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20 feared killed in Azare market blast

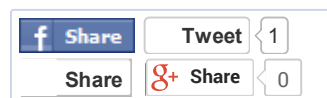
## 20 feared killed in Azare market blast

Monday, 17 November 2014 00:37

Written by Bertram Nwannekanma  
(Lagos) Ali Garba (Bauchi) and John Okeke (Abuja)

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• SERAP, others seek sanction for terrorists' sponsors

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IN yet another bestial act, about 20 people were at about 5.30 p.m. yesterday feared killed when a bomb exploded at the popular GSM Market known as Kasuwan Jagol in Azare headquarters of Katagum council of Bauchi State.

Meanwhile, in a renewed onslaught against insurgents, the military yesterday recaptured Chibok town in Borno State, where nearly 300 schoolgirls were abducted on April 14, by the Boko Haram sect.

The terrorist sect took control of the town on Thursday night.

In a related development, some human rights groups in Nigeria have urged the UN Security Council to "urgently initiate, support and adopt a resolution to sanction the countries allegedly backing insurgents in the country.

An eye witness, Mamman Shehu, told The Guardian that many other people were severely injured in the bomb blast.

He said those injured were rushed to the Federal Medical Centre Azare, adding "but the

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unfortunate thing is that members of the Joint Health Sector Unions (JOHESU) are on nationwide strike and many who would have been saved died in the hospital.”

He said Kasuwan Jagol is the only GMS market in Azare town where people from all walks of life especially in the evening visit to repairs their handsets or buy new ones.

Speaking to The Guardian, another Azare resident, Yusuf Bashir said, “this is the third time a bomb would explode in Azare. There was the first one at a motor park, then at a bank and now this one which is targeted on a very busy area in the town. If this continues, we’ll have no option than to vacate the area for safety.”

He called on the Federal Government to intervene and end the insurgency in the north east.

However, efforts to get the State Commissioner of Police to comment on the incident proved abortive as at the time of filing this report. No group has claimed responsibility yet for the blast.

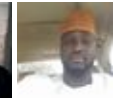
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Spokesperson of the Army Division in Maiduguri, the Borno State capital, said the army has retaken Chibok and driven the terrorists away.

According an agency report, Sani Usman, a Colonel and Deputy Director, Army Public Relations, said, "Troops of 7 Division Nigerian Army have recaptured Chibok town in Borno State from Boko Haram terrorists since yesterday.

"The military is still carrying out mopping up operations in the surrounding environment. Chibok town is now fully secured."

Villagers around Chibok town said they saw a large deployment of soldiers moving in from the direction of Damboa towards Chibok on Saturday morning.

"We saw large number of trucks filled with uniformed personnel moving towards Chibok; initially, we were scared but later realised they were soldiers as they did not harass us like the Boko Haram gunmen usually do," said a resident who spoke on phone.

The insurgents have seized several towns lately in Borno and Adamawa State, driving out soldiers and other security operatives and confiscating their arms.

In the letter signed on their behalf by the Executive Director of Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP), Adetokunbo Mumuni, the groups also want the council to “request the African Union and ECOWAS to sanction any neighbouring states that may be aiding and abetting international crimes through weak border controls and other means; and banks that fail to monitor cash transactions in and out of their branches and thereby enabling groups like Boko Haram to launder money.”

The rights groups are: Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP), Enough is Enough Nigeria Coalition (EiE Nigeria), Civil Society Network Against Corruption (CSNAC), and Women Empowerment and Legal Aid Initiative (WELA).

According to the groups, “Initiating, supporting and adopting the proposed

resolution will send a powerful message that the international community has not abandoned the victims and in fact, ready to play a meaningful role to end the conflict which has continued to result in serious human rights violations, such as the unlawful killing and displacement of thousands of people.”

The groups said that, “Support from all member states is important to demonstrate that an important institution of the UN committed to promoting international peace and security stand with the people of Nigeria.”

They asked the council to “request the Secretary-General to appoint a Special Representative on the situation in the Northeast of Nigeria to investigate the complicity of any ECOWAS members, individuals or organisations and to report to the Council at regular intervals on the implementation of the proposed resolution.”

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