

12 killed as Boko Haram attacks 2 Borno villages

FROM JAMES BWALA AND
MOHAMMAD SABIU

NO fewer than 12 persons were reported to have been killed at Tashan Alede and Kwajjafa Villages, when suspected members of Boko Haram attacked the two villages on Saturday night and Sunday morning, respectively.

Tashan Alede and Kwajjafa Villages in Hawul Local Government Area of Borno State are about 234 kilometres from Maiduguri, the Borno State capital.

According to the reports, the attack at Tashan Alede occurred on Saturday at about 11:00 p.m., during which 8 persons were killed at a bachelor's eve party, while Kwajjafa was attacked on Sunday during which four persons were killed.

Nigerian Tribune reports that there were earlier reports that the Islamic militants were planning to attack Marama, Garkida, Shaffa and Kwajjafa, which happen to be Christian dominated areas.

Mallam Isuwa Hyelkuzuku, a resident of Kwajjafa, who spoke with our correspondent on the attack, said they were not surprised that the sect attacked Christian villages following a video message released on Friday purportedly by the sect leader, Abubakar Shekau, who claimed responsibility for the attacks on Maiduguri NAF base, Kur Mohammed barracks in Bama, among others.

"We heard on the radio and read in the newspapers that Boko Haram is fighting a religious war according to their leader, Shekau, and they are targeting Christians. I don't know if Christianity or Islam is written on the faces of adherents of the religions. Those killed were not all Christians. If their claim of fighting for Islam is right what wrong has Christianity done to Islam that they are waging this war? I believe this madness was borne out of sheer hatred for humanity from the pit of hell. God will not allow them to succeed," he said.

It is recalled that in that video release, the sect leader said they are the warriors of Islam and are waging a religious war on Nigeria's President Goodluck Jonathan and Christians.

Shekau's words: "This is to show our Muslim brethren that victory comes from Allah. This is just a tip of the iceberg regarding the booty Allah has blessed us with, the booty which took our brothers day and night to cart away.

"Our fighters stormed Bama (military) barracks. Allah threw them (troops) into confusion through some servants of Allah who dedicated themselves to Allah.

"Allah finished them. They bragged, they said whatever pleased them to the extent of claiming they had cleansed Bama, now that they have stick-wielding vigilantes. Even Jonathan praised them, saying Bama is steadfast.

"It is in the same Bama that our brothers pulverised 21 armoured tanks. People in multitudes were killed, bodies scattered all over. The sight would astonish any on-looker.

"Soldiers hid under blankets in their rooms and our fighters pursued them and blew out their brains.

"Had Allah allowed us to eat them we would have eaten them but we are not cannibals because we are not spirits or animals.

"As for killing, we will kill,

(for) Allah says we should decapitate, we should amputate the limbs, we should mutilate.

"This is a victory from Allah, that is why the title of this message is 'Victory from Allah'.

"We were amazed by the victory in Damaturu, then a greater victory was achieved in Maiduguri and now Bama operation is better than Maiduguri. And tomorrow we will go to... (laughter and shouts of Allahu Akbar in the background).

"By Allah, if you want to secure peace in this world you should repent.

"My brethren, we should thank Allah. They try to brainwash the people that we are fighting an ethnic war. No, we are fighting a religious war, we are fighting Jonathan, we are fighting Christians.

"This is a bounty placed on me (brandishing a flyer with his picture), that whoever

finds me and takes me to Jonathan, will be given N50 million.

"What is N50 million. Do you know what we are doing? Your armoured tank is worth more than N50 million and we burn it. Haven't we burnt your aircraft? What is N50 million? We do not worship money. As for he who is in our midst for money, Allah has taken care of him. Hypocrites who lived with the prophet could not harm him. You can't in any way harm me.

"Even America has placed \$7 million ransom (on my head) if you arrest and take me.

"It is difficult indeed. The way you hide Jonathan in Aso Rock and hide Obama in White House, so does Allah hide me under his protection. You are with Jonathan and Obama, while I'm with Allah. Let's play then."

For now, there was no official reports from the 7

Division Nigerian Army or the police on the attack, but residents of Kwajjafa and Tashan Alede Villages, who lost one relation or the other, were being prayed for in churches in Maiduguri as they travelled back home to the village to bury their loved ones, who died in the attacks.

Gunmen injure 50, cart away over 300 animals in Zamfara

Also, gunmen numbering about 100 attacked a remote village in Kaura Namoda Local Government of Zamfara State, injured about 50 villagers and stole over 300 animals.

An impeccable source, who pleaded for anonymity told the **Nigerian Tribune** that the attack took place around 2.00 a.m. last Friday morning.

According to the source, the gunmen stormed the village with AK 47 rifles, long knives and sticks.

"They ordered the villagers to bring out their animals. Those that proved difficult were mercilessly beaten and injured, the source disclosed.

Findings gathered revealed that the gunmen injured about 50 villagers and stole 300 cows and over 100 sheep and goats.

As at the time of filing this report, about 40 of the injured villagers had been hospitalised at the Kaura Namoda General Hospital, while 10 people have been discharged.

