



- **Scores killed in Yobe, Bauchi**
- **Military reclaims insurgents-controlled communities**
- **Govt backs ICC on insurgency**

IN yet another moment of madness, a suspected female bomber disguised as a passenger yesterday detonated a bomb at Dukku Motor Park in Gombe State, killing over 25 persons.

Meanwhile, scores were feared killed and many public buildings torched on Sunday in Geidam town, Yobe State when suspected Boko Haram insurgents invaded the community. Also, an explosion rocked a busy market in the Bauchi yesterday, engulfing it in flames and causing an unknown numbers of casualties, according to Reuters.

Large sections of the Bauchi central market area were on fire, sending plumes of smoke into the air, he said. Medics were driving some wounded away in ambulances.

In a related development, the military on Saturday re-recaptured Goniri town five months after it has been under the control of insurgents.

Following the Dukku motor park explosion Gombe, the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) led rescue operations have evacuated all persons affected by the incident to the hospital while the area has been cordoned off.

Most of those evacuated were taken to the Gombe State Specialist Hospital where they are now receiving treatment from injuries sustained in the explosion.

Meanwhile, the NEMA has advised the public to be vigilant and report all suspected movements to security operatives.

In the same vein, the Federal Government has pledged solidarity with the International Criminal Court, ICC, to bring to justice terrorists, even as the United Nations-backed court gets a vote of confidence from African countries.

This is coming in spite of the call by the President of Uganda, Yoweri Museveni, that leaders in the continent should pull their nations out of the international court.

An eye witness, Yusuf Ahmed, told The Guardian that the incident occurred exactly at 10:50 a.m. when the female bomber went to Dukku Motor Park and detonated a bomb in a bus, leaving 25 people dead while others sustained injuries.

He said the bomber took an advantage when passengers have already boarded vehicles, saying that the bomber was said to have kept the bag at the bus without coming back to the vehicle.

Speaking further, the source said during the blast, two vehicles were burnt, adding that hawkers were among those that were affected in the blast.

He said that the bomber would have not succeeded in her mission if there was serious screening at the gate.

Confirming the incident to reporters, the Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), Fwaji Atajiri said that during the blast, 19 people were feared dead while 25 were injured.

He said so far, the police had already cordoned the area, noting that those that died in the incident have been taken to the mortuary, adding that the injured ones were responding to treatment at Gombe Specialist Hospital.

The police spokesman called on the general public to assist security agents in order to maintain law and order, saying the police cannot perform its civic responsibility without the assistance of the public. He also urged them to report any suspicious movement in their vicinity. Geidam is a border town with Niger Republic, and 180 kilometres north of Damaturu, the state capital.

Eyewitnesses in Geidam said that over 100 gunmen in a convoy of Toyota Hilux vehicles and motorcycles launched sporadic attacks on residents and public buildings with Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) for over 10 hours, before a combined team of soldiers and members of vigilante group repelled them by noon yesterday.

"I can confirm to you that so far, five people I know were killed by the attackers as I ran out of the town. Before running out of the town, I heard of the five persons killed but I am sure several people were also killed during the attack," another source who spoke under anonymity said.

It was also confirmed that the Divisional Police station in the area, the local government secretariat and the Geidam Central market were burnt by the attackers as many food items as well as valuables were looted.

The State Police Commissioner, Mr. Markus Danladi, who also confirmed the incident, however, stated that he was not authorised to speak on the issue as only the Defence Headquarters could give details on the exact level of casualties.

Also, speaking on the attack in Geidam, the Special Adviser to the Governor on Public Affairs and Information Abdullahi Bego, said: "Geidam was under the control of insurgents between 4:30 p.m. on Sunday and at dawn yesterday, but a combined team of the military and vigilante group repelled the insurgents by 2.00 p.m. in a fierce battle that lasted for over two hours in the town."

The source added: "Initially the insurgents captured this town and Bara in Gulani Local Government Area of Yobe State in July and August this year, after they attacked Buni/Yadi, Katarko village and Bara, the council headquarters. They had been forcibly conscripting youths to join the sect fight us and other security personnel, but today (Saturday), we were able to reclaim Goniri from these terrorists. Some of them had fled to the forest, south of the affected town in Gujba council area."

On the reclaim of Goniri, Mallam Abdu Bukar, a resident also said: "A military fighter jet dropped explosives on some targets in the town on Saturday night, while the infantry stormed the town targeting key locations of the insurgents within and outside Goniri."

A helicopter also came midnight on Saturday and struck at some locations, and today (Monday) we saw troops coming in through Damboa, Ngamdu and Damaturu roads."

Goniri town is one of the five communities in Southern Yobe Senatorial District which were captured by Boko Haram last July and August.

Other towns under the control of insurgents, included Gujba, Buni Gari, Buni Yadi, in Gujba Local Government Area.

Musevini had said recently that he would ask the African Union at its next meeting to consider a motion to pull out African nations from the UN backed court, because according to him, the court has now turned into "a vessel for oppressing Africa again."

But speaking at the just concluded 13th Assembly of State Parties to the Rome Statute of the ICC in New York, the statement from the Nigerian delegation not only endorsed the work of the ICC, but also expressed readiness to work with the international court regarding the ongoing insurgency in the Northeastern part of Nigeria.

According to the Federal Government statement at the meeting which ended late last week at the New York headquarters of the UN, "the present security challenges in Nigeria's North-East Region which has been characterized by mindless and inhuman terrorist activities have necessarily deepened our engagement with the Court."

Continuing, the statement said such engagement is to ensure that the ICC "acquires a proper understanding of the nature of the conflict and in solidarity with it, to send the clear signal that perpetrators of crimes against humanity will ultimately be brought to justice."

In fact, the statement made it clear that the ICC "is increasingly becoming a critical global institution in the task of checking impunity and promoting the Rule of Law at domestic and international levels."

Nigeria therefore called for collective global efforts to making the international law establishing the ICC become "a truly universal legislation through the progressive increase in the number of signatories to the Statute" that set up the court.