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11 killed in Maiduguri day of rage

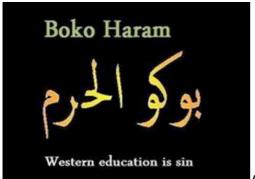
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About 11 people, including four believed to be members of the Islamist sect, Boko Haram, were killed in separate incidents in Maiduguri yesterday.

But what could have turned into a more bloody incident was averted after soldiers attempted to disperse worshippers who had gathered on a road in the city for their jumat prayers.

The worshippers were restrained by peacemakers from confronting the soldiers and calm was restored.

Unknown gunmen first struck at Gwange, Ajilari, Bulumkutu and Gomari between Thursday night and yesterday morning, killing seven people in their homes.

Two of the victims were killed at Gwange, three persons at Ajilari, and one each at Bulumkutu and Gomari.

Simultaneously, men of the Joint Task Force (JTF) in the city raided suspected hideouts of the sect at Biafra Bulabin, Kasuwan Shanu and GRA, killing two suspects and confiscating assorted weapons.

Twenty-six other suspects were arrested.

Later in the afternoon, suspected members of Boko Haram allegedly attacked a patrol team of the JTF at Shehuri area of Maiduguri, the Borno State capital. Two of the hoodlums were killed in the attack, which took place around 1 pm.

Spokesman for the task force, Lt. Col. Sagir Musa, said his colleagues repelled the attack, gunning down two of the terrorists in the process.

As the exchange of gunshots raged, residents took to their heels. Soon, the streets were empty and commercial activities were paralysed.

Lt. Col. Musa said of the incident: "A JTF patrol vehicle was attacked at about 1300 hrs today (yesterday) in Shehuri General area by suspected Boko Haram terrorists, and the attack was resisted.

"The incident led to the killing of two Boko Haram terrorists wounded are stable and are responding to treatment at UN

"Twenty-five suspects have so far been arrested in connec

"Similarly, an improvised explosive device was detected by

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about 1130 hrs."

The JTF described the face-off between its men and the worshippers as a minor misunderstanding.

It said: "There was a mild misunderstanding arising from impatience, compounded by lack of effective communication and respect to constituted authority between JTF personnel on a rescue mission rushing to evacuate wounded and dead colleagues to University of Maiduguri Teaching Hospital at about 1345 hours when they met some worshippers seated on the main road ready for the Friday congregational prayers at Maisaje Friday mosque, and requested them to give way for them to rush the injured and the dead to the hospital.

"The request was vehemently resisted with some worshippers using vociferous, uncouth language against security men on legitimate duty. The soldiers exercised restraint amidst the surging crowd, as no shot was fired except that someone attempted to snatch a rifle from a policeman—a member of the team. No casualty was recorded and the timely intervention of JTF spokesman doused the tension."

On the JTF raid, Musa said: "Following intelligence report available to the Joint Task Force Operation Restore Order, special operations were conducted on Thursday 26 and early hours of Friday 27 July, 2012. The operation led to the arrest of 26 terrorists and the killing of two suspected Boko Haram terrorists at Biafra Bula-bulin, Kasuwan Shanu and GRA in Maiduguri metropolis.

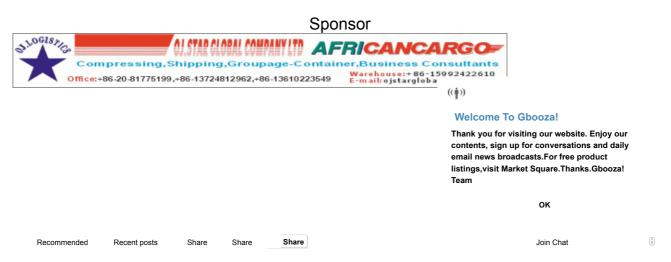
"Some of the suspects killed and arrested were responsible for the killing of two Indians, a cleric and several other killings in Maiduguri in the past."

Musa said items recovered during the raid included two AK 47 Rifles, three AK 47 Magazines, 200 rounds of 7.62 mm special ammunition, a primed Improvised Explosive Device which was detonated by the Bomb Disposal Unit of the outfit, a large quantity of cutlasses, daggers and charms.

Also recovered at the hideout, according to Musa, were blood-stained clothes used during the killing of a cleric in Kasuwan Shanu, Maiduguri.

He disclosed that the items and suspects were in the custody of the JTF for further action.

via The Nation



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