State, among them a terrorist on the wanted list of security operatives.

Over the weekend, Obiano met in Awka with representatives of the Hausa-Fulani community, chairmen of local councils, some traditional rulers, president-generals of the communities affected by the activities of the herdsmen and security operatives to address the threats to peace in the state.

He told the gathering that the committee would comprise all stakeholders, including the representatives of the Hausa-Fulani community, and would ensure, among others, that herdsmen are restricted to areas mapped out for grazing to avoid clashes.

However, the National Chairman, Council of Ulama of Jammatul Izalatul Bida Waikamatu Sunnah (JIBWIS), Sheikh Sani Yahaya Jingir, claimed that terrorists are planning to use the Islamic veil (hijab) in launching attacks on people.

According to Jingir, who spoke on Saturday at JIBWIS national seminar in Jos, Plateau State, "reliable information has reached us that some non-Muslims have purchased a large quantity of Hijab and Jallabiya in some markets in Jos."

"Terrorists and their cohorts, the enemies of peace, have resorted to using our Islamic mode of dressing to launch their devilish act of attacking innocent souls during the forthcoming Ramadan Tafsir, when Muslim faithful gather."

Stating that the trend was meant to demonize the Islamic way of life and threaten its women, he vowed: "No amount of propaganda would stop us from using Hijab. I urge all religious and community leaders to educate their followers and devise means of taking precautionary steps against the terrorists."

He said the casualty figure in the Gwoza blast could have been higher had the military not barred people from plying that road over safety concerns since last month. The Guardian also learnt that most of the

border villages in Gwoza were attacked this month, with over 120 villagers killed, including the dwellers of the hill bordering Cameroun.

Borno State Police Command also confirmed yesterday's suicide bombing that claimed security agents at a military post. A top police officer attached to the Bama-Gwoza Road also confirmed that no civilian was killed in the blast, adding that the police anti-bomb squad has been drafted to the affected area.

Obiano called for vigilance, urging all residents to report suspicious situations and strange characters promptly to security agencies, just as he enjoined them to register with the Divisional Police of their area of residence to provide the police with necessary data.

Leader of the Hausa/Fulani Community, Mallam Gidado Siddiki, had alleged that unknown herdsmen were coming into the state from either Kogi or Enugu and were destroying crops and farmlands in Awka, 9th Mile, Ayamelum and Anambra West local councils.

He requested the governor to continue with the ongoing cattle market project, noting that when completed, it would boost the state's internally generated revenue.

