

# Buhari mourns as Boko Haram kills over 40 Borno farmers

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FILE: The President, Major General Muhammadu Buhari (retd.)

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The President, Major General Muhammadu Buhari (retd), has expressed grief over the killing of over 40 farmers on rice fields at Zabarmari, Jere Local Government Area of Borno State.

He described the insurgents' action as senseless.

Buhari's position on the killings was contained in a statement by his Senior Special Assistant on Media and Publicity, Garba Shehu, titled, 'President Buhari condemns as insane, Boko Haram killing of farmers in Borno State.'

Shehu quoted Buhari as saying, "I condemn the killing of our hard-working farmers by terrorists in Borno State.

"The entire country is hurt by these senseless killings.

"My thoughts are with their families in this time of grief. May their souls rest in peace."

Boko Haram had on Saturday reportedly killed over 40 rice farmers in Kwashebe village, Jere Local Government Area of Borno State.

The village is near Maiduguri, the state capital.

The terrorists were reported to have first tied up the farmers, who were working in rice fields, before slitting their throats.

A leader of a vigilante group, Babakura Kolo, who helped the survivors after the attack, told *AFP* that the insurgent group frequently attacked farmers in the area.

"We have recovered 43 dead bodies, all of them slaughtered, along with six others with serious injuries," Kolo said.

Another vigilante member with the Zamarmari group, Ibrahim Liman, also told *AFP* that the deceased were labourers from Sokoto State who had travelled to Kwashebe to find work.

He also gave the death toll to be 43, adding that six persons were injured and eight kidnapped.

“There were 60 farmers who were contracted to harvest paddy in the rice fields. Forty-three were slaughtered, with six injured,” Liman said.

Meanwhile, a source at Kwashebe who spoke with one of our correspondents gave the casualty figure as over 50, stating that the onslaught started at around 11am on Saturday.

“As of now (2.30pm), they (terrorists) are still arresting people at gunpoint and taking them to the ‘slaughterhouse,’” the source said, adding that local hunters, vigilantes and members of the Civilian Joint Task Force were currently mobilising to go after the insurgents.

A local who took part in the search and rescue operation, Mala Bunu, said the bodies of the murdered farmers had been taken to nearby Zabarmari village, where they would be kept ahead of burial on Sunday.

But a security source, who spoke on condition of anonymity, told *SUNDAY PUNCH* that the farmers’ corpses had yet to be cleared from the farm as of 9.30pm on Saturday.

The source added that the insurgents razed the farm, destroying hectares of rice plantation.

“As I am speaking to you, the corpses of the farmers are still on the farm. We cannot evacuate them now because it is night and they cannot be buried. It is also dangerous to do that (remove the corpses) because the insurgents could still be around the area and operate under the dark to attack,” the source said.

“The Governor, Prof Babagana Zulum, who is apparently shaken by the incident, has equally instructed that he would like to see the corpses before they are buried,” he added.

Since 2009, Boko Haram terrorist group has killed tens of thousands of people and displaced about two million, according to the International Crisis Group.

Meanwhile, at least 22 people were on Friday killed in southern Chad in the latest instance of deadly ethnic violence between herders and farmers, *AFP* reports.

A curfew was imposed in the Kabbia region where the fighting took place and 66 people were arrested following the incident on Monday and Tuesday, minister and government spokesman, Cherif Mahamat Zene, said.

The clashes left 11 dead on each side — some hit with arrows — and a further 34 injured, Zene said.

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