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25 Killed, 200 Houses Razed In Taraba

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— April 17, 2014

Twenty-five people were on Tuesday night killed in a renewed crisis between the Jukuns and the Hausas in Wukari local government area of Taraba State.

The crisis, LEADERSHIP learnt, was a spillover from the problem between the Tivs and Fulani herdsmen in Benue, Nasarawa and Plateau states.

An eyewitness who escaped the bloody attacks said over 200 houses in about four villages were razed down by the trouble makers, just as the roads leading from the north-east zone to the southern part of the country has been closed down by the military Joint Task Force.

However, the police public relations officer (PPRO), ASP Joseph Kwaji, confirmed that seven people were killed during the incident. Other eyewitnesses told LEADERSHIP that the killings and burning had been on from 7:30pm on Tuesday to noon on Wednesday.

Narrating the ugly incident, the chairman of the State House of Assembly Committee on Information, Hon. Ishaya Daniel Gani, who lost his elder brother on Tuesday night, told journalists in his residence that even as he was speaking, he could not witness the burial of his late brother (Yakubu Musa Gallunje) whose interment was going due to sporadic shooting, burning and imposition of 24-hour curfew.

The lawmaker said that reports reaching him had confirmed that one military man had been killed in the process, two seriously in danger, while his newly completed rented house and two churches were razed down. "I have no access to my local government/constituency to see my people as I am speaking with you people unless through GSM handset and a majority of the people especially non-indigenes are said to have fled the area since Tuesday night," he said. Gani however call on constituted authority to draft more military personnel to the area, or else the crisis may engulf the entire state.

Chief press secretary to the acting governor Mr Kefas Sule told journalists that the state government was taking steps to control the situation, saying that a 24-hour curfew had been imposed until further notice.

Meanwhile, commuters and motorists, especially those travelling to the southern part of the country and their counterparts moving towards the north-east axis of the country, have been stranded.

Another monarch, 19 others killed in Borno

Barely 48 hours after some 100 school girls were abducted and taken to an unknown destination, members of the Boko Haram terrorists yesterday morning and Tuesday night attacked villages in different parts of Borno State, killing 20 people including a monarch, security sources and witnesses said.

The village head of Sabon-Kasuwa in Hawul local government area of the state was attacked in his palace on Tuesday night by armed men who walked right into his living room, shot him and also killed his security guard before fleeing.

In less than 12 hours after the attack, another gang of gunmen, about 7am yesterday, invaded Wala village, near Gwoza town in Gwoza local government area, where they shot and killed about 18 people.

Though the police in Maiduguri, the Borno State capital, could not be reached immediately to confirm the incidents, senior Department of



State Services officials who didn't want to be quoted confirmed the killings.

"We have just received the report from our officers in Gwoza that the Boko Haram gunmen had attacked Wala village and killed 18 poor souls there; it is rather unfortunate and a sad development, despite our efforts up here," he said.

He also confirmed that in Sabon-Kasuawa village in Hawul local government area, 210km south of Maiduguri, Boko Haram gunmen had killed a local monarch and his guard.

A local government official who did not want to be quoted told journalists: "We are in difficult times in Gwoza local government; deaths and killings have become a daily affair."

Jonathan summons govs to Security Council meeting

President Goodluck Jonathan has summoned members of the National Security Council to an expanded meeting billed to hold today (Thursday) at the Presidential Villa, Abuja, over recent security challenges, including Monday bombing in Nyanya and the kidnap of over 100 female students in Borno.

A statement by presidential spokesman Dr Reuben Abati said the meeting of the National Security Council scheduled to commence by 11am will be followed at 1pm "by an enlarged meeting on security developments in the country to which President Jonathan has invited state governors".

"President Jonathan, members of the National Security Council and the state governors will review the security situation in the country as well as ongoing national security measures and operations with a view to determining the best way forward," Abati added.

He also noted that Jonathan was particularly disturbed over the 100 female students abducted in Borno State by suspected members of the Boko Haram sect.

Abati said: "The President is particularly concerned about the plight of the young senior secondary school girls who were reportedly abducted from their school in Borno State on Monday night and has ordered the military and national security agencies to deploy maximum efforts towards rescuing all of the girls and returning them safely to their parents.

