

Sunday

20 killed in Maiduguri poultry market suicide bombing

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A suicide bomb attack said to have been carried out by a girl of about 10 years on Saturday killed at least 20 people at the popular poultry market in Maiduguri, Borno State, North East Nigeria.

The attack, eyewitnesses said, occurred at about 12.30pm, a stone throw from the live chicken section of the market, threw residents into confusion as those who were within the area scampered for safety at the sound of the blast.

The shattered body of the bomber was found about 500 metres from where the explosive strapped on her was detonated.

This latest attack is coming barely six weeks after a similar attack at the market on December 1 and the third in less than three months.

Borno State police spokesman, Gideon Jubrin, who confirmed the explosion to newsmen, put the casualty figure at 20, including the suicide bomber while at least 18 persons were injured.

Jubrin said the scene of the incident has been cordoned off by the police to enable them ascertain the extent of damage.

The attack increases fears of the new strategy of the dreaded Boko Haram sect, which has carried out recent attacks in the North East region, killing thousands and displacing millions of residents.

Following the upsurge of killings by sect, about 7,300 Nigerian refugees are said to have fled from the country to Chad in the past 10 days.

A United Nations spokesman, Farhan Haq, stated this on Saturday when he spoke to newsmen in Abuja on the wave of Boko Haram insurgency in the country.

This is as the United Nations Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon, lamented the level of killings of Nigerians by the Boko Haram sect. Haq said that the newly arrived refugees in Chad are staying with local communities in villages some 450 kilometers North West of the Chadian capital, Ndjamena.

"The UN refugee agency teams in Chad are at the border and seeking more information on the new arrivals and their needs," Haq said.

He said that the number of refugees from Nigeria in Chad had reached more than 10,000.

Haq said that the Chadian government had requested the assistance of aid agencies to help the refugees.

Citing the United Nation Refugee Agency, he said that the conflict in North Eastern Nigeria has led to the exodus of some 135,000 people "with "at least 850, 000 people displaced within Nigeria".

Meanwhile, Ki-moon, has lamented the continued terror attacks by the Boko Haram insurgents in Nigeria.

In a statement issued from his office in New York at the weekend, Ki-moon expressed worry over the violence, killings and abductions of people by the sect, even as he described the coming general elections in Nigeria as "another grave test".

He said: "We face another grave test as Nigeria readies for its election

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