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Boko Haram attacks police station, army base...kills 40 soldiers, policemen in Yobe



One of the villages destroyed by Boko Haram

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Boko Haram insurgents continued their rampage on Monday night, killing 49 security operatives and civilians in two communities in Yobe and Borno states.

In the attack on Buni Yadi, Gujba Local Government

Area of Yobe State, they left 20 soldiers and 20 policemen dead while in Chinene, Gwoza LGA of Borno State, they cut the lives of nine civilians short.

The Divisional Police Officer and the Divisional Crime Officer of the Police Station in Bunu Yadi were believed to be among the victims of the attack by the insurgents who stormed the town with an Armoured Personnel Carrier and Toyota Hilux vans.

Residents said the attackers dressed in camouflage and hoisted Boko Haram's flag on the APC and the vans.

They said the gunmen, on arrival moved straight to the military formation in the town from where they launched the attack which lasted over two hours.

The attackers were said to have set the military formation, LG secretariat, the divisional police station, the area court, the district head's residence and office as well as some residential quarters ablaze.

The palace of the Emir, Alhaji Muktar Gangaran, was also vandalised by the insurgents during the attack, the third on Buni Yadi this year.

One of the residents, who declined to give his name said, "We counted up to 20 dead soldiers and 20 policemen when the attackers left our village after operating for almost two hours.

"They overpowered the security operatives on duty and also burnt the military base and police station in the town."

Another resident, Mallam Modibbo Kawu, said the insurgents told them not to be scared because they were on reprisal against the military.

“They told us not to be afraid because they were in Buni Yadi on a reprisal against the military for attacking them in Alagarno last week,” he said.

“I can confirm to you that several police, soldiers and mobile policemen were killed. Their corpses were taken to the Damaturu Specialist Hospital,” he said.

But military sources, who asked not to be named, claimed that 14 soldiers and 11 policemen lost their lives.

They regretted that the attack claimed the lives of many of their colleagues.

Reuters’ account of the attack had it that 24 security personnel lost their lives. It quoted security sources and civilian witness as saying that the attack occurred not far from where the insurgents shot or burned to death 59 pupils at a boarding school in February.

The spokesman for the military in Yobe State, Lt. Eli Lazarus, could not be reached for comment on the attack.

The state commissioner of police Mr. Markus K. Danladi, who visited the scene, said he could not give the casualty figure because he was still getting the details.

In Chinene, the insurgents killed nine civilians, and set ablaze churches and residential buildings.

They were said to have hoisted their flag on some structures in Ashigashiya ward in the community, thus depicting its conquest.

According to sources, many people sustained serious bullet wounds while others were forced to take refuge in nearby bushes and surrounding hills.

An LG official, Nglamuda Ibrahim, who spoke to journalists in Maiduguri, said many of his extended family members and friends displaced in the attack had been calling for assistance since Monday night.

Ibrahim said, “As we speak now, I am still receiving distress calls from them; they are all calling for help. No soldier and no policeman had gone there yet.”

“The Boko Haram gunmen mounted their flags in Ashigashiya ward showing that it was now under their control.

“Last night, six churches were burnt, eight persons were killed and several others seriously injured. We cannot count the number of houses that were burnt in Chinene village of Chikide-Joghode-Kaghum ward.

“The insurgents also attacked Amuda village in Chikide-Joghode-Kaghum ward where one person was killed and several others injured.

“All we are doing now is calling on the military authorities in the state to quickly go up there and help us rescue those poor villagers, their wives and children.”

He listed the names of some of those killed in Chinene village as Bulama Dajiba, Bulama John, Haruna Wadda, Bitrus Kurma, Haruna Kwatha, Haruna Waruda, and Shaibu Galva.

A top security officer, who did not want his name in print, said, “We all have received the report from Chinene village. It was really another sad episode and we learnt that the insurgents hoisted their flag in Ashigashiya.”

The Police Public Relations Officer, Gideon Jubrin, could not be reached as all his telephone lines were switched off.

Meanwhile, former president Olusegun Obasanjo has met with people close to Boko Haram in an attempt to secure the release of the schoolgirls kidnapped in Chibok by the sect.

The meeting which took place last weekend at Obasanjo's farm in Ogun State, had the relatives of some senior Boko Haram fighters and intermediaries in attendance, *Agence France Presse* quoted a source on Tuesday as saying.

"The meeting was focused on how to free the girls through negotiation," said the source who requested anonymity.

Obasanjo had previously sought to negotiate with the insurgents after Boko Haram bombed the United Nations headquarters in Abuja.

Then, he flew to Maiduguri to meet relatives of former Boko Haram leader Mohammed Yusuf, who was killed in police custody in 2009.

The 2011 talks did not help stem the violence and some at the time doubted if Obasanjo was dealing with people who were legitimately capable of negotiating a ceasefire.

A source told *AFP* that Obasanjo had voiced concern about Nigeria's acceptance of foreign military personnel to help rescue the girls.

He was quoted to have said he was worried that Nigeria's prestige in Africa as a major continental power had been diminished by President Goodluck Jonathan's decision to bring in Western military help, including from the United States.

Mustapha Zanna, the lawyer who helped organise Obasanjo's 2011 talks with Boko Haram, said he was at the former President's home on Saturday.

But he declined to discuss whether the Chibok abductions were on the agenda.

"I was there," he told *AFP*, adding that Obasanjo was interested in helping orphans and vulnerable children in troubled North-East.

It was not clear if Obasanjo's weekend meeting had been sanctioned by the government.

According to a source, Obasanjo supported a prisoner-for-hostage swap that would see the abducted girls released in exchange for a group of Boko Haram fighters.

Meanwhile, Cameroon has deployed some 1,000 troops and Armoured Personnel Carriers in its border region with Nigeria to counter a rising threat from Boko Haram.

"Their mission will be to carry out reconnaissance and be ready to respond with enough fire power," Cameroon's Army spokesman, Lt.Col. Didier Badjeck, told *Reuters* by telephone from Yaounde on Tuesday.

Boko Haram, which outraged international opinion with the abduction of over 200 schoolgirls in Chibok, Borno State on April 14, has also carried out attacks in northern Cameroon.

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