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# 30 die as blasts, gun duel rock Maiduguri

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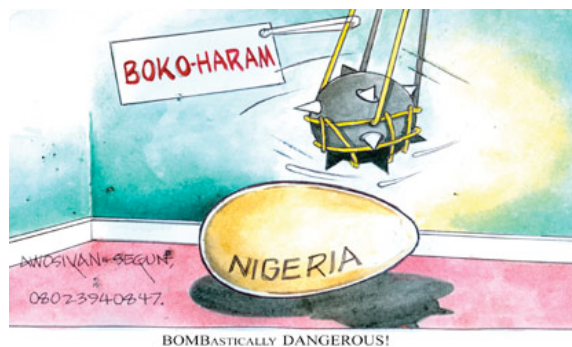
By Kingsley Omonobi, Wole Mosadomi, Ndahi Marama & Monsur OLowoopejo

MAIDUGURI— No fewer than 30 people were killed yesterday in Maiduguri when suspected members of the Islamic sect, Boko Haram, opened fire and set off bombs at Baga Fish market in the metropolis. Eight of the sect members were, however, killed in a gun duel with the Joint Task Force.

According to AFP report, traders at the market reported that gunmen believed to be members of the Islamic sect stormed the market and opened fire indiscriminately killing many of them, including women and children.

"The number of dead could not be less than 30," a Maiduguri hospital nurse told AFP.

The military confirmed the assault on the market but denied any civilian deaths, saying security forces had killed eight assailants and safely defused bombs planted by the attackers.



Spokesman of the Task Force, Lieutenant Colonel Hassan Mohammed said "at about 1:30 (1230 GMT) this afternoon at Baga Market of Maiduguri metropolis some gunmen suspected to be members of Boko Haram attacked and shot civilians at the market. Several people had been wounded but there was no civilian death at this time. The military immediately came to the rescue and safely defused three bombs planted by members of the sect and shot dead eight members of the sect."

However, one trader in the market who identified himself simply as Mairami said six gunmen stormed the food and commodities market and "opened fire indiscriminately. At least 30 people including women and children were killed."

Another vendor by the name Gana gave a similar account of the attack in the city saying, "the gunmen just opened fire killing people. I saw three military vans piled with

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bodies leaving the market. There were several explosions after the shooting.”

The attackers had accused traders of collaborating with the military following the arrest last week of a suspected Boko Haram member in the market, witnesses said.

Mairami said one gunman shouted angrily that traders had “teamed up with soldiers” to help arrest members of the sect.

“We have henceforth waged war against you,” Mairami said the gunman had declared, before spraying bullets on both vendors and customers. Last week, traders overpowered a gunman suspected to be a Boko Haram member and handed him over to the military.

### **Fashola bans religious activities within secretariat**

Following the spate of bombings in some parts of the country, Governor Fashola in an executive order with reference number E0/BRF/003, sent to all Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) of the state government described the situation as worrisome.

According to the Governor, “I have observed with grave concern, the lack of adequate security measures in place to check movement into and out of the secretariat, resulting in a high human and vehicular traffic in the secretariat. In order, therefore, to ensure the protection of lives and property within and around the secretariat, all religious activities within the

secretariat are hereby prohibited.

“All devotees are now to use the Central Mosque and the Chapel of Christ the Light respectively which have been provided for that purpose,” he added.

Other security measures taken by the Governor included the seven-day ultimatum given to the state ministry of Transportation to remove all abandoned vehicles within the secretariat.

The use of unauthorized number plate, trading and touting within the secretariat were also prohibited as “anyone found will face the full weight of the law.”

### **Terrorism threats from Arab countries are real – Maj-Gen. Audu**

Against the backdrop of current security and terrorism challenges facing the country, Chief of Defence Intelligence, Major General Sani Yakubu Audu has said that terrorism threats from countries involved in the Arab Spring uprising, was real and that the federal government was doing all within its powers to checkmate the flow of terrorists, arms and ammunition into the country.

Towards this end, General Audu disclosed that the recent approval for the opening of a Defence Attaches’ offices in Niger and one other country was in furtherance of assisting security agencies in the country to contain and checkmate this dangerous and disturbing flow.

In addition to the establishment of the new

Defence Attaches' mission, the CDI disclosed that because of the Al Qaeda threat in the sub-region, the Defence Intelligence Agency was concentrating on the training of its personnel and officers on Counter Terrorism training, while on the local scene, efforts are being made to open new intelligence cells in some parts of the country to boost intelligence gathering.

“On our part, capacity building is what we are focusing on to ensure we improve intelligence gathering, techniques and analysis and this is yielding positive results. We have also discovered that the level of awareness among Nigerians especially as it concerned security issue is very low and we are trying to do something about this with regards to education because security is not all about security agencies alone but the responsibility of everybody, he said.

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