



## ...e bombers strike close to SSS n Maiduguri

Written by Group

### •*Insurgents ambush soldiers to hijack weapons*

### •*Eight fleeing villagers killed on return home*

Boko Haram yesterday took its terrorism within a few meters of the Borno State command of the Department of Security Services (DSS), Maiduguri, claiming three lives. Two of the dead were the suicide bombers. The third was a passer-by. Five other passers-by were injured by shrapnel from the Improvised Explosive Device (IED) carried by the terrorists on a day a gang of Boko Haram fighters laid ambush for a convoy of military vehicles on the Maiduguri/Damaturu highway. The hoodlums were routed, according to eye witnesses. Overnight, terrorists

raided Ngamdu village some 100 kilometres from Maiduguri, killing 11, just 24 hours after another gang opened fire on residents of Gamboru, Borno State, as they returned to inspect their damaged homes in the abandoned town. Eight of the villagers died in the

incident, displaced people said. Many of the residents who had fled the town, close to the border with Cameroon during a previous attack, were said to have sneaked back on Thursday following a rumour that Chadian and Cameroonian troops were providing security. The terrorists opened fire on them with only a few managing to escape. The police confirmed that yesterday's attack was carried out by two suspected Boko Haram suicide bombers in a tricycle. Police

Commissioner Aderemi Opadokun said the explosive went off at about 7am “by the Welcome to Maiduguri Gate and near the office of the State Department of Security Services (SSS) and El-Kanemi Theological College, Maiduguri.” He said the suspects were apparently targeting the Borno Express Motor Park, during the early morning rush hours. Eyewitness Sani Modu said there were three persons in the tricycle at the time of the explosion. He said:” the entire place was thrown into confusion as the bomb exploded and tension quickly rose. Everyone started running for his life. Motorists and tricycle drivers on both sides of the road began making a U turn in a bid to escape, although a few parked to see what was happening. “The remains of the explosion were scattered all over the place and the tricycle reduced to scrap.” Soon after the explosion, security operatives and rescue officials from the National Emergency management Agency (NEMA) and the Red Cross stormed the scene to take the wounded to the hospital and clear the debris. Sources at the State Specialist Hospital Maiduguri confirmed that the five people brought from the scene were treated and discharged. A few hours after the incident, scores of travellers on the Damaturu/Maiduguri highway were abandoning their trips after Boko Haram fighters engaged soldiers on the route in what appeared to be an ambush. Baba Aminu who was travelling from Damaturu to Maiduguri claimed to have witnessed it all. His words: “I left Damaturu this morning (yesterday) to come to Maiduguri. Soon after our vehicle passed Benishiek, we suddenly sighted ahead of us a long convoy of over 30 military vehicles. “We were trailing them until they stopped in the middle of the road and the soldiers jumped down from their vehicles and lay on the ground. “Facing their convoy a few meters away were three Hilux vans apparently owned by Boko Haram. The soldiers

threw a bomb at the Hilux vans, destroying two instantly. More explosions came in quick succession and what we saw next was the boys (Boko Haram members) running into the bush. "The soldiers gave them a chase. They returned about an hour later and told us that the road was clear for us to proceed with our journey. "We drove behind them until we got to Jakana (about 36km from Maiduguri). They stopped again and asked from us the distance from there to Maiduguri. When we told them, they asked us to continue with our journey while they remained there." A military source who does not want to be named said: "the insurgents are desperate to get weapons hence they decided to test their confidence. They thought they could ambush and overpower our men and then seize the weapons being moved to Maiduguri to prosecute the war against them." Earlier on Friday, terrorists raided Ngamdu village, killing 11, residents and a member of the civilian militia said while on Thursday, eight people were killed in Gamboru, when Boko Haram fighters opened fire on residents returning to the abandoned town from Fotokol, just across the border in northern Cameroon. "We lost eight people to Boko Haram gunmen," said Babagana Bukar, a Nigerian from Gamboru now living in the town of Fotokol, just across the border in Cameroon. "Some of our people went back to Gamboru after they were told the town was safe for them.... While they were inspecting their homes, Boko Haram gunmen on a motorcycle opened fire on them killing five men and three women," he told AFP. Two other former residents of the town, also now living in Fotokol, supported Bukar's account. One of them, Umar Babakalli, said two other women were seized and beaten. They managed to make it back across the bridge that forms the border and were being treated for their injuries, he added. Boko Haram fighters have been seen going in and out of Gamboru for months, sometimes

firing rocket-propelled grenades towards Fotokol, according to those who fled. The group, which has been pushed out of captured towns across the Northeast by soldiers from Nigeria, Niger Republic, Chad and Cameroun since February, are said to be dispersed in different areas. In the last few weeks the extremists have stepped up their attacks on civilians, hitting crowded markets, mosques and churches. More than 550 people have been killed.

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