"In this regard, President Jonathan will be pleased to see all politicians in the country exhibiting greater responsibility and patriotism by doing more to support his administration's sincere efforts to enhance national security rather than trying to build political capital out of the pain and misery of their compatriots."

Those expected at the National Security Council meeting are Vice President Namadi Sambo, minister of defence Lt-Gen Aliyu Gusau, national security adviser Col. Sambo Dasuki (rtd.), chief of defence staff Air Chief Marshal Alex Badeh, service chiefs, the inspector-general of police, the director-general of the State Security Service and the director-general of the National Intelligence Agency.

Gov Shettima offers N50m reward for information

Governor Kashim Shettima yesterday announced a reward of N50 million to anyone that offers useful information which will lead to the rescue of some female students of Government Girls' Secondary School, Chibok, abducted by suspected members of the Boko Haram sect. The offer came just as 10 girls escaped from an un-identified camp of their Boko Haram abductors.

This bring to 14 the number of students that have so far escaped from the Boko Haram abductors; four had escaped when the vehicle conveying them to the camp broke down on Tuesday morning.

Shettima explained that a total of 129 final-year science students taking exams were at the school hostel at the time of the attack. He said other science students were day students while the rest of the students were on holiday. He however said the exact number of abducted students was yet to be ascertained but that a register has since been opened for parents and guardians to make formal reports on missing students. He said 50 complaints by parents and guardians have so far been documented in the register.

The governor said his government was willing to do everything to ensure that the female students get reunited with their families.

He said he had been in constant touch with the principal of the school and the leaders of Chibok and had got everyone involved in the search for the students.

Shettima, who was in painful mood at the press briefing, said: "The commissioner of education has been in constant touch with the school and the people of the town. I have also been speaking to the principal and the district head of Chibok on hourly basis."

On how the 10 students escaped, the governor said they were asked to be involved in the preparation of meals by the insurgents and they took the opportunity of washing plates to flee the camp.

He said he would have been in Chibok by now but for security advice which told him to stay away for now as search-and-rescue operations launched by the military and vigilantes were ongoing.

Shettima added that the time calls for sober reflection and should not be used to apportion blame, insisting that everyone is required to contribute his quota at finding the students and reuniting them with their families.

He said: "I want to appreciate the efforts of the military in the task of bringing peace back to the state."

We have rescued 121 of the kidnapped girls – DHQ

But the Defence Headquarters has claimed that a total number of 121 students of the Government Girls' Secondary School, Chibok have been freed this evening in the ongoing search and rescue operations to free the abducted student.

It added that concerted efforts are being put in place to free the remaining eight female students of the school.

This was disclosed by the spokesman of the Defence Headquarters, Major General Chris Olukolade during an interview with our correspondent.

Olukolade said, "One of the terrorists who carried out the attack on the school has also been captured. Efforts are underway to locate the remaining 8 students".

Although there are conflicting figures on the actual number of the abducted girls, the Defence Headquarters insisted that the abducted female students were 129.



Gunmen snatch UN Hilux vans, attack Soro town in Bauchi

The Bauchi State police command said that gunmen had snatched two Hilux vans belonging to the United Nations (UN) following an attack on Soro town in Ganjuwa local government area of the state.

Confirming the incident, the police public relations officer (PPRO), DSP Haruna Mohammed, said that the incident occurred on Tuesday at 5 pm.

Soro town is on the Bauchi – Maiduguri highway.

Mohammed said that the attackers, numbering about 20, also snatched another Hilux van belonging to the Bauchi State Television Authority (BATV).

He gave the registration numbers of the snatched vehicles as 206 UN, 139 UN and 04C – 04 BA.

The police spokesman said that one person later died from gun injuries received during the attack.

"In a bid to escape, the assailants opened fire sporadically where a stray bullet hit one Bose Bappa, who later died in the hospital while receiving treatment."

Meanwhile, all the five people recently kidnapped in the state, including a politician, a businessman and some health workers, have been released by their abductors.

Shedding of innocent blood is becoming worrisome – APC govts

Meanwhile, the All Progressives Congress (APC) governors yesterday said the shedding of innocent blood is becoming worrisome and all stakeholders must wake up to their responsibilities in order to stop it before too it is late.

The governors under the aegis of Progressive Governors' Forum made the statement while visiting some of the survivors of Nyanya bomb blasts that took place this Monday at the National Hospital in Abuja.

