

TO THE ADAMAWA

• 158 rescued women, children sick – NEMA

FROM DAVID MOLOMO, YOLA

Boko Haram fighters have killed 10 people in Kwamda-Kobla village in northern parts of Adamawa State.

This is even as the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) said 158 out of the 275 persons rescued from Sambisa Forest are sick.

The Chairman of Madagali Local Government Area in Adamawa State, Maina Ularanu, confirmed several attacks by the insurgents. According to him, the attackers did not shoot, but beheaded their victims.

He said members of vigilance groups had gone after the attackers before they escaped to their hide-outs in the surrounding villages. "The village is five kilometres from Gulak town but, there is no security presence there as soldiers are deployed in Madagali town and Gulak only. When the vigilance men went after the militants, they escaped," he said.

However, following the apparent renewed onslaught by Boko Haram in Adamawa North villages, fear has gripped the residents of the area as about 20 gunmen attacked Jwamda-Kobla village at around 5 am last Friday. The attackers laid siege of the village in the morning, armed with knives and axes.

Mallam Ularanu said several villages in are reportedly attacked because of lack of security.

A number of residents who are taking refuge in Yola, the state capital, had stayed back because the government has not assured them safety of their lives and property if they should return to their ancestral homes.

A resident, Titus Musa, said he was supposed to have returned to his village after the military reclaimed the area, but because there are other necessities to be



• Chief of Defence Staff, Alex Badeh

put in place which should include proper rehabilitation of victims.

In disclosing that 158 rescued victims are sick NEMA Director-General, Mallam Sani Sidi, said it was as a result of gunshot wounds, bomb blasts and malaria.

He told reporters in Abuja that they were received in the night and most of them were weak, hungry and sick. But those that have serious ailments were transferred to the Federal Medical Centre in Yola.

However, against the backdrop of reports that most of them were pregnant, Sidi confirmed that only six were pregnant but warned that the issue be de-emphasised so that the children would not be stigmatized.

"We must be very careful not to stigmatise these innocent Nigerians who were under captivity and came back with pregnancy so that we don't end up stigmatizing the child that is yet unborn" he

warned. He also declined comments on the children's fathers, saying what is important is the welfare and well-being of these women and children.

But he said that the rescued persons are undergoing assessment, profiling within the capacity of the doctors in the camp. Their diseases ranged from eye, malaria, fatigue and trauma and, so a trauma unit was immediately organized to counsel them.

"Most of them came especially the children, with eye diseases, malaria, fatigue. They came looking very hungry, tired and traumatized. We had to immediately organize for trauma counseling and other requirements like feeding, clothing and even personal hygiene" he said.

On the result of the profiling, he said the identities of some of the rescued women are known, adding that they are still under monitoring to make sure that they are not security risks.

"We have carried out assessments of the rescued women and children and before they were even delivered to us in our camps, the military has done profiling to ensure that they are not security risks and that they are innocent people captured by the insurgents and rescued by the military. What is left for us is to identify where they came from and that we have done and then we have assessed them medically and we shall continue to monitor them, especially the children. Some of them have also sustained various degrees of injuries from gunshots, bomb-blasts and they have been referred to Federal Medical Centre where they are receiving treatment," Mallam Sidi said.

Regarding other children who were rescued, he confirmed that some have been identified and were reconciled back to their parents, but nobody has come to identify the 275 children and women yet.