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20 Killed In Fresh Borno Attack

By: Sadiq Abdulateef, Agency Report on August 7, 2013 - 3:23am



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Gunfire and explosions shook Gamboru Ngala town in Borno State yesterday just as the Joint Task Force (JTF) imposed a 24-hour curfew on Potiskum in Yobe State to check waves of insurgent activities in the affected areas.

Clashes broke out in the town of Gamboru Ngala on the border with Cameroon on Monday night and continued yesterday. About 20 people have been killed so far, a resident said. The military had not commented on the situation there and details remained unclear.

Meanwhile, a round-the-clock curfew had been imposed on Potiskum as soldiers carried

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out house-to-house searches.

The military did not say why it moved to suddenly impose the curfew on Potiskum or provide other details. The operation came ahead of the Muslim Eid-el-Fitr holiday which follows the fasting month of Ramadan.

The situations in the two towns did not appear to be linked as they are located hundreds of kilometres apart in Africa's most populous nation.

In Gamboru Ngala, one resident said the fighting began after someone who runs errands for immigration officers was shot and wounded.

"We have been bombarded with explosions and sounds of gunfire since yesterday evening, and I have counted 20 corpses so far on the streets," the resident said.

Residents over the border in Cameroon also reported hearing gunshots.

In Potiskum, residents said soldiers were conducting house-to-house searches in two neighbourhoods and word had spread in the town that troops were looking for high-profile members of Islamist extremist group Boko Haram.

"The Joint Task Force announces the imposition of a 24-hour curfew commencing from today," a military statement said late Monday.

"Residents of Potiskum town are enjoined to remain calm and cooperate with security agencies by remaining indoors until the curfew is lifted."

It gave no indication of how long the curfew would remain in place. Nigeria will celebrate Eid al-Fitr on Thursday and Friday.

"I have been able to contact some people in other parts of town and from what I gathered there is a huge military deployment in town

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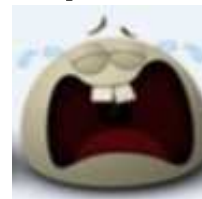
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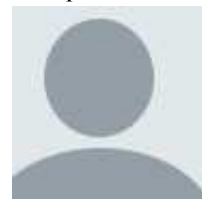
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and that house-to-house searches have begun in two areas,” resident Kabiru Ahmed said.

Another resident provided a similar account.

The clashes and military operation came in the wake of fighting in two other north-eastern towns on Sunday that left at least 35 people dead, most of them insurgents, according to the military.

Those clashes broke out in the towns of Bama and Malam Fatori and were triggered by attacks on soldiers and a police station, the military said.

Nigeria’s northeast is currently under a state of emergency as the military pursues an offensive seeking to end Boko Haram’s four-year insurgency.

The insurgency is estimated to have claimed more than 3,600 lives since 2009, including killings by the security forces.



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