Addressing newsmen at the hospital, Imo State governor and chairman of the Forum Owelle Rochas Okorocha described the tragedy as unfortunate and called for concerted efforts on the part of those in elective offices, irrespective of political affiliations, to stop the menace. He admonished President Jonathan to show leadership that could meet the present challenges.

He stated: "We are in the hospital to see those who were involved in the ugly incident, an unfortunate incident which took place in Nyanya. At this moment, our hearts go to those people who lost their loved ones. And we know that they must be in serious pains at this moment.

"What happened was rather unfortunate. And it is one killing too many. Our nation has experienced an increasing loss of lives. Almost on a daily basis, we hear one ugly story or the other about loss of lives. So, for the Nyanya incident, we the APC Governors' Forum have joined millions of Nigerians to condemn this unholy act, which does not do our nation any good.

"We also want to request Mr President and the commander-in chief of the armed forces to defend that particular part of our constitution which guarantees the safety of life and property of the ordinary citizen. We urge him to show leadership at this moment, and whatever it is within his capacity as president to fish out those who are involved in this act.

Okorocha, who disclosed that the APC governors have planned to establish a trust fund "to support the families of the victims of this unholy act" also said the governors were determined to join forces with other well-meaning Nigerians to address the scary security situation.

Jonathan insensitive for campaigning the day after Abuja blast, says APC

The All Progressives Congress (APC) has said President Jonathan is exhibiting the traits of an insensitive and utterly hard-hearted leader by returning to his illegal campaign trail, barely 24 hours after 75 of his compatriots died in a bomb blast in Abuja, and as news broke that 200 school girls had been abducted by Boko Haram in Borno.

In a statement issued in Lagos on Wednesday by its interim national publicity secretary, Alhaji Lai Mohammed, the party also renewed its call on the president to urgently convene a stakeholders' summit and pursue a non-partisan approach towards ending the insurgency, as it is now very obvious that the challenge posed by it is beyond the capacity of the government.

"The message that President Jonathan is sending to Nigerians is that keeping his plum job, at all cost, is more important to him than the security and welfare of the same people who voted him into office. Otherwise, the President would not have rushed back to his illegal campaign trail at a time he should be leading the nation in mourning the dead.

"A President who said his ambition is not worth the blood of anyone is now dancing gleefully on the graves of over 70 of his compatriots. What is so important about the illegal campaign stop in Kano on Tuesday that could not have waited for the smoke to clear from the scene of the deadly blast on Monday? Who will President Jonathan rule over when his countrymen and women are being daily mowed down under his watch?

"Without mincing words, President Jonathan erred badly by not showing enough sympathy for the victims of Monday's blast. More people died in the blast than from Kenya's mall shooting last September, yet President Uhuru Kenyatta declared three days of national mourning during which flags at public buildings flew at half mast and the people of Kenya prayed for the dead and the injured.

"In 2012, Gen. Muhammadu Buhari ordered the immediate postponement of all activities long planned to mark his 70th birthday, following the death of Gen. Azazi, Gov. Yakowa and others in a helicopter crash in Bayelsa. Such is the stuff of a great leader."

We won't be cowed, PDP tells APC

But the ruling Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) yesterday continued its accusation of the opposition APC as sponsors of insurgency in the country, alleging that their plan to impose a reign of terror in the country has failed.

PDP, while reacting to a statement by the APC which portrays President Jonathan as "heartless" for not shutting down governance over the terrorist attack in Abuja, said the claim by the APC was another demonstration of the party's support for terrorist agenda against the country.

PDP in its own statement signed by its national publicity secretary, Chief Olisa Metuh, noted that contrary to the allegations by the APC, President Jonathan has continued to be sensitive and responsive to the welfare of all Nigerians.

Buttressing its claim that the president is sensitive to the plight of Nigerians, PDP recalled that the president cancelled his planned trip to Ibadan, visited the scene of the blasts and the injured and gave directives on the matter.

The party also recalled that after the Dana crash of June 3, 2012, the government flew the Nigerian flag at half-mast and the president and the federal government wisely refrained from celebrations.

The statement said "it is common knowledge that those behind the attacks seek to impose a reign of terror in our country, cow the President, dictate the tempo of government and ultimately shut down governance, a plot which the APC has betrayed its support for".

The PDP noted that the federal government cannot in any way be cowed or intimidated to abandon its mandate, adding that Jonathan has remained committed to the welfare and security of all Nigerians.

