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# Boko Haram: Borno, Yobe residents flee as death toll hits 70

Written by [newsadmin](#) on December 25, 2011 in [News](#) - [No comments](#)

News 2

• **General Overseer of The Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG), Pastor Enorch Adeboye (left), being welcomed by Osun State Governor, Rauf Aregbesola (second left), his wife Serifat (second right), and son,**

**Abdurauf, during the Clergyman's visit to the governor in Osogbo, on Saturday .**

- Security beefed-up to avert Christmas Day attacks***
- Soldiers roll out tanks in Jos***

By **Abdulkareem Haruna** (*Maiduguri*) and **Onoja Audu** (*Jos*)

**The serial** bombings and gun attacks that have lasted about 48 hours in Damaturu, the **Yobe** State capital, has claimed well over 56 lives, who are mostly policemen and hapless civilians. A similar encounter had claimed the lives of about 15 when members of the *Boko Haram* sect struck on Thursday in the two neighbouring states.

In Maiduguri, military sources claimed only one person was killed in the wake of the multiple blasts that rocked the state for over two hours, but credible eyewitnesses and families who lost their relations in the attacks said over 15 persons were killed at different locations of the state capital.

The **Borno** State Commissioner of Police, Simeione Moidenda, did not however give the true casualty figure, as he told newsmen who contacted him on phone, "We are still working to gather more details of what happened and we will have to brief the IG (Inspector-General of Police) first before making public our reports."

In **Yobe** State, the state Commissioner of Police, Tanko Lawal Song, was also hesitant with divulging information on the casualty level recorded. He told journalists who besieged him that the command might not be in a position to give the actual number of casualties because, according to him, "the

attack is still going on as you can see.”

He added, “The Police cannot give the public the actual figure of casualty for now as the gun battle is still on between my men and the *Boko Haram* sect. But we want to assure the general public that we are making progress with the seizure of a major factory for making Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs).”

But a source at the state Specialists Hospital, Damaturu, reliably informed *Sunday Independent* that “we have seen piles of dead bodies brought into the hospital morgue in seven different trucks; and when we later counted, they were about 56, and mostly policemen and innocent civilians”.

The source who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorised to speak to the press as a staff of the hospital, noted, “The way and manner these people (members of the *Boko Haram* sect) attacked this time around shows that they are well trained. Even the police and soldiers were at some point helpless. This is one attack too many because our morgue is presently overstretched.”

The police and military operatives have reportedly asked all **residents** of Pompomari where members of the Boko Haram sect were dwelling to leave immediately as the security operatives embarked on full military operation in the area.

An eyewitness told *Sunday Independent* that about 14 people were killed following the explosion of an IED “but their corpses were secretly evacuated by the soldiers early this morning. Some of us in Dala saw the dead bodies of over 14 people. We cannot tell whether or not they were killed by the *Boko Haram* or the security forces”, said the source.

*Sunday Independent* can authoritatively report that Damaturu, a relatively calm state capital city, has now lost its former hustle and bustle status as many **residents** especially the non-indigenes and Christians have taken their leave of the town.

“Many people are leaving and I for one will not advise any person to stay especially during this Christmas period; we are targets and there is no doubt about it,” said a pastor of a Pentecostal church.

In Maiduguri, the military Joint Task Force (JTF) on Saturday pulled out its full force on the streets of Maiduguri and especially around churches and government facilities, apparently to quell any further insurgence or attack.

Head of Field Operations of JTF, Colonel Victor Ebhaleme, said while a heavy “reinforcement is being sent to Damaturu, as we speak, we have as at this morning moved MI 35 Helicopter gunship and armored vehicles to the streets of Damaturu

and Maiduguri with a view to tightening security in both states. We are not ready to give anything to chance, that is why we are taking these measures. We urge all in both states to go about their normal businesses as we have taken far-reaching measures to ensure protection of lives and properties during the Christmas and New Year celebrations, and even beyond.”

Meanwhile, tension has enveloped Jos, the Plateau State capital, as soldiers from the 3rd Armored Division, Rukuba Barracks, patrol major streets and environs of the restive city with tanks.

When *Sunday Independent* went round the Tin City on Saturday, the atmosphere was edgy. Chief of Defense Staff, Air Marshall Oluseyin Petrin, who is now in charge of internal security in Jos, penultimate week drew a battle line between the military and those he called “evil men tormenting Plateau State.”

Amid the apprehension, the likelihood is that the turn-out of Christian faithful in churches on Christmas Day (today) may be limited, as many fear that Islamic militants may carry out an earlier threat to attack churches in Jos today.

*Sunday Independent* gathered that many Christian faithful in Plateau who hail from various communities in the 17 Local government councils of the state have relocated to their respective villages to celebrate Christmas with their loved ones while they keep contacts with those left behind in Jos to get an up date on the events that might unfold in the state capital.

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