

Boko Haram pledges allegiance to ISIS

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WITH AGENCY REPORTS

AS the controversy surrounding the reported joining of the Islamic State (IS) by the son of former Chief Justice of Nigeria, Muhammed Uwais, continues, the Boko Haram insurgent group has pledged allegiance to the world renowned terrorist group, IS, an audio statement reportedly released by its leader, Abubakar Shekau, revealed.

The message, according to a report by the **British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) News Africa**, could not be verified immediately.

It was said to have been "posted on Boko Haram's **Twitter** account and appeared to be by the group's leader."

In another report by **AlJazeera**, Shekau was quoted as saying "We announce our allegiance to the Caliph... and will hear and obey in times of difficulty and prosperity."

The terror group began a military campaign to impose Islamic rule in Northern Nigeria in 2009. The conflict has since spread to neighbouring states.

The group, only yesterday, orchestrated many bombs blasts in the capital city of Borno State, Maiduguri, killing scores of people.

Terror group bombs Maiduguri

In the latest bombing reported on Saturday, a number of explosions hits

Maiduguri, leaving many people dead, while scores of others were rushed to hospitals owing to severe injuries sustained.

The explosions, which occurred at Tashan Baga, Borno Express terminus, Tashan Bama and Monday Market killed over 100 people, according to eye-witnesses.

Reacting to the explosions, the Media Coordinator of the Campaign of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) governorship candidate, Bwala, said in a statement that "the entire PDP is saddened by the explosions in several parts of Maiduguri on Saturday in which precious lives were lost, others injured and properties destroyed.

"We, once again, condemn the act and empathise with fellow citizens for the losses and pains being inflicted on them. Coming at a time hopes are beginning to rise that the end to the mindless carnage is coming, it is really sad that some sadists are still bent on keeping the fire burning.

"It is rather curious that such explosion occur only when the PDP is planning a visit, as was the case in Biu recently. While we have our reservations to the effect that there may be a deliberate sabotage of Federal Government's efforts in ending insurgency in the state, we must condemn all efforts at further prolonging the sufferings of the people.

"We wish to condemn the attitude of the Borno State government to such developments where it seeks to maximise politi-

cal benefits from such unfortunate incidents, rather than work to cushion its effects on the citizenry. "It is callous and the height of insensitivity for the governor, Kashim Shettima, to remain busy politicking in other parts of the state, while Maiduguri burns.

"We urge the governor to immediately cut his political misadventures in the Southern part and return to Maiduguri to face his job as the chief security officer of the state, now that there is no state of emergency in force. "At this point, we call upon security operatives to intensify intelligence gathering on some characters who we have always suspected of being the brains behind some of these dastardly acts," he stated.

Wakil also condemns blasts

Minister of State, Power, Honourable, Mohammed Wakil, also condemned the blasts, describing them as reprehensible.

He called on local and international human rights organisations to document the killings and indict Boko Haram leaders for crime against humanity. In a condolence message he personally signed over the bombings, the minister described the unfortunate incidents as "crime against humanity which the International Criminal Court should take up without further delay."

Army recaptures 2 more LGs

In the meantime, the Nigerian Army has said that

the troops in the North-Eastern part of the country have recovered two additional local government areas from Boko Haram.

This was contained in a statement issued to journalists by the Acting Director, Army Public Relations, Colonel Sani Usman, on Saturday.

The statement noted that "in continuation of avowed recovery of territories held by Boko Haram insurgents, the Nigerian military have recaptured Mafa and Marte local government areas of Borno State on Wednesday and Friday, respectively.

"During these operations, the gallant and courageous troops recovered a large quantity of high caliber arms and ammunition, including anti-aircraft guns, from the insurgents.

"It is significant to note that our troops did not suffer any casualty during these operations."

It added that "currently troops are conducting cordon and search and mopping up operations in the recovered territories, while effort is on going to recover more grounds from the fleeing terrorists.

"With the capture of Mafa Marte local governments and the Chadian troops holding forte in Dikwa, the international route from Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad and Central African Republic is now fully secured. With this positive development the security of the area has significantly improved. It is hoped that international trade and socio-economic activities would be restored along this corridor."