

At least 80 dead after suspected Boko Haram attack in Nigeria

About 150 suspected jihadists on motorcycles reportedly opened fire in Yobe state on Sunday

Agence France-Presse in Kano

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At least 80 people have died and several are missing after an attack by suspected Boko Haram jihadists in Nigeria's north-eastern Yobe state, local officials have reportedly said.

“Around 150 suspected Boko Haram terrorists armed with rifles and RPGs [rocket-propelled grenades] attacked Mafa ward on more than 50 motorcycles around 4pm on Sunday,” said Abdulkarim Dungus, a Yobe state police spokesperson, according to Agence France-Presse. “They killed many people and burned many shops and houses. We are yet to ascertain the actual number of those killed in the attack.”

Dungus said it appeared to be a revenge attack “for the killing of two Boko Haram terrorists by vigilantes from the village”.

Bulama Jalaluddeen, a local official, added: “From these figures it has been established that at least 81 people were killed in the attack.

“Fifteen bodies had already been buried by their relations by the time soldiers reached Mafa for the evacuation of the corpses. In addition to these, some unspecified number of dead victims from nearby villages who were caught up in the attack were taken and buried by their kinsmen before the arrival of the soldiers. Many people are still missing and their whereabouts unknown.”

Boko Haram and other jihadist groups have waged a 15-year insurgency in north-east Nigeria that has killed more than 40,000 people. Central and north-west Nigeria have been plagued for years by gangs of criminals, known as “bandits”, who raid villages, kill and abduct residents and burn homes after looting them.

By working alongside these gangs, jihadist groups have increasingly established a presence in central Niger state, officials and analysts say.