

Tension in Adamawa as Boko Haram kills 7, abducts others

• 5,000 persons displaced, 50 houses, worship centres, markets, schools razed

By Billy Graham Abel, Yola

CASUALTY figure in the weekend attack on Kwapre community, Hong Local Government Area of Adamawa State, has risen to seven.

The assailants suspected to be members of the Boko Haram terrorist group also reportedly abducted several persons, torched worship centres and other residential houses.

Local sources said the insurgents who stormed the town in several Hilux vans disguised as military personnels.

Kwapre community and Garkida are at the fringe of the Sambisa forest.

Chairman of Hong Local Government, James Pukuma, said: "The attack carried all the trade marks of Boko Haram insurgents. They came into our town in several trucks, killed and kidnapped men, women and children. The destruction is massive because at least 50 houses were burnt down.

"They razed the market and both primary and secondary schools. They also burnt down every standing church in the town including the LCCN Church, the EYN Church and the Catholic church."

Asked the number of persons kidnapped, Pukuma replied: "Right now, we cannot hazard any speculations. We cannot confirm the number of persons kidnapped because several persons ran away for safety, so we do not know who is missing or who escaped. But what I can confirm is that they abducted several people. Yesterday, the military were able to rescue three women and six children that were abandoned by the insurgents because they could no longer cope

with the stress of the long walk after transporting them out of the community."

On response of the military, Pukuma said: "The military came in late because they were given a faulty intelligence report that the insurgents were planning an attack on Garkida. After the military moved to secure Garkida, the terrorists attacked Kwapre. The area has communication reception challenge, so it was difficult calling on the military. Right now, there are both military and vigilante personnels patrolling this area."

Member representing Gombi/Hong constituency at the Federal House of representatives, Yusuf Buba Yakubu, described as an act of cowardice.

"I condemn in very strong terms this latest attack on the innocent and peace loving people of Kwapre community as another senseless and cruel act of cowardice on a community that is renowned for peace, industry and serenity."

Spokesman of the state police command, DSP Sulaiman Nguroje, confirmed the attack.

This is as the state Emergency Management Agency said the attack has displaced no fewer than 5,000 persons.

Dr. Mohammed Sulaiman, executive secretary of the agency, who announced this in Yola yesterday, said the displacement affected many other neighbouring communities.

District Head of Dugwaba, Mr. Simon Yakubu, confirmed that the attackers invaded the village at about 1pm.

"During the attack that lasted for more than two hours, more than 20 persons were injured and no fewer than 20 persons

kidnapped by the attackers. Places of worship, schools, shops food stores and village head house were destroyed."

He said the injured had been receiving treatment at Hong General Hospital, while two persons who

were critically injured by gunshot had been referred to Federal Medical Centre, Yola.

He also recalled that in 2014, Kwapre village was attacked and destroyed by Boko Haram insurgents.



Governor Emmanuel Udom of Akwa Ibom State (middle) with General Overseer of Victory Life Bible Church, Apostle Lawrence Achudume (right) during a thanksgiving service to mark the annual convention of the VLBC, in Abeokuta, Ogun state, yesterday.

CAN tackles NSCIA over judicial appointments, others

From Fred Ezech, Abuja

CHRISTIAN Association of Nigeria (CAN) has accused the Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NSCIA) of being myopic in its observation and analysis of event in Nigeria.

It said NSCIA has taken pleasure in "feeding" Nigerians falsehood and several incitements instead of speaking truth to the government on the deplorable state of the nation.

This was in response to NSCIA's recent statement in which it used some unprintable names to describe CAN's position on the shortlisting of 20 Justices-designate by the Federal Judicial Service Commission (FJSC) and other national issues. CAN General Secretary, Joseph Daramola, in a statement, yesterday, claimed NSCIA was being economical with the truth when it picked an example of just one arm of government (judiciary) without addressing the totality of fundamental questions on all the arms of government.

"We are disappointed with NSCIA for the abysmal and tragic condescension knowing that the Council is made up of eminent and highly respected personalities. We will not join them in the mudslinging. We choose maturity, candour, moderation and objectivity over parochialism and fundamentalism because we have the facts and figures which the entire world knows."

CAN maintained that it did not have hatred for Islam and Muslims or whatsoever as claimed by NSCIA in its earlier statement, describing it as highest degree of cheap blackmail for any individual or group to have made such puerile and empty claim.