NMA calls for forensic identification of victims

Still in a state of shock over the monumental loss of lives and severe bodily injuries following the Nyanya bus park bomb blast on Monday, April 14, the Nigerian Medical Association (NMA) is worried over the consistent deterioration of security in the country, despite several statements by government that it is "on top of the matter".

Indian hospital offers free drugs to victims

Additional succour has come the way of victims of the Nyanya bomb blast as Primus International Specialty Hospital based in the suburb of Karu, less than 2 kilometers from the scene of the Nyanya bomb blast has offered to donate drugs free to victims of the blast, a majority of whom are being treated in government hospitals.

China condemns Nigerian schoolgirls' kidnapping

China on Wednesday condemned an incident in Nigeria in which over 100 schoolgirls were kidnapped by armed gunmen, and voiced firm support for the Nigerian government.

The Foreign Ministry spokeswoman, Hua Chunying, said, in reference to the raid: "China strongly condemns and opposes terrorism in all forms.

"We urge the immediate release of those innocent students, and assurance of their safety. "

UNICEF seeks immediate release of abducted students

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has strongly condemned the reported abduction of some 100 school girls between 12 and 17 years old from their school hostel in north-eastern Nigeria Tuesday and called for their immediate and unconditional release.

Adoption of girls by Boko Haram a crime against humanity – NLC

The Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) has described the abduction of over 100 female students from a school at Chibok in Borno State in the early hours of Tuesday as a heinous crime against humanity.

The union said it is outraged and appalled by the abduction of the students who were said to have been roused from sleep and forced into waiting trucks and driven to an unknown destination.

Nyanya attack: Traders, shoppers desert market

The after-effects of Monday morning's tragedy were painfully obvious at Nyanya Market yesterday.

The weekly market, which usually is a beehive of activities with human and vehicle traffic, looked deserted as many traders and even customers chose the familiar safety of their homes instead of risking a visit to the scene of the tragic attack.

Speaking to LEADERSHIP, one of the few traders who opened for business, Mr Jonathan Mba, a cloth merchant, said: "There is doubt everywhere; even we that came out here are not so confident. Business is not flowing as usual but the little we get would make the family happy. We are trusting God that things will get better."

Mr Mba also called on the government to employ more pro-active security measures. He said, "Government should put more effort towards securing people's lives. Let us flood everywhere with security consciousness. This has gotten to the level of engaging private security firms and vigilantes – people who know the community and the people and their stories and can relate to them."

The atmosphere in the vicinity was calm but the tension in the air was palpable as the few customers who went to the market performed their transactions briskly with a view to leaving as soon as possible.

"Knowing full well the situation on ground, there is no need to waste time in a place like this. I just want to get what I want and find my way home," said a customer, Mrs Yetunde Adepoju.

Another trader, Abigail Jeremiah, bemoaned the loss of some of her colleagues. She said, "Many of our brothers and sisters have just gone like that because they were looking for their daily bread. People are afraid, we are afraid, business is not like before."

Another trader, Mr Christian Okeke, advised the federal government to seek international assistance in terms of equipment and expertise. "Government should go to developed countries, get advice from them and apply it," he said.

The heavy and rowdy traffic which normally characterised the area around the Nyanya bridge was absent, a testament to the absence of market agents and the presence of security personnel from the police, army and civil defence who worked to enforce sanity among the few that showed up.

They (security personnel) declined comment when approached by LEADERSHIP.

First Lady calls for release of abducted girls in Borno

The first lady, Dame Patience Jonathan, yesterday called for the release of the school girls abducted by insurgents in Chibok, Borno State. This is contained in a statement signed by Mr Ayo Adewuyi, media assistant to the first lady, in Abuja.

Kidnap of school girls barbaric – ACF, JNl

The kidnapping of over 100 final-year secondary school female students in Chibok, despite the emergency rule, is shocking and unfortunate, Arewa Consultative Forum (ACF) and the Jama'atu Nasril Islam (JNl) have said.

The ACF in a text message made available to our correspondent in Kaduna, said it is "sad, painful and unfortunate that such incident of abduction of school children by insurgents in a state where you have an emergency rule with heavy presence of military and security agencies could take place".

According to the ACF's spokesman, Muhammad Ibrahim, this wicked act of terrorism against innocent students is condemnable.

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