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Gunmen Kill 29 Boarding Students in Yobe School

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Gunmen

- Attack wicked, horrendous, says Tambuwal

By Okechukwu Uwaezuoke, with agency reports

A pre-dawn grisly attack Saturday on a boarding school in the outskirts of the Yobe State town Potiskum by suspected members of the Islamic extremist group, Boko Haram, left 29 students and a teacher dead. Agence France Presse (AFP) quoted 42 as the casualty figure.

But the Joint Task Force operating in Yobe State confirmed that 20 students and a teacher were killed.

JTF spokesman in Yobe State, Eli Lazarus said: "At about 0530hrs today Saturday 6 Jul 13, unknown gunmen suspected to be Boko Haram terrorists attacked Government Secondary School, Mamudo, near Potiskum Town.

"20 students and a teacher were confirmed killed by the terrorists while 4 students sustained injuries and are in critical condition."

No arrest, he said, has been made, adding that a “cordon and search operation” was ongoing in the area.

Some of the students in this latest attack blamed on the terror group were burnt alive, according to the survivors who were being treated for burns and gunshot wounds at the Potiskum General Hospital.

The attack at the Government Secondary School in Mamudo, which is five kilometres from Potiskum – the deadliest since the Federal Government’s declaration of state of emergency in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa states – was reported to have occurred at about 3 a.m.

A teacher in the school, Ibrahim Abdu, identified his dead colleague as Mohammed Musa an English language teacher, who he said was shot in the chest. A student, Musa Hassan, whose four fingers of the right hand were blown off as he tried to ward off a gunshot, narrated how they were roused from sleep by the sound of gunshots.

“When I woke up, someone was pointing a gun at me,” the 15-year-old told the Associated Press.

He also recalled how the gunmen had arrived the school with jerry cans of fuel, which they used to torch the school’s administrative block and one of the hostels. Many of the victims, he narrated with horror, were roasted alive.

His account, corroborated by those of the teachers at the hospital’s morgue, revealed that several of the 1,200 students of the school had escaped into a nearby bush and have not been seen since.

A member of staff of the Potiskum General Hospital, Haliru Aliyu quoted eyewitnesses who escaped the massacre as saying that the attackers had rounded up students and staff of the school in a dormitory and had thrown explosives inside and opened fire on them.

“We received 42 dead bodies of students and other staff of Government Secondary School (in) Mamudo last night,” he was quoted by the AFP to have said. “Some of them had gunshot wounds while many of them had burns and ruptured tissues.”

It was a gory sight. People who went to the hospital and saw the bodies shed tears,” he continued. “There were 42 bodies, most of them were students. Some of them had parts of their bodies blown off and badly burnt while others had gunshot wounds.”

Grief-stricken parents howled with dismay as they searched for their wards among the charred and bullet-ridden remains of the victims. One of the parents, Mallam Abdullahi, was able to identify the bodies of two of his sons. One, a 12-year-old was shot in the chest, while the other, a 10-year-old was shot in the back as he apparently tried to escape. Kneeling over their bodies, the bereaved parent vowed he would withdraw his three remaining sons from a nearby school. He complained about the obvious lack of protection for the students despite the May 14 Federal Government’s declaration of a state of emergency in the three north-eastern states of Borno, Yobe and Adamawa and the heavy presence of the federal troops in these three states.

Many of the parents were still unable to identify their children from the badly charred bodies and were still uncertain if they had died or survived.

This gruesome incident, which bears the hallmarks of Boko Haram – an Islamic sect, whose name translates as “Western Education is a sin” – and its splinter groups, adds to the long list of the spate of attacks, which has claimed about 3000 lives in northern Nigeria since it began its insurgency in 2009. An unspecified number of schools have been torched and an unknown number of students killed in the process. The attacks have continued, albeit stealthily, despite claims by the thousands of troops deployed by the President to have chalked up successes in its bid to regain the control of the militants-infested states.

In his declaration of a state of emergency, President Jonathan had acknowledged that the militants had taken control of some towns and villages. The crackdown on the militants by the federal troops, which included attacks with fighter jets and helicopter gunships, seemed to have reversed their fortunes. But claims of killings and arrests of the militants by the military have been blighted by reports that many of them retreated to their redoubts in nearby mountains from where they swoop down to unleash terror on schools and markets.

Meanwhile, the activities of the fundamentalist terror groups are beginning to take its toll on the populace. Their continual targeting of defenceless civilians, who include health workers, farmers, civil service employees and students have worsened the living conditions in the affected states already groaning under the scourge of the ban on satellite telephones and the shutdown of cell phone service.

This latest attack on a school follows closely on the heels of another, on Sunday, June 16, on a secondary school in the Yobe State capital, Damaturu. In the massacre – which drew condemnations from the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon and the former British Prime Minister who is also the secretary general’s special Envoy for Global Education, among others – seven students and two teachers were gunned down in an examination hall.

The next day, nine students were murdered in a school hall in the Borno State capital, Maiduguri. Five students were also gunned down in the examination hall of a primary/secondary school in Maiduguri’s Jajeri ward.

