

NEWS.

Scores feared killed in Borno, Yobe attacks

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Military post sacked

RESIDENTS of Baga community in Borno State faced the fury of terrorists on Saturday as gunmen with Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) and an Armoured Personnel Carrier (APC) invaded the town, sacking military posts of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MJTF) and killing undisclosed number of people.

Baga is on shores of Lake Chad and 275 kilometres north of Maiduguri, Borno State capital.

Also, suspected gunmen armed with explosives on Saturday evening attacked Babangida town in Yobe State, torching a police station and council secretariat.

Babangida is a council headquarters and 50 kilometres north of Damaturu, the Yobe State capital.

According to Baga resident who fled to Chad Sunday, Muktar Audu, the gunmen invaded Baga town through Kauwa village and Mile 3 and 4 of MJTF barracks and attacked the soldiers, before proceeding to Baga main town to unleash terror.

He added: "The soldiers at the barracks and duty posts ran away when the gunmen stormed Mile 3 and 4 on Baga road. Some of the soldiers escaped on motorcycles to Doron Baga Primary School. The militants over powered the soldiers and they hurried to remove their uniforms, because the militants targeted the security personnel first before going for the civilians. But I was able to escape yesterday morning to Chad with three of my family members in an overloaded boat."

He said the militants had planned since last year to attack Baga with a threat letter that the MJTF personnel cannot guarantee the safety of fishermen and other residents in the Lake Chad Basin Area.

"As the time of fleeing, I cannot ascertain the number of people killed because everyone had to scamper for safety by fleeing to Chad. Many houses and shops were also torched and looted by the insurgents," Audu further said.

Also, Senator Maina Ma'aji Lawan, representing Borno North Senatorial District confirmed the incident, stating that it was "shocking, unfortunate and terrifying" for insurgents to overrun and sack both Baga and the MJTF barracks three kilometres from the border fishing town that was attacked in April 2013.

He said the Federal Government and the military should quickly intervene to save the lives of many innocent people now taking refuge at Chadian border villages and towns.

Already, he said, all the Baga traditional and religious leaders along with their subjects had fled to Chad, because Bindanaram and five other villages were also sacked by insurgents in their Saturday dawn attacks.

"With these attacks and killings at Baga and other villages in the Lake Chad Basin areas of Borno State, the insurgents have taken control, because the soldiers that were supposed to provide security in the area, have been chased away along with civilians.

He said the people of his senatorial district, have no any other place to flee, because Abadam, Damasak, Gashigar and Kala/Balge councils had all been attacked and taken over by Boko Haram last year.

According to an eyewitness, Bukar Fantami, several people, including some security personnel were also killed in the three-hour fierce battle with the insurgents.

"I cannot tell you the exact number of security personnel and civilians killed in last night's multiple attacks here in Babangida, but some of our people and security personnel were feared killed, as the bodies were carried to undisclosed hospital in Damaturu yesterday morning," Fantami added in a telephone interview yesterday in Damaturu.

He said he had to flee Babangida, because after torching military and police formations, the insurgents

went on selective attacks of houses and shops, including evacuation of food items into awaiting pickup vans.

"I had to walk for five hours last night to reach Damaturu, along the bush path, because once the insurgents sighted civilians on the road, they often shot them."

A police source in Damaturu also told The Guardian on phone that "the gunmen torched both the military and police formations, including the council secretariat complex, lodge and boarding primary school, located on the Damaturu-Bayamari road. Our men along with some soldiers had to repel the insurgents before fleeing with some gunshot wounds into Sasawa Forest by last midnight."

He further disclosed that the insurgents had issued a threat letter that military and police formations will be attacked, but the threat was, however, "dismissed."

"No meaningful measures were taken to avert the purported attack," said the police officer who spoke under anonymity Sunday.



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