

7 soldiers, 2 policemen, 80-yr-old woman, 5 gunmen killed

●Only a soldier, policeman died —JTF
●LG secretariat, police station burnt

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Maiduguri — At least seven security operatives and five gunmen were killed in Marte Local Government Area of Borno State when some gunmen suspected to be terrorists ambushed troops deployed in the area to maintain peace and order.

Also, unidentified gunmen, yesterday, killed four persons including a soldier, a policeman and an 80-year-old woman with her 13-year-old grandson in a gun duel at Song Local Government Area of Adamawa State, leaving the number of Nigerians lost to insecurity and violence on the third day of the New Year at 14 and the casualty figure in the last 10 days at 37.

However, the Joint Task Force, JTF, "Operation Restore Order" through its spokesman, Lieutenant Colonel Sagir Musa, denied that six soldiers and a policeman died in the Borno incident.

He insisted that one soldier, a policeman and five of the gunmen were killed during the gun duel.

The Borno incident,

according to a source, occurred at about 2 p.m. when the gunmen laid ambush to one of the locations of the troops from the 21 Armoured Brigade, took them unawares and opened fire. The soldiers returned fire leading to an exchange of gunfire that lasted over an hour.

The source said seven security personnel and five gunmen suspected to be terrorists were killed during the encounter.

JTF denies casualty figure

Confirming the incident, Sagir in a statement in Maiduguri, the Borno State Capital said: "This is to confirm that at about 2 p.m, yesterday, January 2, 2013, gunmen attacked 21 Brigade troops' location at Marte, Marte Local Government Area in the Northern part of Borno State."

He said in the process, one soldier, one police personnel and five gunmen lost their lives during an exchange of fire, adding that no civilian casualty was recorded.

He stated that during the clash, the troops were able to recover some items which

include two AK 47 rifles, one locally-made double barrel gun, three magazines loaded with 35 rounds of ammunition, one dane gun and four machetes.

In Adamawa, the attackers struck at about 1: 30 am, killing four victims and wounded two other soldiers and some civilians who are now in critical conditions in some hospitals in the state.

LG secretariat, police station burnt

Sources told *Vanguard* in Adamawa State that the attackers further set the Song Local Government Secretariat and Song Police Divisional Headquarters ablaze and damaged several vehicles.

The Police Public Relations Officer, Adamawa State Police Command, Mohammed Ibrahim, who confirmed the attack said two other soldiers and some civilians were in critical condition as a result of injuries they sustained in the gun battle.

The PPRO said: "It is true that there was an attack on some government formations. We are on our way to the scenes of the attacks with the state commissioner of Police to

assess the level of damage. We had it on good authority that one gallant soldier, a policeman and one old woman with her grand-son were killed in the attack."

He added that the local government secretariat and the police station in the area were razed during the attack while some cars were damaged.

He, however, appealed to law-abiding citizens to go about their lawful activities as the police were doing their best to protect them.

An eye witness told *Vanguard*, on the telephone, that the gunmen shared themselves into two groups before launching the attacks simultaneously.

One of the groups, which was heavily armed, attacked the police station in the heart of the town, shooting sporadically before overrunning and setting it ablaze, while the second group headed for the local government secretariat, ransacked it and set it on fire alongside nearby houses.

Unknown gunmen had in the last two days attacked four other local councils in the state including Maiha, Hong, Fufore and Song.