

6 die as JTF, gunmen clash in Maiduguri

BY NDAHI
MARAMA

MAIDUGURI—SIX persons were killed, yesterday, in Maiduguri in two separate incidents as gunmen attacked the city's largest market while suspected members of Boko Haram also clashed with a team of Joint Task Force

At least four traders were shot dead while two others seriously injured when gunmen attacked Monday market in Maiduguri.

The attack came barely 24 hours after President Jonathan lifted the state of emergency earlier imposed in some parts of the state and the subsequent relaxation of the curfew by two hours.

The incident, which happened at about noon, forced many traders who were at the peak of their pre-Ramadan shopping to flee the market.

General Manager of Monday Market, Maiduguri, Alhaji Ajiya Terrab, confirmed the incident to newsmen on phone, saying: "Some gunmen actually attacked the market and killed four traders and injured two others."

Witnesses said following the attack on the shops outside the market, the management of the market had to lock up the six main entrances, forcing traders to remain indoors for hours, until it was later opened.

Also, men of the Joint Task Force, JTF,

yesterday clashed with gunmen suspected to be members of the Boko Haram sect in Gambouru ward of Maiduguri metropolis in Borno State, killing two persons.

An eyewitness said the clash occurred when suspected gunmen attacked one of the military patrol vehicles near Kofa Biyu on Sir Kashim Ibrahim Way.

He said: "We had to run for our dear lives, as the shootings between soldiers and gunmen came from all directions. I cannot tell you whether some people were killed in the shoot-outs, but some of us ran into our houses for fear of being killed by stray bullets."

An attendant at the Accident and Emergency (A&E) Unit of the University of Maiduguri Teaching Hospital, UMTH, said two bodies of civilians were brought into the hospital by the JTF van.

The attendant in a text message to newsmen said: "Two men in personal dress were brought in dead at the Accident and Emergency (A&E) unit of Teaching Hospital by a JTF van at about noon Thursday."

Speaking on yesterday's clash, spokesman of JTF, Lt. Col Sagir Musa, said: "I am not aware of the shootouts between us and suspected gunmen. But I will investigate to confirm the shootouts, before reaching you if there were casualties."

Confirming the

incident, the Borno State Police Public Relations Officer, PPRO, Mr Gideon Jibrin, said there was a clash between men of the JTF and suspected gunmen in Gambouru ward of Maiduguri, yesterday, where some

civilians were injured by stray bullets.

He said the Police Area Commander of Gambouru ward, was yet to send his report on the incident to the headquarters for further investigations.

October 1 bombing: How text messages linked Okah, others, SSS tells court

BY IKECHUKWU
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ABUJA—A Federal High Court in Abuja, yesterday, heard how mobile telephone text messages linked Charles Okah and three other suspects to the October 1, 2010 bomb blasts that marred Nigeria's Independence Day celebration.

The States Security Service, SSS, told the court that its Technical Department successfully extracted incriminating messages exchanged among the accused persons before and after that bomb explosion that resulted in the death of 12 persons at the Eagle Square, Abuja.

Testifying in court, yesterday, a lead technical officer with the SSS, Mr Wasiu Agbaje, said he personally extracted text message contents in the mobile phone of one of the accused persons, Edmund Ebiware, shortly after he was apprehended by undercover operatives.

Agbaje told the court that when the phone of the accused was thoroughly

scrutinized, two of the incriminating messages were discovered, saying one was in his inbox while the other was a reply.

The witness said he used forensic suite software to extract the messages which he said was printed and passed to the service special investigative panel, insisting that the contents of the messages expressly indicated the accused persons of complicity in the crime.

Meanwhile, Justice Gabriel Kolawole, yesterday, admitted the printed text messages into evidence after it was tendered by the prosecuting counsel, Dr Alex Izinyon, SAN, even as further hearing on the case was subsequently adjourned till October 3 and 9.

It would be recalled that the court had on May 3, okayed separate trial for Ebiware, who was previously standing trial alongside Charles Okah who is the younger brother to the embattled ex-leader of the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta, MEND, Henry Okah, and the 3rd accused person, Obi Nwabueze.