

Scores feared killed in fresh Borno attacks

From Saxone Akhaine
(Kaduna) and Njadvara Musa
(Maiduguri)

- **Sultan laments capturing of towns**
- **JNI raises posers for govt over insecurity**

ABOUT 48 persons, mainly fishermen and traders, were yesterday claimed to have been killed in fresh attacks at Doron Baga and Dogon Fili areas of Borno State by suspected Boko Haram insurgents.

Meanwhile, the Sultan of Sokoto and President General of the Jama'atu Nasril Islam (JNI), Alhaji Muhammad Saad Abubakar, has expressed shock over the continued capturing of towns and villages in the North East by the Boko Haram insurgents in spite of Nigeria's military might.

According to sources in the Multinational Joint Task Force (MJTF) yesterday, the insurgents ambushed the fishermen and traders at Daban Wanza village before killing 48 people by slitting their throats, and bodies thrown into the Lake Chad waters.

"There were multiple attacks on the fishing communities in this region, where dozens of fishermen and travelers in the boat were shot dead on Thursday evening. Some of the villagers, including fishermen and traders from Maiduguri that fateful day fled for safety, as we cannot act and respond to distress calls without an order," said a source in the MJTF yesterday in a telephone interview.

Chairman of Borno State Fishermen and Traders Association (BFTA), Abubakar Gemandi, con-

firmed the incident to *The Guardian* yesterday on phone. "I am travelling to Baga town now, as I speak to you to sympathize with our affected members. The insurgents had ambushed our members at two points of collation and transportation of fish on Thursday evening. When I reach there, I will report this incident to the MJTF, stating the total casualties and the number of our members affected in the attack," Gemandi said.

A fish merchant who spoke on condition of anonymity said: "What happened last Thursday was that our members usually go to Maiduguri with their fish to sell. At a village called Daban Wanzam, seven kilometers to Baga town, the gunmen ambushed our members in the Lake Chad waters and killed some of them, with machetes while others were shot dead.

"Those that could not be killed with machete and shot dead were tied and thrown into the Lake waters. The driver of the boat, Danladi Chaka, was also killed in the multiple attacks. Even though we were not at the scene of the attacks that Thursday, we have a lot of our members that go to Maiduguri on weekly basis with their fishing boats and nets. Among our members, some of them fish in the lake and sell them at the Maiduguri

Baga Fish market."

On casualties, he said: "The report that has reached us this morning, indicates that 48 people were killed in the boat. We are suspecting the armed militants of Boko Haram for these killings." He said when soldiers hear reports of attacks and killings, they do not go there immediately to act, until they get an order from above.

"When we reported this incident to troops of MJTF, they told us that until they (soldiers) have received an order from above," the fish merchant said.

According to him, many people in the affected towns and villages are now fleeing for safety, and the Lake Chad-Doron Baga-Maiduguri route has been closed because of insecurity to lives and property.

"Because of this, there will be no more fishing and transportation of fish to Maiduguri, as the only route has been taken over by insurgents," he said.

While addressing a press conference in Kaduna yesterday, the Secretary General of the JNI, Dr. Khalid Abubakar, who spoke on behalf of the Sultan of Sokoto, said the Muslim organization had again received with great shock and deep concern the news of incessant killings and maiming of innocent people and the destruction of public and private prop-

erty purportedly by the Boko Haram insurgents.

Of particular concern, he said, were the murder of young children in their school premises in Potiskum on November 11 and the murder of a prominent Muslim scholar and his associates in Nafada Town on November 4.

The secretary general of JNI stated: "It is indeed alarming that in a matter of only two weeks, eight deadly attacks were unleashed on seven towns in four states of the federation as follows: Mubi town on 30th October; Gombe Motor Park on 31st October; Potiskum town on 3rd November; Nafada town on 4th November; Ashaka Explosives Depot on 5th November; Maiha on 10th November; Potiskum School on 11th November and Kontagora Federal College of Education on 12th November, 2014.

"Unfortunately, on Saturday, 15th November, 2014, a devastating attack was reported in Hotoro-Kano State, another report came same Saturday, 15th November, 2014, that the ethnic chauvinist group-Ombatse attacked the Palace of the Emir of Lafia, the JNI Vice President-General (VPG) Nasarawa State, leading to the death of many innocent lives. Again on Sunday, 16th November, 2014, came another report of attacks in Azare, Bauchi State. As if these weren't enough to

them, Mafa Local Government of Borno State was ransacked on Thursday, 20th November, 2014, for several hours unabated."

JNI condemned these heinous attacks in the strongest terms and called on the Federal Government to wake up to its fundamental and obligatory responsibility of protecting lives and properties of Nigerians, especially in the North East where the insurgency is most endemic.

According to the Islamic group, "the government should act fast and stop wallowing in diatribe, as human lives are sacred and must be seen to be treated as so! JNI and indeed all Nigerians view the fall out of these repeated attacks, particularly in the taking over of towns and villages by the insurgents, as portending a grave danger to the nation. Nigeria's sovereignty has been threatened as a so called Islamic Caliphate has been carved out of her by the insurgents".

The group further said: "An unfortunate, worrisome and embarrassing dimension has recently been added to the scenarios - that of the way soldiers take to their heels and abandon their bases, arms, ammunition and other military hardware on the approach of the insurgents! It is sad and an unfortunate fact that Nigerian security forces only surface after the deadly attacks and terrorise an already terrorised people by installing road blocks and searching

homes and business premises.

"Thousands of innocent citizens have lost their lives. Thousands have been abducted; the males forced into insurgency and the females into slavery. Thousands more are wallowing in internally displaced persons camps in Nigeria and in refugee camps in neighbouring countries. Trillions of naira worth of infrastructure and public and private properties have been destroyed.

"In the light of all these distasteful developments, JNI is forced to ask the following questions:- Where withered the Nigerian Army of the 1967-69 Civil War? Where are the heroes of international peace keepings? When will the government bring an end to this scourge? Does the government really have the capability, capacity, commitment and sincerity to bring an end to this insurgency and the multifarious security challenges facing the nation?

"As has been done painfully in previous cases, JNI President-General and the Sultan of Sokoto, Alhaji Muhammad Sa'ad Abubakar, on behalf of Nigerian Muslims, condemns these unabated acts of terror being unleashed on innocent citizens and calls for concerted introspection and sincere commitment by government to take proactive and effective measures in addressing this pernicious problem."