
How Boko Haram attacked commander's convoy in Borno

By Njadvara Musa
(Maiduguri), Azimazi
Momoh Jimoh and
Terhemba Daka (Abuja)
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The vehicle of the Theatre Commander of the Operation Lafiya Dole (OPLD), Maj.-Gen. Olusegun Adeniyi, attacked by Boko Haram fighters in Borno.

- **Troops repel ambush as explosive device kills dozens**
- **Atiku, PDP mourn victims, task FG on insecurity**
- **Presidency restates commitment to fighting insurgency**

The Nigerian Army yesterday confirmed an ambush by Boko Haram fighters on the convoy of the Theatre Commander of Operation Lafiya Dole (OPLD), Maj.-Gen. Olusegun Adeniyi, on Monday. The incident took place about two kilometers to Auno village in Kaga Local Government Area (LGA), Borno State. Adeniyi was returning from Jakana where he had visited troops' location following his earlier meeting at Auno with Governor Babagana Zulum.



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Nigerian Army Operations Media Coordinator, Col. Aminu Iliyasu, disclosed in a statement that the ambush was a display of misguided desperation by Boko Haram to stage a reprisal, following the recent neutralisation of several of the sect's top commanders on December 6. Iliyasu said the theatre commander led the troops on his convoy to engage the insurgents with superior firepower, subduing them and thereafter assaulting the ambush site. He also said two soldiers who were wounded in the encounter were in a stable condition and currently receiving treatment at a military medical facility.

"Other senior military officers on the theatre commanders' convoy at the time of the ambush include the Deputy Theatre Commander, Maj.-Gen. M.G Ali, Brig.-Gen. E.I Eze, Brig.-Gen. S.I Igbinomwanya and Lt. A.A Tejuoso.

"In the aftermath of the encounter, several Boko Haram criminal insurgents were decimated. Additionally, 20 rounds of 7.62mm special ammunition, two rounds of

7.62mm NATO ammunition, one pair of camouflage trousers, one Nigeria Police Force fragmental jacket, two AK 47 rifles and three AK 47 rifle magazines were captured from the fleeing insurgents. “Thereafter, the commander and his convoy continued their trip and have since returned safely to the headquarters, Theatre Command Operation Lafiya Dole in Maiduguri.”

The news of the ambush came as an improvised explosive device detonated on a bridge killed about 30 people in Gamboru, Borno State yesterday. “It is an unfortunate day for us to witness this frustrating and devastating incident in our community. I just heard a loud sound of explosions. Before I realised it, I saw many of our friends and colleagues were killed,” an eyewitness Modu Ali Said told Reuters.

Reacting to the incident, former Vice President Atiku Abubakar tweeted: “I am saddened by reports of the death of no fewer than 30 people in a bridge bomb attack in Gamboru, Borno State. May the souls of the deceased rest in peace and their families comforted. Security must be beefed up across border towns.”

Also, the opposition Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) issued a statement challenging the Federal Government to explain why it allegedly terminated the nation’s counter-insurgency operations to satisfy foreign interests, leading to increased violent attacks in parts of the country, particularly in the north.

“Nigerians can now see why insurgents, marauders and bandits, who had been pushed to the fringes under the PDP administration suddenly resurged in renewed ravaging of communities and killing our compatriots unabated, while the APC and its administration engage in lip service and empty condolence messages,” said a statement by PDP’s national publicity secretary, Kola Ologbondiyan.



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The PDP claimed: “Nigerians are aware of how the APC imported political mercenaries, thugs and miscreants from neighboring countries including Niger Republic and used them to unleash violence on Nigerians during the 2019 presidential elections. “The APC has failed to account for these miscreants, most of who are now unleashing violence as kidnappers, armed robbers and marauders, pillaging our communities without restraint under the APC.

“It is important to observe that the APC had failed to apologise or join other well-meaning Nigerians in forcefully demanding the arrest and prosecution of perpetrators of the mass killings in Benue, Borno, Plateau, Taraba, Kogi, Kaduna, Kano, Jigawa, Katsina, Yobe, Adamawa, Ekiti, Ebonyi, Abia, Nasarawa, Niger and other parts of the country, on its watch. “Only recently, Edo State Governor Godwin Obaseki accused the APC national chairman, Adams Oshiomhole, of always relying on thugs for elections and Nigerians know the devastation thuggery and its associated violence have caused the nation in the last five years of the APC.”

But the presidency yesterday noted: “As we fight Boko Haram on the ground, so too must we tackle their beliefs. Stability and unity in the face of their hatred is itself a rejection of their worldview.” It was reacting to the killing of some Christians by the sect amid concerns by the Christian Association of Nigeria that the Federal Government was not doing enough to protect adherents of the faith.

“Nigerians must continue to be united in ensuring that they do not subscribe to the terrorists’ message of division,” said presidential spokesman, Garba Shehu, in a statement. “Unfortunately, some leaders and politicians seek to make political capital from our religious differences.” He insisted that Nigeria’s security forces were working continuously to free all hostages taken by Boko Haram and that “government has full confidence in their ability to accomplish the task.”

He added: “On its own part, government has condemned some of the appalling acts of terror, especially following the festive period. Yet, to continue to see these happenings solely in religious terms – removed from social, economic and environmental factors – simplifies complexities that must be heeded. “Not seeing them as they should be is exactly what the terrorists and groups wish: they want Nigerians to see their beliefs as reason(s) to turn against one another. On the contrary, Christians and Muslims alike are united in their opposition to Boko Haram and the hatred for decency that the infamous group stands for.”

In a related development, Governor Zulum has urged military authorities to rescind the decision to relocate Minok and Jakana communities in Kaga LGA. He made the call when he visited the communities yesterday. The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that Mainok and Jakana communities witnessed a resurgence of insurgency activities in recent weeks.

The governor said he received information that the military planned to relocate the communities to Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) camps in Maiduguri. “I call on the Chief of Army Staff (COAS), Lt. Gen. Tukur Burutai, to refrain from the action. In as much as possible, we need to commend the Federal Government’s effort in the counter-insurgency operation, we are not in support of displacing these communities.

“We are fully behind the military and police in cordon-and-search exercises in the communities, to arrest and prosecute all those involved in nefarious activities. But we do not want the communities to be displaced,” Zulum said. He explained that such an action would compound the humanitarian crisis in the state. According to him, adequate arrangements must be put in place to facilitate a smooth relocation and resettlement of the affected communities.

“The federal and state governments, the National and State Emergency Management Agencies (NEMA and SEMA), humanitarian and development partners should be notified. “The police, Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) and other security agencies should also be notified, so that we can make adequate arrangements.

“I am sure that no information has been passed to the police, the Department of State Services (DSS), as well as the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) with respect to the planned evacuation of Jakana and other communities to Maiduguri. Therefore, the government of Borno State is not in support of the move,” he said. Zulum warned the communities against collaboration with the insurgents and urged them to support the military and security agencies to end the insurgency. He also reiterated his commitment to supporting the military in the ongoing clearance operation to rout the remnants of the insurgents in the state.

“Maiduguri-Damaturu Road has not been closed since 2011 and Jakana community not displaced. Therefore, displacing these communities means that commuters plying the

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road are not safe, for it entails blocking the road. “We are pleading with the Federal Government to ensure the protection of communities on this highway. We appeal to them to ensure the protection of life and property. People should freely move around while supporting their desire to punish all those culpable,” Zulum added.

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