CAN said: "In the past when Muslim leaders in the country were under unjustifiable attack, we spoke against it. Two good examples were the then continued incarceration of the former National Security Adviser, Col. Sambo Dasuki and the leader of Islamic Movement in Nigeria, Ibrahim

Yaqub El Zakzaky, despite the court's rulings. CAN was among the potent voices calling for their release. "Similarly, whenever terrorists or bandits attacked any Muslim community or mosque, CAN always come out publicly to speak against it. But CAN has never seen NSCIA reciprocating that whenever their brethren attacked Christians or predominantly Christian communities or churches. Who hates who in this context?"

CAN, however, maintained its earlier position of lopsidedness in political appointments since the coming of President Muhammad Buhari in 2015. "We dare either the Federal Government or its self-appointed spokespersons, NSCIA, to publish names, state of origin and religions of the appointments by President Buhari into the following offices since 2015 to date, particularly the Ministers of Defence, Police Affairs and Interior, the National Security Advisers (NSA), the Inspectors-General of Police, Director-Generals of the Security Service, National Intelligence Agency (NIA), Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA); Chairmen, Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC); the Director-General, National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA). Others are the Comptrollers-Generals, Nigerian Customs Service, Nigerian Immigration Service, Nigerian Correctional Service, Federal Fire Service, and Commandant-General, Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) and Corps Marshal, Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC). Out of all these, maybe only one or two are Christians and from the South. The Accountant-General of the Federation, all heads of the agencies and parastatals.

"The whole world will then know the agent of falsehood and character assassination between CAN and NSCIA. We have observed that the grand plan of subtle Islamisation is to make a Muslim the head of every key board, committee, parastatal and put Christians under without much influence in the decision-making process in the establishment, irrespective of their number. "Let the whole nation know that it would be difficult for us to do pilgrimage together as a nation if this type of injustice and favouritism continues. Under President Buhari, Christians have become endangered species and lives have been lost to terrorists. The murderous suspected terrorists, herdsmen and bandits were hitherto targeting pastors and predominantly Christian communities until a while ago when it became an attack on anyone. "We are totally disappointed that NSCIA was too busy to call their children to order. A CAN Chairman was abducted and murdered in Adamawa state, till date, NSCIA has not console or react proportionately. We call on the leadership of NSCIA to borrow a leaf from CAN. "Howbeit, we have no reason to attack or criticize them but to objectively criticize the Federal Government that presently rules the country as if we are no longer a multi-ethnic and multi-religious nation whose leaders are expected to lead in strict adherence to the constitution and with respect for fundamental human rights of all citizens, decency, good conscience and fear of God."

CAN maintained that it is a peace-loving Association that believes in dialogue and negotiation rather than verbal war in the media as done by the NSCIA in its recent publication.

It said: "The NSCIA obviously evaded those troubling issues that are well known, not only to Nigerians but members of the international community. Those knotty issues that have pushed our country on the edge of precipice. It has unwittingly exposed itself as a promoter of bad governance, divisiveness and injustice in Nigeria under the Buhari administration."

"Interestingly, there was never a time when CAN ever attacked or made veiled reference to NSCIA over the obvious lopsided appointments in the country. Rather, CAN's concern has always been directed to Federal Government as a concerned non-governmental group but NSCIA as an underdog of Government rather took it upon itself to speak for the Government."

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UN condemns attack on aid facilities in Borno

From Timothy Olanrewaju, Maiduguri

UNITED Nations Humanitarian Coordinator in Nigeria, Edward Kallon, has condemned attack on three facilities of international aid organisations in Borno by Boko Haram.

In a statement, yesterday, he said he was expressed concerned about destruction of aid facilities at Damasak town in the northern part of the state late Saturday.

"I am deeply concerned about recurrent reports of violent attacks by non-state armed groups putting the lives of civilians under risks. Last night and through the morning, a violent attack in Damasak town, in Borno State, was reported with three international aid partners' facilities directly targeted, set ablaze, and sustained damage."

He said humanitarian aid operations and facilities remain the lifeline for people affected by violence in the North East. He maintained attacks on such facilities would deepen the humanitarian challenge in the troubled area.

He said humanitarian operations at Damasak will be reduced due to the violent attack. He said the reduction will affect support to 8,800 internally displaced people and 76,000 people in the host community.

"Civilians and aid workers,

their facilities and assets should never be a target. They must always be protected and respected," the UN envoy said.

He called on armed parties (Boko Haram and military) to observe international humanitarian law and human rights law concerning aid facilities and workers to ensure the protection of civilians, humanitarian property, and personnel.

Boko Haram attacked Damasak around the Lake Chad shores in Borno Saturday night. Details of the attack are still scanty though security sources said the insurgents burnt most of the public facilities.