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- **Records Five Strikes In Five Days Kills Dozens In Borno, Yobe**
- **As Military Moves To Relocate Anti-Terror Command To Maiduguri**

By Ejikeme Omenazu (Lagos) and Chesa Chesa (Abuja)

(With Agency Reports)

Against the backdrop of President Muhammadu Buhari's determination to dislodge the Boko Haram insurgents from their stronghold in Nigeria's north east geo-political zone, the sect has intensified attacks in Maiduguri, Borno State and Potiskum in Yobe.

Just yesterday, the sect not only carried out a land attack on the city, it also bombed a busy meat market in Maiduguri, killing over 50 people.

This is the fifth attack in just five days, killing almost 100 people in Borno and neighbouring Yobe State. Buhari replaced Goodluck Jonathan only on Friday, May 29, 2015. That night, members of the sect struck in the state, in what is believed to be their daring the political will of the new president, a retired Army General.

As if to drive their message home, the group, instantly released a new video after yesterday's attack, in which they ridiculed the Nigerian military.

During his inauguration, Buhari pledged to deal with the sect, even as he announced a temporary relocation of the military's Anti-Terror Command headquarters to the troubled zone.

Eyewitnesses, hospital and military sources told newsmen that Tuesday's bomb attack, which was concealed under a butcher's table in the market, went off at around 1.00pm, killing shoppers and travellers.

Lawal Kawu, a paramedic, told reporters that 31 charred bodies had been evacuated to the teaching hospital in Maiduguri, and several other people were brought in with severe injuries.

Witnesses said they heard a loud explosion.

"It shook our school building and I had to run away. I saw military vehicles with soldiers moving toward the area," Abubakar Mohammed, a student who was few meters away from the blast scene told Reuters.

The group is showing a return to its guerrilla tactics and seems to have rediscovered its killer instinct, since losing the territory it gained in 2014 to the successful offensives by Chadian, Nigerian and Nigerian troops over the past few months.

Before the successful military operations, Boko Haram had maintained a stronghold in the Sambisa forest reserve, and appeared to have operated from there as its base. It was even reported that the abducted Chibok girls were probably kept in the forest, until the military sacked their bases and rescued over 1000 women and girls, without any trace of the secondary school girls abducted in April 2014.

According to a report by AFP, the Islamists arrived in the Moronti area of Maiduguri by the river, but were unable to advance further because of wide ditches and embankments dug by soldiers around the city limits.

One of the residents, Isa Mala, who lives in Ajillari Cross, gave a graphic account of how the attack occurred to newsmen.

He said: "They began shelling Ajillari Cross, about three kilometres (two miles) away at about 12.45 am."

"There was no immediate word on damage or casualties. We were bombarded by RPGs (rocket-propelled grenades) by Boko Haram from Moronti. We all left our homes for fear of being hit inside."

"It was dark so we could see the trajectory of the RPGs, which were red with heat. Soon afterwards, we saw troops in trucks moving towards Moronti and then a fighter jet also deployed not long afterwards."

Another resident, Kyari Bulunkutu, who lives near Mala, while corroborating the claim, recalled that: "At about 2.00am in the morning it was all over. But, I haven't been able to see whether there was any damage or casualties."

The insurgents launched a similar attack nearby early on Saturday, just hours after Buhari was sworn-in. The President had referred to the sect as "godless" and "mindless," pledging to move the military's counter-insurgency command centre to Maiduguri, which has suffered the worst violence in the six-year insurgency.

The sect later carried out a suicide attack at a Mosque in the city on Saturday, killing 26 people and injuring 28 others.

Meanwhile, the President met with the nation's service chiefs and the Inspector General of Police on Tuesday to discuss the security situation across the country. As a fall out of the meeting, the Nigeria's military top brass have started the process of relocating the anti-terror war command centre to the Borno State capital. Briefing newsmen after the meeting at the Defence House, Abuja, Chief of Naval Staff, Usman Jubrin, said he and his colleagues briefed the President on the general security situation in the country, especially on strategies to maintain the tempo of successes in the war against the Boko Harm terrorists until they are routed.

He stressed that the presidential order on the command centre was one that would not be ignored, but also tasked Nigerians to cooperate with the security agencies by giving them useful tips that could aid intelligence gathering.

His words: "On the command centre, we are the ones to go back and work on it. Soon it will be carried out, it is a Presidential directive, it must be carried out, and we must do that as quickly as possible.

"All Nigerians should continue to support the military and provide us with the needed intelligence, as to the human beings, their movements and suspicious movement should be reported to the police. Of course, the police will make that available to us.

"You know as we continue to put pressure on them in the Sambisa area, they will try to run away from there and then create further problems, using improvised explosives devices."

Reminded that the terrorists were becoming more daring with daily attacks and bombings in Maiduguri, the Navy Chief rather maintained that successes were being recorded against the insurgents.

In the meeting with Buhari, were; Chief of Defence Staff, Air Chief Marshal Alex Badeh; Chief of Army Staff, Kenneth Minum; Chief of Naval Staff, Usman Jubrin; Chief of Air Staff, Adesola Amosun; Inspector-General of Police, Solomon Arase; and National Security Adviser, Sambo Dasuki, attended the meeting.

Against the speculations that Buhari may relieve the service chiefs of their appointment, yesterday's meeting proved otherwise. This may also be Buhari's break from normal tradition where incoming Presidents immediately replaces service chiefs with own appointees.

The latest video by the terrorist group, had a masked person in military fatigue flanked by well-armed fighters, claiming that they are still operating in the Sambisa forest.

In the 10-minute video, the first in many months, released on social media Tuesday, June 2, 2015, under the banner of Islamic State Branch of West Africa, the group derided reports of recent successes credited to the Nigerian military.

The puzzle in the video is that the group was represented, this time around by another face, and not its leader, Abubakar Shekau. The person who spoke did not introduce himself or make any reference to Shekau.

Reacting to the video on his twitter handle, Tuesday, Andrew Alli, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Africa Finance Corporation (AFC), said: "The fact that Boko Haram has to produce a video to say they are still strong, indicates to me the exact opposite."

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Can Hausa/Fulanis please tell these boys to stop NOW because Jonathan is no more the president. Alhaji King sometime ago promised Nigerians that should Jonathan say he'll not run for 2015 election, that the killing would stop the same day. apparently because Jonathan did run is the reason for continued killing. Really? when you set fire on your neighbour's house thinking you'll put it off after consuming them, think again for you got surprises coming because fire is a bad master.

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