

Recovery. It is the tripod upon which But it exposed to us the basic arithmetic scattered the forum."

Boko Haram attack: Military imposes curfew on Maiduguri

Kayode Idowu, Maiduguri

THE military authorities on Thursday slammed a 24-hour curfew on Maiduguri as the death toll in the Boko Haram's Wednesday botched effort to overrun the Borno State capital emerged.

Among the dead were three soldiers, four female suicide bombers and six members of the state youth vigilance group.

Twenty nine other people lost their lives in Ba'ale, one of the villages used by the insurgents to launch the attack on the city.

A member of the vigilance group, who gave the figure said the six vigilantes, soldiers and female bombers died near the Giwa Barracks.

According to him, soldiers manning a checkpoint close to the barracks had sighted four women who looked distressed and tried to help them when explosives strewn to their bodies exploded.

He said: "Apart from the soldiers and bombers, our members, who were near the checkpoint were killed. Some of them were injured and are presently on hospital admission as a result of the bombs detonated by these useless wives of Boko Haram that came to attack us yesterday (Wednesday).

"Our men and the soldiers thought they were women escaping Boko Haram captivity but they took them by surprise and killed six of our active members.

"But we will not allow the incident to demoralise us. We will not relent until we crush all of them."

The spokesman for the vigilance group, Jubrin Gunda, who also spoke with our correspondent, claimed that six female bombers were deployed for the Maiduguri attack.

He added that a top member of the militant Islamist sect was captured by soldiers in Dumsa, another village used to launch the attack.

Gunda said, "The insurgents deployed six female suicide bombers for the attack. The death on the part of the insurgents was high.

"The military, assisted by our group, was able to repel the insurgents. As we talk now, I am on my way to Dumsa for the movement of one of the commanders of the sect that was arrested to a detention camp."

A resident of Ba'ale, Abba Shettima, said the insurgents killed 29 persons and injured about 30 others while moving towards Maiduguri.

Shettima added that they torched 20 houses and five shops on their way to the state capital.

The insurgents were engaged by the military while sneaking through Ba'ale into Maiduguri.

Shettima told journalists that when the attackers were passing through the village, some residents took to their heels while the unlucky ones were killed.

According to him, the villagers who returned to their homes on Thursday morning participated in Muslim prayer conducted for the dead in front of the residence of the village head. He said

the victims were buried thereafter in accordance with Islamic law.

Another villager, said 10 corpses were picked on the streets and 19 others picked from the bushes.

The villager, who gave his name simply as Idi, said, "Our people were confused as many had to flee into the bushes. We returned today (Thursday) and saw 10 dead bodies on the streets and when we combed the bushes, we saw 19 corpses."

The Acting Director, Army Public Relations, Col. Sani Usman, said in a text message to some journalists, "We did not lose any soldier in Maiduguri."

Before the text message, Usman had said that the 24-hour curfew on Maiduguri was a measure to track all insurgents believed to have sneaked into the town during the attack.

Giving assurance that the curfew would be lifted as soon as the situation improved, he said the military engaged the attackers with sophisticated weapons.

The Deputy Director, Army Public Relations, 7 Division of the Nigerian Army, Col. Tukur Gusau, had earlier issued a statement which read, "In view of the recent development within Maiduguri metropolis a 24-hour curfew is hereby imposed on the city. This is done to protect lives and property of innocent and law-abiding people of Maiduguri.

"The Nigerian Army wish to once again thank you for your continuous support and cooperation. The situation is firmly under control."

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