

16 killed as Borno bus runs over ISWAP explosives

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| By Uthman Abubakar

No fewer than 16 persons were feared dead and 20 others injured when a commercial vehicle plying the Baga-Kukawa Road in the Kukawa Local Government Area of Borno State drove over an Improvised Explosives Device suspected to have been planted by ISWAP terrorists.

Credible military intelligence sources told Zagazola Makama, a counter-insurgency expert and security analyst in the Lake Chad region, that the incident occurred on Wednesday, April 17.

Although Zagazola Makama reported 10 feared dead, credible sources told *The PUNCH* they were no fewer than 16.

The spokesman for the 7 Division, Lt. Col. Ajemusu Jingina, said, “I will not comment on the incident, as the location falls under the jurisdiction of the Multi-National Joint Task Force, which is headquartered in Ndjamen

| ISWAP Terrorist Group

However, a resident of Baga, Bukar Wakil, told *The PUNCH* on the phone, “We heard that the IED was planted with the intent of killing troops, but the unfortunate commercial vehicle drove over it before any military vehicle did, killing about 16 people and injuring about 20, mainly passers-by.”

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A Maiduguri-based security expert, Abdullahi Abubakar, raised concern over the resurgence of sporadic attacks by ISWAP across the Lake Chad basin.

“You should look at the current resurgence of attacks from three angles.

“One, troops have claimed degrading Boko Haram to virtual non-existence; two, ISWAP, a rival of Boko Haram, has invaded the Chad basin, not only unleashing terror but attempting to crush Boko Haram in incessant battles for supremacy; and three, ISWAP wants to show the Nigerian military that they are very much around and are very much uncrushable.

“Until troops completely crush ISWAP, the terror group will never, in my view, allow Chad basin to rest. This explains the sporadic attacks, especially in northern Borno.”