

Boko Haram slaughtered own wives before Bama showdown —Witness

DOZENS of Nigerian women who were forced to marry Boko Haram insurgents were reportedly slaughtered by their "husbands" before a battle with troops in Bama, multiple witnesses said on Thursday.

Five witnesses who recounted the massacre to the *Nigerian Tribune* said the insurgents feared they would be killed by advancing soldiers or separated from their wives when they fled the town.

They killed the women to prevent them from subsequently marrying soldiers or other so-called non-believers, they added.

"The terrorists said they will not allow their wives to be married to infidels," said Sharifatu Bakura, 39, a mother of three.

According to Bakura's account, which was supported by others, Boko Haram insurgents received word of a military assault on Bama, formerly their stronghold in Borno State.

The insurgents had decided to flee to the nearby town of Gwoza before the troops' arrival, but first decided "to kill their wives so that nobody will remarry them," she said.

Bakura's husband was killed by the insurgents four months ago, but she was spared from a forced marriage, because she was visibly pregnant.

Boko Haram insurgents forcibly married scores of women in Bama after seizing it in September, but Nigeria's military announced the recapture of the town on Monday.

Witnesses, who were taken under military protection this week to Bor-

no's capital, Maiduguri, 73 kilometres (45 miles) away, said the killing of women began 10 days before Bama was liberated.

The insurgents said "if they kill their wives,

they would remain pious until they meet again in heaven, where they would re-unite," said Salma Mahmud, another witness.

A vigilante, who fought

alongside the military in the battle to retake Bama, Abba Kassim, said he saw "dozens of women corpses" in the town.

Nigeria's national security spokesperson, Mike

Omeri, told the *Nigerian Tribune* that he would try to verify the report, however, the military could be reached immediately for comment.



Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) officials demonstrating the use of card readers to stakeholders, during the INEC stakeholders' forum in Abuja, on Thursday. PHOTO: NAN

NBA drags INEC, others to court over card readers

EBENEZER ADUROKIYA-WARRI

THE row against use of card readers during the coming general election got louder on Thursday, with the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA), Warri branch, dragging the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to the Federal High Court sitting in Warri.

The electoral umpire was brought before Justice Abubakar Shittu, over the use of Voter Cards Reading Machines (VCRMs) proposed for use during the elections by INEC.

The plaintiffs were Mr

John Aikpokpo-Martins, chairman NBA, Warri; Mr Othadua Okpakpor, Secretary NBA, Warri and Olukunle Edun, chairman, NBA Warri, Public Interest Litigation Committee.

Joined in the Suit Number FHC/WR/CS/40/2015 as second, third and fourth defendants were the resident of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP) and the All Progressives Congress (APC).

The plaintiffs are asking the court to restrain the second, third and fourth defendants from interfer-

ring with the functions of the first defendant (INEC), as regards the usage of the VCRMs in the March 28 and April 11 elections.

They also sought an order compelling INEC, either by itself, servants, agents and privies to use the VCRMs in the 2015 general election and subsequent elections.

The plaintiffs filed an application seeking to know whether the second, third and fourth defendants could lawfully interfere with constitutional and statutory responsibilities of INEC.

They also wanted to

know whether the VCRMs were not part of the operations and activities of INEC for the management of the election processes.

The plaintiffs claimed that the National Assembly appropriated some money for the purchase of the VCRMs in the 2014 Appropriation Act and was duly assented to by the president (second defendant).

They further submitted that the VCRMs were part of the activities of the INEC and, therefore, the second, third and fourth defendants cannot compel the electoral body to use the card readers.

They further contended that if the use of the card readers was canceled, the

IGP orders tight security at vulnerable points nationwide

CHRIS AGBAMBU-ABUJA

THE Inspector-General of Police, Suleiman Abba, has ordered water-tight security around all key and vulnerable points, such as internally displaced persons (IDPs) camps, media houses, service providers installations, INEC headquarters and centres, banks, hospitals, NYSC lodges, hotels, government offices, among others.

This becomes imperative in a bid to ward off any likely or possible attempt by hoodlums or men of underworld to attack these installations and public places.

Force Public Relations Officer, Emmanuel Ojukwu, said that the IGP had enjoined members of the public to remain steadfast in collaborating with officers and men of the Nigeria Police to stamp out crimes, as the police had perfected strategies to prepare a safe and secured ground to guarantee a hitch-free March 28th and April 11th elections.

NECO postpones 2015 common entrance till April 25

THE 2015 National Common Entrance Examinations into secondary schools scheduled for March 21 has been postponed till April 25, the *News Agency of Nigeria (NAN)* reports..

Mr Abdul Mustapha, the Abuja Liaison Officer of the National Examination Council (NECO), disclosed this in an interview with *NAN* on Thursday, in Abuja.

Mustapha said the postponement was necessitated considering anxieties of parents ahead the general election rescheduled to hold on March 28 and April 11.

According to him, registration for the examination would continue until April 18.

Troops discover scores of dead bodies in wells

THE capture of Bama in whose bodies were thrown confirmed that the cordon been attending to survi-