“The Nigerian killings have parallels with the Saturday massacre at a girl’s college in Pakistan,” the former British Prime Minister wrote in a June 21, 2013 back page column in THISDAY. “There, on Saturday, a bus taking 40 students from their college studies was blown up by a female suicide bomber, killing 14 girls. In just three days, 30 young people have lost their lives simply because they wanted an education.”

There was also a recent report of the murder by suspected Boko Haram militants of a primary school headmaster, Hassan Godiya, and his family in Bui, a town about 180 kilometres from Maiduguri. The headmaster, who was the proprietor of the private Godiya Nursery and Primary School, was gunned down

at 7 a.m. just as he was about to leave his residence. His wife and four children were killed in the attack, eyewitnesses also said. The assailants, meanwhile, got away.

Such attacks come amid the outcry from the Yobe State citizens against the shutdown of telecommunications services. In their last week's appeal to the authorities, they had argued that they could have raised alarm about suspicious movements if their cell phones were working.

The latest spate of terrorists attacks have been apparently fuelled by the recent activities of the vigilante youths in the northeast aimed at flushing out the Boko Haram members in their midst. A purported spokesman of the sect, Abu Zinnira was quoted to have vowed reprisal attacks on the youths, who are also known as the "civilian JTF (Joint Task Force)".

Zinnira was quoted in national newspapers to have said: "We have established that youths in Borno and Yobe states are now against our cause. They have connived with security operatives and are actively supporting the government of Nigeria in its war against us. We have also resolved to fight back."

Tambuwal: Attack Wicked

Speaker of the House of Representatives, Aminu Waziri Tambuwal, described Saturday's killings at Government Secondary School, Mamudo, Potiskum, Yobe State as ignoble, wicked and horrendous.

The Speaker, in a statement issued by his Special Adviser on Media and Public Affairs, Mallam Imam Imam, said no reason can justify such a dreadful act. He tasked security agencies to fish out perpetrators of the dastardly act and bring them justice.

According to him, the recent gains recorded by security agencies in their battle against terror in the country should be built upon in order to protect the citizens at all times.

Expressing sympathy with the families of the victims, Tambuwal urged Nigerians to be more vigilant and to help security agencies with useful information to help secure their areas.

He equally called for information that will lead to the arrest of the perpetrators of the killing and said the National Assembly will, at all times, give necessary support to ensure that peace and security is restored in all parts of the country.

Recent Killings in Schools

June 16

7 students, 2 teachers, 2 soldiers and 2 terrorists killed during an attack on a school in Damaturu, Yobe State

June 17

9 students killed in an examination hall in a school in Maiduguri, Borno State

June 17

5 students gunned down in an examination hall in a school in Jajeri ward of Maiduguri, Borno State

July 6

At least 29 students and a teacher killed when terrorists stormed Government Secondary School in Mamudo near Potiskum, Yobe State

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 Buhari will never condemn these acts of terrorism and he wants to rule Nigeria. Those supporting his pet project APC are day dreaming.

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 Listen everyone. This is the only and final solution. Let Jonathan expose and arrest all Boko Haram sponsors in his government and bring them to justice. Nothing else aside this will restore peace in the nation. But our president is too weak, afraid and indecisive.

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ariyo → Kingsley Agbonaye • a day ago
 You just hate him, monitor Buhari negatively.

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**Ifikolo** · a day ago

This is horrendous!! I am angry with the FGN. Since schools are now the targets of these Bokites, the FGN should have deployed soldiers to schools in these areas even if that will require deploying the entire Nigerian army. They should also provide to the heads of these schools alternative telcom tools hooked to the army and police telcom infrastructure. I am sick already... Gosh!!

1 ^ | ▾ Reply Share ›

**Iere adetimirin** · a day ago

Enough is enough. Deal as Odi and quenched this insurgent for ever. Matasaine was dealt with. I wonder why President Goodluck finds it difficult to deal with them once and for all. You cant be charged at the World Court like Taylor. We are losing greatbleaders in these students. They are the tribe complaining of backwardness and since some have embrased literacy and education, we must protect them to achieve their aspirations.

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**Emma** · 7 hours ago

We will just continue to talk and talk, Nigerians should know all these killings is nothing but politics. if not, why would own soja go to another country and bring peace but could not achieve same in their own country? because their hands are bind by politics. The president can give the military 24 hours to arrest this barbaric situation once and for all which I believe the Nigerian military is capable of, but I don't know why the president has remain adamant to protect the citizen of this country. someone is mentioning Buhari, please leave that man out of this and hold the FGN responsible for the killings. Our military are capable of returning peace to this country what are you afraid of mr president? give this order.

^ | ▾ Reply Share ›

**Victor Olowogoroye** · a day ago

Obviously, this government is not taking the threat from this criminal group seriously otherwise how can the spate of Student and Teachers killings in schools get to this level without government providing adequate security for Students and Teachers in these schools knowing fully well that their main grouse is with western education?

^ | ▾ Reply Share ›

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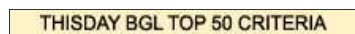
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