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Boko Haram Captures Baga, Kills Scores in Borno, Yobe

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Boko Haram insurgents

- Soldiers chased out of the barracks
- 40 youths abducted in Malari
- Bomb kills one, injures others in Adamawa

Michael Olugbode in Maiduguri and Daji Sani in Yola

Seeming to resume from the Yuletide holidays, the Boko Haram insurgents on Sunday struck again with vengeance, capturing Baga, a fishing community in Borno State, as well as killing scores of persons in Yobe State.

Some residents of the fishing community, who escaped the insurgents' onslaught, said in Maiduguri that the Islamic fundamentalists had hoisted their flag at the headquarters of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) after attacking the military base.

The capture of the base had sent many fleeing into Maiduguri, the capital of the troubled Borno State.

Thousands of the fleeing residents were yesterday seen at the Baga motor park in Maiduguri, while some anxious residents of the state capital were also seen waiting for their relatives.

One of the escaped residents, Ibrahim Kaka, who arrived Maiduguri around 5pm yesterday, told THISDAY that he slept in the bush and trekked many miles before he got a bus which brought him to Maiduguri.

He said: "It was around 5am yesterday (Saturday) when we started hearing gunshots and they gained entrance into the Multinational National Joint Task Force (MNJTF) premises where they killed many civilians living in the barracks."

Another fleeing resident, Modu Isa, said that the insurgents also followed people fleeing into the bush where they killed many people.

"They did not spare anybody as they shot at men, women and even children who were fleeing into the bush," he added.

During THISDAY's visit to the motor park, some residents of Maiduguri were seen searching for their relatives living in Baga.

The fleeing residents have now occupied the Jajeri Primary School behind the Baga market.

A military source told THISDAY that the Boko Haram terrorists attacked the base of the Multinational Joint Task Force and killed dozens of soldiers.

He said the attack caught the soldiers unawares and were "practically dislodged" by the insurgents.

The source said: "It was an ugly development in Baga on Saturday morning, when the Boko Haram insurgents attacked the base of the Multinational Joint Task Force there and practically dislodged the soldiers. I cannot tell you how bad it was but it was really bad because we heard that the base was attacked unawares, though the extent of damage is yet unknown."

The Multinational Joint Task Force is the major military deployment that has been keeping the terrorists at arm's length in the area.

Meanwhile, the sect also attacked Yobe State, killing scores of men including soldiers.

THISDAY gathered that numerous insurgents lost their lives in the attack.

The attack on Yobe was at Babbangida town, the headquarters of Tarmuwa Local Government Area.

A resident of the town, Mohammed Hassan, who spoke on phone to THISDAY yesterday morning, said the insurgents attacked the town at about 6:30pm, engaging security forces in a gun battle.

According to him, the places of battle included the military base located north of the town, the police station at the southern part, the local government secretariat, the Government Lodge as well as the boarding primary school, "all which the terrorists have the intention of destroying".

He said: "The security forces from what we have seen so far have been able to repel them, but we are still entertaining fear that the battle may continue today (yesterday)."

Hassan said the number of casualties still remains unknown as most of the places of heavy battle were still cordoned off by the military.

Saturday's attack made it four times major Yobe towns have been attacked by the insurgents within the last one month as the sect has lately attacked Damaturu, Damagum and Geidam, all in December. But the attack on Babbangida town is the first in the new year.

Babbangida is 50 kilometres north of Damaturu, the Yobe State capital, and has always been attacked by the insurgents.

It was also confirmed to journalists in Maiduguri that about 40 youths were abducted on Thursday by the terrorists in Malari.

A security source said it has been discovered that the group now has a new camp, known as Modube, close to the notorious Sambisa forest.

The security source said the abducted youths were taken to a location called Modube, a new base of the sect.

"Our office had received the Intel that on January 1, 2015, at about 5pm, some Boko Haram gunmen had invaded one Malari village in Damboa Local Government Area of Borno State, where they killed some of the villagers and abducted some youths, who might have been taken to one of Boko Haram's hideouts known as Modube Camp," said the source.

The source added that "Modube Camp is one of the new bases where the Boko Haram insurgents are hiding out".

Some of the residents of Malari, who escaped the attack told journalists in Maiduguri that the Boko Haram gunmen had attacked their village shortly after the villagers had retired to their homes and asked them to come out to listen to some sermons during which they shot some of them and forcibly took others away.

Bulama Malam, a farmer, told journalists in Maiduguri on Friday that at least 40 youths were taken away from the village.

"They gathered many of us near the house of the village head, after telling us that they wanted to preach to us; and then they began to select young men aged between 12 and 25," he said.

"I was lucky to escape, because they only selected very young and able-bodied men."

In the same vein, a bomb exploded at Lugda village of Mahia local government area of Adamawa State yesterday morning, killing one person and

injuring many others.

An eyewitness account revealed that the improvised explosive device, IED was suspected to be abandoned by the Boko Haram insurgents during their reign in the area before they were chased out by the combined efforts of the military and the local hunters.

Mahia local government area had been one of the areas captured by the Boko Haram insurgents where they hoisted their flag before it was recaptured.

Our source said as soon as one of the victims of the bomb blast dropped a nylon bag into the fire a loud explosion occurred and resulted in killing one and injuring others who were later rushed to the federal medical center Yola for treatment.

Confirming the incident Adamawa state police public relations officer (PPRO), DSP Othman Abubakar explained that the situation happened as a result of the ignorance of the victims who acted foolishly without finding out what was the content of the nylon bag before throwing it into fire.

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