

NEWS

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Boko Haram plotting attacks on Abuja, Jos, says IGP

- Warns public not to panic over security alert
- UNIJOS authorities order students to vacate hostels for 2 weeks
- Army still investigating Shekau's 'death'; US wary of report

Bgbanga Omokhunu,
Abuja/Kolade
Adeyemi, Jos/Yinka
Adeniran, Ibadan

FROM the police yesterday came a fresh security alert on Boko Haram.

Police Acting Inspector General Usman Baba put the police commissioners in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) and Plateau State on the alert over possible attacks by the terror sect.

Although the police sought to downplay the alert yesterday by saying they were prepared to deal with any threat to peace, the warning came on the heels of an attack on the Kwankwashe community in Suleja LGA of Niger State on Wednesday.

One man was killed while 12 residents were abducted during the attack.

Suleja LG shares a border with the FCT.

Apparently acting on the police warning, the authorities of the University of Jos yesterday asked students of the institution to vacate the hostels for two weeks.

Acting IGP Usman Baba, in a May 19, 2021 circular addressed to the FCT and Plateau State Police Commissioners, said intelligence report revealed that terrorists were planning to attack Abuja and Jos.

His Principal Staff Officer, Idowu Owolunwa, an acting CP, who signed the memo, said: "Intelligence report at the disposal of the Inspector-General of Police has uncovered

plans by Boko Haram terrorists to attack major cities in the country, particularly in Jos, Plateau and the FCT, Abuja.

"The proposed attacks would be coordinated by the duo of Muhammad Sani, a Boko Haram commander domiciled in Sambisa Forest, and his deputy, Suleiman, hibernating around Lawan Musa Zango, Gashua, Yobe State.

"In light of the above, it is the directive of the Inspector-General of Police that you review your security architecture across all critical government infrastructures and police facilities in your jurisdiction with a view to checkmating the dastardly plans of these marauding terrorists."

Soon after news of the alert hit the social media, the Force Headquarters issued a

statement asking residents of the FCT and Plateau State to go about their businesses without panic.

It said citizens should see the alert as a "re-assurance of the intelligence depth capacity and operational preparedness of the Nigeria Police."

Continuing, the police said: "The IGP's directive, which is a deliberate, intelligence-driven and proactive measure, is designed to prepare the law enforcement community for comprehensive response to any threat to lives and property."

"The IGP noted that the security alert, rather than becoming a source of panic to the citizens, should instead send a message of re-assurance to them about the intelligence depth capacity and operational preparedness of the Nigeria Police to preemptively deal and contain any threat to public peace and security."

Baba added that the alert did not suggest an imminent attack

in the two states.

"The Police High Command therefore calls for calm, urging citizens to go about their normal activities with renewed sense of vigour, patriotism and vigilance as the police continue to work with other relevant stakeholders to keep our public space safe," the statement said.

Bandits attack Suleja LG, kill one, abduct 12

Gunmen had on Wednesday night invaded the Kwankwashe community in Suleja LGA of Niger State, killing a resident.

Twelve others were abducted, according to The Cable.

Governor Abubakar Sanni Bello said recently that Boko Haram had invaded about 50 communities in the state and even hoisted their flag in Kaure, Shiroro LGA of the state.

Army still investigating Shekau's 'death'; US wary of report

The Nigerian Army said yesterday it could not confirm the reported death of Abubakar Shekau, the Boko Haram leader.

The army said it was still making effort to confirm the report while the United States said it was wary of the speculations about his fate.

"The United States has not yet been able to independently verify these reports and continues to monitor the situation," a spokesperson for the White House National Security Council told the Voice of America (VOA) yesterday.

A U.S. State Department spokesperson said it was also working to confirm the reports, noting that if true, "the death of one of the most violent terrorists in African history would be a positive development."

But the official cautioned that Shekau's death alone would not be reason to rejoice.

"Even if Shekau has been killed, terrorism remains a threat to peace

and stability in the region," the spokesperson told VOA. "Boko Haram is not the only terrorist group operating in the area."

Shekau has led Boko Haram since 2009 and is blamed for orchestrating a campaign of terror that has killed more than 30,000 people and forced millions more to flee their homes.

Under Shekau's leadership, the group gained additional notoriety for the 2014 kidnapping of about 300 schoolgirls from Chibok, Nigeria.

The U.S. named Shekau a Specially Designated Global Terrorist in 2012 and offered a reward of up to \$7 million for information leading to his capture.

Reports on Thursday said Shekau died during a confrontation with fighters from the rival Islamic State-West Africa terror group in the Sambisa Forest, known to be Shekau's base of operations.

News agencies, citing transcripts of geolocated, intercepted calls between insurgents and an audio message from a longtime mediator between Shekau and the government yesterday, said he was dead.

UNIJOS authorities order students to vacate hostels for 2 weeks

The management of the University of Jos yesterday ordered students of the institution to vacate their hostels immediately.

The Registrar of the institution/Secretary to Senate, Chief Monday Danjem, said yesterday that the Senate unanimously ratified the decision of Management that all students' hostels should remain closed to both undergraduate and Postgraduate students pending the receipt of a favourable security report from the Office of Plateau State Commissioner of Police.

Consequently, the 2nd semester lectures for undergraduate students have been suspended until 7th of June 2021 pending a review of the security situation.

However, Postgraduate

students are to continue with their academic activities.

The Directorate of Physical Facilities is expected to use the period of the absence of students to fix up all necessary repairs in the hostels.

Obasanjo proffers way out of insecurity

Speaking yesterday on the security challenge in the country, former President Olusegun Obasanjo said a way out was a long gestation period of training and education for all Nigerian children.

Although he did not give how long or short the gestation period should be, Obasanjo emphasised that all Nigerian students irrespective of language, region, tribe or creed must get quality education.

He spoke at the commissioning of the Professor Abayomi Oluwatoshin Jiboku Building and Entrepreneur Centre at Lariken International College, Ologuneru, Ibadan.

The former president who maintained that there must not be any substitute for quality education as a panacea also harped on the place of not allowing our culture and values to be eroded by other priorities.

Obasanjo said: "If we are going to get out of insecurity, banditry, Boko Haram, kidnapping and other criminalities, we will have a long gestation period of training and educating all Nigerian children."

"And I underlined all Nigerian children. Education is the beginning of a life well lived."

"God has given each and every one of us innate ability. It is when those innate abilities are developed that you can be of best in our own self-service, in the service of our nuclear and extended family, in the service of our community and in the service of our nation and the world."

"Education, and there is no substitute for education. If you don't give it, then those you should have given it to don't have it and if they don't have it, then you don't get the best out of them and whatever you get out of them, if you start to complain, you will have yourself to blame. Education and quality education is important."



• European Union Ambassador to Nigeria and ECOWAS, Amb. Mr. Ketil Karlsen, on Friday paid a courtesy visit to the National Leader of APC, Asiawaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu, at his Bourdillon, Ikoyi Lagos residence. PHOTO: Tinubu Media Office

Gunmen kill Catholic priest, abduct another in Katsina church attack