

# 30 burnt to death by Boko Haram in Borno attack

February 11, 2020



## *From Duku Joel, Maiduguri*

A four-hour rampage by Boko Haram terrorists in Auno, a sleepy community near Maiduguri, the Borno State capital, on Sunday night left no fewer than 30 people, including infants, dead.

The victims consumed by the fire set to their houses and the vehicles inside which they were sleeping by the insurgents who arrived in the village on motorcycles.

Eyewitnesses said the fire was aggravated by a military fuel tanker which rammed into parked commercial vehicles already torched by the insurgents.

An unspecified number of women, according to some of the witnesses, were said to have been abducted by the terrorists before fleeing the village along the Maiduguri/Damaturu highway. There was, however, no independent confirmation of the abduction



The wreckage at the scene of Boko Haram's attack in Borno...on Monday

A resident said "those who died in that attack were over 30, including infants. The attack started around 9:45pm (on Sunday) and lasted till about 1am (Monday).

"The entire village was almost burnt down.

“A friend’s relative was among the victims. They were caught up in the curfew imposed by the government on parts of the state because they got to the checkpoint few minutes past 5pm.”

A commercial driver, who gave his name as Adamu Tella, said he saw a number of burnt bodies being conveyed in a Civilian JTF vehicle while driving past the scene, a 24-minutes’ drive from Maiduguri.

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“I also saw many vehicles loaded with goods, many houses and shops burnt down to ashes,” Adamu added.

A passenger, Haruna Yunusa, said he “counted 21 vehicles, including trailers, some of them still being burnt as at the time I passed through the village this (yesterday) morning.”

“I also noticed that so many shops and houses were burnt. Some of the vehicles were still being consumed by the fire because of the items they were carrying.”

Borno State Governor Babagana Zulum, who visited the scene, said he was told by the villagers that about 30 people were burnt in the fire

He sympathized with the people and called on them to give the necessary cooperation to the military.

The governor, who collaborated allegations by the survivors of the attack that soldiers left them unprotected, said he had made several appeals to the military to establish a unit in Auno to no avail.

His words: “We have to be brutal in telling the truth. I am pushed to the wall to say the truth. Since I was inaugurated as governor of Borno State, Boko Haram has attacked Auno six times.



Governor Babagana Zulum inspecting the scene...on Monday

“Another thing is that the military has withdrawn from Auno town. I am not undermining the capacity of the military but we have made repeated appeals for the military to establish their unit in Auno.

“They are here but as soon as it is 5 pm, they close the gate and lock the people and go back to Maiduguri. This is not right.”

Theatre Commander of Operation Lafiya Dole, Maj. Gen. Olusegun Adeniyi, however, told reporters at a news conference that 10 people were killed in the attack. Gen. Adeniyi also said he had “no knowledge of a military tanker on that road at that time.”

He said the insurgents parked their motorcycles far away and walked down to burn travellers vehicles.

He also dispelled the allegation that his soldiers were in the habit of abandoning the residents to their fate.

Gen. Adeniyi said: “We normally close the Damaturu Road by 5pm and it is expected that you time your movement very well so that you get to Maiduguri by 5pm because the soldiers cannot leave to fight Boko Haram and come back to protect people sleeping along the road who refuse to obey the law in the first place.

“People should realize that there is a counter insurgency going on throughout the Northeast. As a result of the dastardly activities of the Boko Haram, certain measure have to be taken to safeguard lives and property especially on the Maiduguri-Damaturu Road.”

He however gave the assurance that “we will do more to ensure that incident like this does not happen again.”

### **Three schoolchildren rescued from Boko Haram den**

Gen. Adeniyi said his men averted another tragedy that would have brought sadness to a family by rescuing their three schoolchildren abducted by Boko Haram along Gubio Road on Sunday.

He said the children-Wommi Laja, Ammo Laja and Kingi Laja- had been handed over to their parents

Gen. Adeniyi said they were rescued unhurt from the insurgents' den after a gun duel.

He said: "On February 9, Boko Haram insurgents came with 15 gun trucks between Magumeri and Gubio. They did a snap operation in less than two minutes and kidnapped three students.

"The students were wearing school uniforms which made it easy for them to be identified. The insurgents are against western education and they abducted them.

"The commanding officer mobilised the troops and went on hot pursuit of the insurgents' with the help of the locals who provided intelligence.

"We are happy the students are here with us safe and sound."

### **Buhari commiserates with Borno Govt, victims' families**

President Muhammadu Buhari on Monday commiserated with families of victims of attack, assuring them that his administration would continually frustrate and bring the activities of Boko Haram to an end.

A statement by Senior Special Assistant on Media and Publicity to the President Mallam Garba Shehu, in Abuja yesterday, quoted the president as condemning "murderous and cowardly" attack on innocent people by terrorists

He said: "The commitment of this administration to protect the lives of Nigerians will not be derailed by the cowardly and indiscriminate violence against innocent people by Boko Haram terrorists."

The president, who also condoled with Borno State Government over the attack, warning that "terrorists are clearly on a back foot and their days numbered".

He added: “As our armed forces continue to receive more hardware and intelligence to counter our current security challenges, the remnants of Boko Haram will ultimately be crushed.

“The peculiar challenges of asymmetric warfare notwithstanding, our Armed Forces are ever determined to defeat these enemies of humanity.”

