

## METRO

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MAIDUGURIBorno: Boko Haram kills 30,  
abducts others, burn 18 vehicles

●Troops rescue two students, one passenger -Army

**B**oko Haram members have killed more than 30 people during an attack on travellers at Auno checkpoint on the outskirts of Maiduguri, Borno State.

In the Sunday night attack, the terrorists also snatched three vehicles loaded with passengers and took them into the bush.

They also set 18 vehicles on fire.

The vehicles were trapped at the Auno checkpoint when the military has officially closed the Maiduguri-Damaturu Road. The travellers were forced to spend the night at Auno where they were attacked.

But the Army said troops yesterday rescued three of those abducted during a fierce battle on the Maiduguri-Gubio Road.

The state Governor, Babagana Zulum, visited the scene of the attack yesterday.

He said: "I was told that over 30 people were killed, three vehicles loaded with passengers were snatched.

"We got intelligence report from the Department of State Services (DSS) about 3a.m. that Auno will be attacked by Boko Haram. The military has withdrawn from Auno. We appealed to the military to establish a unit at Auno but once it is 5p.m. the military will close the gate and go back to Maiduguri and leave people at the gate. If Auno cannot be protected then Maiduguri too is not protected. What is Auno and Maiduguri?"

"I call on the general public to be law-abiding and not to take law into their hands. The government of President Muhammadu Buhari and the Borno State government will do anything possible to secure the lives



Scene of the attack



The rescued victims

some media reports saying that over 30 people were killed. This is false and not true. Yesterday (Sunday), we recovered three corpses and today (yesterday) we also recovered seven corpses. Insurgents did not attack the vehicles during the normal time of movement. They attacked in the night during the official closure time.

"In the night, our troops always go on operations; they go after Boko Haram. They cannot leave the operation and come to protect vehicles that are on the road at the time they are not ought to be. I am calling on the general public to always leave Damaturu by 3p.m. so that they will arrive on time and for the truck to leave by noon."

Adeniyi added that the terrorists rode on motorcycles which they parked at Auno.

He said: "You know the road is usually closed by 5p.m. Many vehicles parked at the checkpoint at Auno, Jakana, Minok, Ngamdu, Benesheik and Kukareta are usually trapped on the road, exposing them to risk of attack."

"I call on the general public to always abide by the law and embark on their journey early, so that they will not be trapped on the road."

Meanwhile, while briefing journalists at the Headquarters of the Theatre Command, Adeniyi said the troops rescued two students and another passenger during a gun battle with the terrorists yesterday.

He said: "Boko Haram came with 15 gun trucks and blocked the road and attacked motorists between Gubio and Maiduguri and kidnapped three passengers, among them two students in school uniform. Our troops quickly mobilised and pursued the insurgents where they skillfully rescued the students unhurt."

Adeniyi appealed to school authorities and parents not to allow their students and children to travel in school uniforms.

The commander expressed the belief that the insurgents attacked the vehicles because of the uniform.

"You know the insurgents are against western education," he added.

Narrating her ordeal, one of the students, Rukayya Alhaji Gambo, said they were abducted on Gubio-Magumeri Road on their way back to school in Maiduguri.

She said: "We thought they were military. But on getting near, they stopped our vehicle but we refused to stop. The driver tried to escape but they kept on shooting the vehicle until we got hooked in the sand. The driver opened the door and ran for his life. They came and asked us to enter their vehicles."

"On our way into the bush, troops of the Nigerian military opened fire on the insurgents with artillery guns. They left their vehicle and abandoned us."

The attack came a few days after the Chief of Army Staff (COAS), Lt-Gen. Tukur Buratai, said insurgents had resorted to attacking soft targets, including travellers on the road.

Buratai had said that the war against Boko Haram had improved from what it used to be more than years ago.

He said: "Insurgency is not what you defeat and it would just fizzle out; they would revert to other tactics. That is terrorism."

"They will promote propaganda, to the effect that all the institutions of government would be seen to be ineffective. This is what they are doing. They are exploiting the fault lines in our economic and political endeavours to expand the gulf of so-called discord and acrimony among various ethnic and religious groups."

"Why are they doing this propaganda, blocking the road and capturing individuals because they are of a particular religion? Unfortunately, they murder those individuals and send it to the world. These are propaganda strategies of the terrorists."

and property of the people."

The Theatre Commander, Operation Lafiya Dole, Major General Olusegun Adeniyi, con-

firmed the attack.

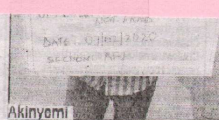
He said: "Boko Haram attacked transporters' vehicles and commuters at Auno. I heard

The suspect was arrested by the Florin Zonal Office of the EFCC at his hideout.

"We were able to fish him out on 6th of February 2020 in his beautifully built duplex at Arepo, Ogun

State by an insurance company for public workers in the United States, which resulted in the loss of approximately \$2,500,000."

EFCC said its investiga-



Akinyemi



His house