

P.M.NEWS investigations revealed that security forces carried out the raid from 12.45 am till 5am today at the police station close to the mobile police barracks in Tsamminya Boka, by eastern Bye-pass, Kano.

morning when armed soldiers and other security forces

stormed the area, a hideout of Boko Haram sect. Three

persons died during the shootout.

According to residents of the area, there was no Boko Haram attack on the mobile police barracks but based on information, the security operatives stormed the police station and its environs and the people could not sleep due to explosions and exchange of gun fire.

After the fierce gun battle which residents described as a mini war, two members of the Boko Haram and a military man were reportedly killed, with an unconfirmed number of them were

It was gathered that the early morning raid was jointly carried out by the State Security Service, SSS, the police and

"I was awoken from sleep by explosions and gunshots coming from the police station opposite the mobile police barracks," a resident recounted his experience to AFP in Kano this morning, adding that it was a terrible incident and no one dared to go out because it was dangerous to do so especially with the curfew imposed by government.

On Friday, several people were killed when the Boko Haram members attacked the police headquarters in Kano. Some of the blast victims were in their police uniform while five of the assailants were said to be suicide bombers.

Jonathan imposed emergency rule in parts of Nigeria's north on December 31 after a wave of violence blamed on Boko Haram. But Kano, which had escaped the worst of the violence in recent months, was not among the areas covered.

"I will pray to God that we should never re-live the catastrophe

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that resulted in the deaths and maiming in our city," Kano State governor Rabiu Musa Kwankwaso said as about 200 Muslim clerics and political leaders offered peace prayers in Kano.

Nobel literature laureate Wole Soyinka, who has previously warned of the risk of civil war, appealed to fellow Nigerians not to exact revenge.

"We must not accept the agenda of Boko Haram. Do not consider reprisals," Soyinka said. "They want... to embark on a programme where neighbours will turn against neighbours."

Political leaders also sought to ensure that the attacks do not spark a wider conflict in Nigeria, which is roughly divided between a mainly Muslim north and predominantly Christian south.

"We want to ensure that a few misguided Nigerians who have been led into this action don't take this country hostage," said Senate president David Mark who travelled to Kano with the speaker of the House of Representatives Aminu Tambuwal.

A purported spokesman for Boko Haram said the attacks were in response to a refusal by the authorities to release its members from custody.

Some detainees being held at a police station in Kano were thought to have been freed during Friday's attacks.

The group, which has staged a series of increasingly sophisticated and bloody attacks, often targeting Christians, is believed to have a number of factions with differing aims, including some with political links and a hard-core Islamist cell.

President Jonathan has said some Boko Haram members have infiltrated government, including the security services and the executive.

In Kano, around 50 people gathered Monday outside the main hospital's morgue waiting to collect remains of their loved ones for burial.

There was tension in Kano yesterday that the Friday attack by the Islamist might not be the last when police bomb experts discovered 10 cars that were laden with explosives in the Kano metropolis. The early morning raid in Boko Haram's hideout today might have been a result of police's shock find of Monday.

Meanwhile, Governor Babatunde Fashola of Lagos State, while answering a question a woman asked him at a forum in Lagos on Monday about security challenges posed by Boko Haram, called for vigilance by all and for residents of the state to report suspicious occurrence in their domain to security agencies.

He said it is only by such collective vigilance that the security of the state could be ensured.

"Let us take more notice of unusual faces in our neighborhoods so that when we need to, we can recall and remember and describe them. Let us take much more notice of strange vehicles parked near our street ends, parked in front of our homes that were not there yesterday.

"Ask questions; who owns this vehicle? Check and recheck

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and keep up the vigilance and pass information about unusual developments in your areas to us," he told the thousands of people present at the event held at the Lagos Television Ground, Ikeja, Lagos.

Fashola expressed the need for residents to take more interest in what is happening around them especially the appearance of strange faces and vehicles parked in street corners for more than usual times.

He appealed to residents to make use of the state's toll free emergency numbers, 767 and 112, while expressing the readiness of the state's security agencies to respond promptly to such information.

Fashola also attributed the current peace and security being enjoyed by Lagos residents to "the restraint that we have all shown, the respect we have demonstrated for one another irrespective of our cultural and ethnic diversities."

"We have chosen to live together, respecting each other's faith, respecting each other's colour, each other's tribal marks, each other's language," he said while commending traditional rulers and others for their support.

Advising against ethnic or religious colouration to disputes, Fashola declared: "There is no community where there are no disputes. There is no community where there are no wrongs.

"Even in this Hall, there is wrong. But when wrong is done, let us address such wrong for what it is rather than giving it tribal or religious colouration.

"If something has been done in a way that you think that it is unjust, focus on that complaint and on that issue rather than say it is being done because you are of a particular tribe or religion. It escalates provocation," he appealed.

—Madu Nmeribeh/Kano



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