When contacted, the Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), DSP Lawal Abdullahi, confirmed the attack.

He said the State Commissioner of Police, Alhaji Ibrahim Bichi, had directed the police to comb the entire forest.

DSP Abdullahi solicited the co-operation of the general public to come with vital information that could lead to the arrest of the criminals.

Perishable cargo revenue to surpass oil revenue in 10 yrs —Oduah

SHOLA ADEKOLA- LAGOS

THE Minister of Aviation, Stella Adaeze Oduah, has projected that revenue that will accrue from the export of farm produce by Nigerian farmers through the perishable cargo programme would surpass oil revenue in the next 10 years.

She also said this would also empower farmers who constitute 85 per cent of Nigeria's workforce and eliminate poverty in the country by 60 per cent.

Speaking in Abuja while explaining the benefits of the perishable cargo programme, Oduah declared that although, the Federal Government was driving the programme, the states and local governments have keyed into it as it would benefit the rural dwellers who today toil in their farms but earn very little from their produce.

The minister said that government would ensure that a certain standardisation was achieved in terms of quality of the produce and the packaging so that it would meet the standard of international consumers in Europe, the US and other parts of the world, some of whom have already indicated their interest to accept Nigeria's farm produce.

The minister also assured that the perishable cargo terminals are in various stages of completion and should deliver the

first fresh produce to local supermarkets and international markets by 2014.

Her words: "Various private investors and state governments have expressed readiness to take advantage of the programme and contact the relevant authorities for permission to establish Export Processing Zones or Free Economic Zones at the terminals."

Spokesman of Aviation Parastatals, Yakubu Dati, further explained that the

abundance and varieties of fresh produce in Nigeria, and the growing economic importance of the sector, which stands at US\$ 1.53 billion (N245 billion), has necessitated the development of 14 Perishable Cargo Terminals in Nigeria.

Dati explained that these terminals have been selected in line with their regional agricultural comparative advantage and private sector expressions of interest.

"They will enhance the farm-to-market value

chain, consequently improving the food security network and rural transformation by creating rural employment opportunities in storage, warehousing and air/road transportation logistics," Dati explained.

He noted that the perishable export cargo programme would utilise open field cultivation for the fresh produce, as farmers would be able to transport their produce to collection centres in the states, while

refrigerated trucks would deliver the products to the primary airport hubs.

"These collection centres are part of the farming skills centres in each of the states with the perishable cargo terminals. The fresh produce would find its way to local farmers' markets or be exported to supermarkets in EU, USA or the Middle East where off-takers would have made pre-arranged inspections and processes for the produce," Dati said.

N15bn fraud: Briton, ex-bank MD, others know fate today

LANRE ADEWOLE- LAGOS

A Federal High Court in Lagos will today rule on the bail application of a Briton, Gareth Wilcox, former managing director of the defunct Gulf Bank Plc, Prince Johnson Adebami and three others arraigned for an alleged N15 billion fraud.

Justice Mohammed Yunusa fixed today for the ruling last Friday, after taking counsel submission on the application.

Wilcox is the former managing director of Ibom Power Company and LYK Engineering Company.

He is standing trial alongside Adebami, Uche Uwechia, Ibom Power Company and LYK Engineering Company, owned by Wilcox, on a 21-count charge.

Uwechia is a former legal

adviser to the defunct bank.

Counsel to the first accused, Mr Samuel Oshodi, in adopting his bail application, urged the court to admit the accused to bail on liberal terms.

Oshodi submitted that the fundamental right and liberty of the accused were already at stake, since he had been allegedly detained at the Special Fraud Unit (SFU) for over 20 days.

Citing the provisions of Section 118 (2) of the Criminal Procedure Act, and Sections 35 and 41 of the constitution, Oshodi argued that the presumption of innocence enshrined in the law, still availed the accused.

He, therefore, urged the court to grant them bail.

Counsel representing the other accused, Mr Martin Liadi and Mr Daniel Ade-

Peters, also aligned themselves with the submissions of the first defence counsel.

Responding to the argument for bail, the prosecutor, Mr Dania Abdullahi, adopted his counter-affidavit and urged the court to exercise its discretion in determining the application for bail.

He noted that the amount stated in the charge was monumental, adding that operatives of the SFU experienced great difficulties in securing the arrest of Wilcox.

Abdullahi, therefore, left the issue of bail to the discretion of the court.

Justice Yunusa adjourned till today but to be remanded ordered the accused in SFU custody.

The accused were arraigned on December 23, following the charge of fraud and had pleaded not

guilty.

Abdullahi had told the court that the accused allegedly converted more than N15 billion from the defunct bank, in the guise of granting loans and overdraft facilities to various companies, without appropriate accounting records.

He said that they also allegedly converted and appropriated a total of \$55.3 million and more than N3.7 billion belonging to the bank.

He said that part of the money was allegedly used to finance a non-existing refinery, while the others were converted to personal use.

Abdullahi explained that the offence contravened the provisions of Section 390 of the Criminal Code, Cap A6, Laws of the Federation, 2006.