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29 killed in fresh attack in Borno

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No fewer than 29 persons have been killed in fresh attacks in Borno State by suspected Boko Haram insurgents, military source said yesterday.

Those killed, according to the source, included 19 insurgents and 10 civilians. **The first incident reportedly occurred at Benisheikh along Maiduguri-Damaturu highway. Some gunmen were said to have barricaded the road and attacked travellers.**

According residents, 10 people were slaughtered by the attackers, while many vehicles abandoned by owners and passengers were seized.

Similarly, others who attempted escaping from the roadblock mounted by the insurgents were wounded when the assailants fired sporadic shots into the direction of the fleeing commuters.

"The incident happened when over 30 gunmen, armed with sophisticated weapons emerged from their hide-out inside Sambisa forest. They later blocked the highway and forced motorists to stop," a source claimed.

The source further revealed that the death toll recorded in the attack might be higher as bullets fired by the attackers hit many passengers.

"Immediately the terrorists rushed towards the abandoned vehicles, they opened fire on the occupants and then started cutting their throats with knives," another source said.

"When some motorists sighted danger, they hurriedly reversed and drove towards Maiduguri, while others escaped to Damaturu axis.

Though the security forces responded swiftly and mobilized to the scene and succeeded in killing some of the terrorists in a gun-duel, others however fled inside the bush," Ali Musa, a driver.

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In another incident which occurred in Gwoza town, 19 Boko Haram members were killed in a gun battle with soldiers.

The battle which lasted about three hours took place when the militants stormed a security check point mounted by the military, leading to a fierce shoot-out.

A resident of the area who declined identification told newsmen on phone that the attackers, believed to have emerged from the Gwoza hills, caught the soldiers unawares when they appeared from different directions.

The source explained that the invaders threw Improvised Explosive Devices, (IEDs) into the direction of the military men, before opening fire on them.

"But the insurgents suffered heavy casualties as 19 of them were killed in an encounter with combined team of military and policemen attached to the Counter Terrorism Squad (CTS), who quickly mobilised to the scene of the attack.

I cannot say if there was any casualty on the side of security personnel because we were not allowed access to the scene till the following day when soldiers displayed corpses of the insurgents killed in the incident and asked everyone to come and catch a glimpse", the residents said.

According to him, by merely looking at the slain terrorists, they were between the ages of 15 and 17, the source added."

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