



Yobe: B'Haram murders 50 sleeping college students

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Abuja 139 Comments (<http://www.punchng.com/news/yobe-bharam-murders-50-sleeping-college-students/#comments>)



(1) Relatives of the slain students of the College of Agriculture, Guijba, (2) Another relative grieving beside an ambulance at the Sani Abacha Specialist Hospital, Damaturu in Yobe State ...on Sunday; (3) File photo of a Boko Haram attack in Borno State on September 19, 2013.

| credits: File copy

It was a bloody weekend in Yobe and Borno states where the fundamentalist Islamist sect, Boko Haram, killed at least 54 people

While 50 of them were students of the School of Agriculture, Guijba in Yobe State, four were travellers who were accosted on the Damaturu-Maiduguri Road on Saturday evening by the insurgents.

Investigations revealed that the Boko Haram members attacked the College of Agriculture situated along the Guijba-Damaturu Road at 12 midnight when most of the students were already asleep.

A security source confided in one of our correspondents that 50 students were killed by the insurgents who wielded guns, swords and knives. But the state government put the casualty at 40.

It was further stated that several other students, who were lucky to have escaped the killings with different degrees of injuries, were taken to the emergency ward of the general hospital.

Gruesome death

The security source claimed that the gunmen used swords and knives to kill 36 of the students to avoid attracting the attention of security operatives. He however added that 14 others, who broke the wooden windows of their hostels to escape into the nearby bushes, were shot dead by the insurgents.

He added that some of the corpses were without heads while others had heads hanging to the bodies in spite of the attempts to sever them.

The source stated further that all the victims of the attack were male students aged between 18 and 22.

At the time of filing this story, wailing parents and relatives gathered outside the Sani Abacha Specialist Hospital mortuary in Damaturu, where rescue workers laid out bloody bodies in an orderly row on the lawn for them to identify their loved ones.

One body had its fists clenched to the chest in a protective gesture while another had hands clasped under the chin, as if in prayer. Yet, another had arms raised in surrender.

The Medical Director of the specialist hospital, Damaturu, Dr Garba Fika, who said that 40 corpses were received by the hospital, added that five students, were receiving treatment.

But the Provost of the College, Molima Idi Mato, was quoted by the Associated Press as having said that "the number of dead could be as high as 50."

"They attacked our students while they were sleeping in their hostels. They opened fire at them," he added.

Mato was also quoted to have said that security forces were still recovering the bodies and that about 1,000 students had fled the campus.

He added there were no security forces stationed at the college despite government assurances two weeks ago that they would be deployed.

The AP quoted a surviving student, Ibrahim Mohammed, as having said that the extremists rode into the college in two double-cabin pickup all-terrain vehicles and on motorcycles, some dressed in Nigerian military camouflage.

Mohammed, according to the AP, added that the insurgents appeared to know the layout of the college well as they attacked the four male hostels but carefully avoided the only hostel reserved for girls.

When contacted, the Director, Army Public Relations, Brig. Gen. Ibrahim Attahiru, said that he would call back to give the Army's reaction to the killing.

Another call to his mobile telephone line after the discussion indicated that it was switched off.

Schools in the state re-opened 13 days ago after 10 weeks of forced closure following attacks targeted on schools.

In June, seven students and two teachers were killed at the Government Secondary School, Damaturu and in July, 22 students and two teachers were killed at Government Secondary School, Mamudo.

Gov Gaidam, deputy visit victims, weep

Yobe State Governor. Ibrahim Gaidam, who visited the specialist hospital to inspect the wounded and the corpses of students, was in tears as he urged security operatives to intensify aerial surveillance of the area.

The Deputy Governor, Abubakar Aliyu and other dignitaries, who accompanied him, also shed tears when they saw the corpses of the students.

Gaidam, through his Special Adviser on Press Affairs and Information, Mr. Abdullahi Bego, later issued an electronic statement in which he condemned the murder of the students as 'devastating, heinous and barbaric.'

The statement put the total number of dead at 40 and the injured at four. It added that the governor promised to foot the medical bills of the injured.

The statement reads, "Governor Gaidam strongly condemns attack on students of the State College of Agriculture, Gujba. The governor describes the attack as devastating, heinous and barbaric.

"Forty students were killed by criminals and terrorists while four others were injured during the attack.

"On a visit Sunday to the injured at the Sani Abacha Specialist Hospital, Damaturu, Governor Gaidam commiserated with families of the victims and prayed the Almighty Allah to make the injured recover quickly.

"The governor also says the Yobe State Government will foot the bill for medical treatment for the injured.

"Governor Gaidam calls on the military and other law enforcement operatives in the state to intensify surveillance and patrols to deal more effectively with the prevailing security challenges.

"The governor notes that although there is increase in troop movement and the deployment of more military hardware in the northeast, people are yet to see the kind of action on the ground that effectively nips criminal and terrorist activities in the bud."

Travellers sprayed with bullets

Another group of Boko Haram insurgents barricaded the Damaturu-Maiduguri highway and killed four travellers in Mallumti, a few kilometres to Benesheikh, Kaga Local Government Area of Borno State.

It was gathered that the insurgents were confronted by a vigilante group known as civilian JTF, who killed three of them.

The driver of one of the vehicles attacked by the gunmen, Mallam Usman Garba, said, 'I have to give thanks to Allah for sparing our lives. We could have run into the terrorists who killed four people in Mallumti village, but when I sighted them barricading the road, I quickly make a U-turn with my passengers. We had to go-back to Damaturu before coming to Maiduguri Motor Park this (Sunday) morning."

It was learnt that the insurgents also killed 34 people in three different attacks in Borno State on Wenesday and Thursday last week.

In the first two attacks, they invaded Fulatari and Kanumburi communities in Gamboru Ngala Local Government Area of the state near Nigeria's border with Cameroun.

At least 27 people were killed in the two attacks.

The dead included the village head of Gamboru, Lawan Ali Shettima.

The victims of a third attack were the driver and six other occupants of a truck belonging to business magnate, Aliko Dangote, at a border community between Yobe and Borno..

The insurgents were also said to have burnt down the truck said to be conveying bags of cement to Maiduguri.

The Caretaker Chairman of Gamboru/Ngala, Alhaji Modu Sherriiff, was quoted as having condemned the heinous killing during a condolence visit to the affected community.

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