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Scores killed as Boko Haram overruns another border town

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Residents flee community

Our Reporter: TIMOTHY OLANREWAJU, Maiduguri

Scores of residents were killed yesterday when Boko Haram overran Damasak, a Nigeria-Niger border town. Many fled the community.

Sources said the insurgents who had last Friday attempted to attack Damasak, headquarters of Mobbar Local Government around the Nigeria-Niger border, were repelled by troops and men of the Multi-national Joint Task Force, killing about five insurgents.

However, the insurgents regrouped, mobilized and returned to Damasak yesterday morning in a reprisal attack. "They came at about 9am (on Monday) and we started hearing gunshots from different directions, the Boko Haram men were shooting into houses to force people to run out of their homes," Modu Fanami, a fleeing resident, told *Daily Sun* on phone.

He said the insurgents were still shooting as at press time, adding that many people may have been killed.

Modu said he was hiding in a nearby bush, noting that the insurgents were still attacking the residents as at yesterday evening. He claimed that soldiers in the town appeared to have been overwhelmed by the large number of terrorists. "They were many but not more than 50," he claimed.

The senator representing Borno North, Maina Maji, confirmed the attack in a telephone interview with BBC Hausa Service monitored in Maiduguri. He, however, did not give further details, saying the attack was still ongoing as at the time he spoke from Abuja.

Apart from some communities around Damasak which have been severally raided by the insurgents, the

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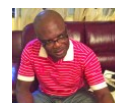
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town has not experienced any major Boko Haram attack in recent times. A military source said the insurgents may have shifted their attention again to northern Borno "having suffered setbacks in their terror activities in the southern part of the state" and in neighbouring Adamawa State where they have held sway in the last one month. He said recent military offensive in Mubi, largest commercial town in Adamawa, which led to the recapturing of the town by troops, may have forced the insurgents to move northward.

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