

## B-Haram slaughters 43 students in Yobe

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By Our Reporters

**DAMATURU—** Barely 24 hours after the soldiers manning the check point close to the main gate of the Federal Government College, Buni Yadi, Yobe State were withdrawn, Boko Haram terrorists, numbering more than 50, yesterday, invaded the school at 1.30 am, killing more than 43 students and staff while abducting 16 female students.

The insurgents who went on a killing spree without any challenge from security agents also burnt down all the students' hostels, the classrooms, and about 40 houses including the council's secretariat complex, high court, government and private establishments as well as telecommunication masts.



(<http://www.vanguardngr.com/2014/02/b-haram-slaughters-43-students-yobe/yobe-school/>)

DAMAGE – The damaged school, yesterday.

The governor's media aide, Alhaji Abdullahi Bego confirmed that on Monday before the attack, the few soldiers stationed close to the school were redeployed without any cogent reason.

The college was the fourth educational institution attacked in the state in the last eight months. Buni Yadi is about 65

kilometres from Damaturu, the state capital, while Gujba town which witnessed a deadly attack at the College of Agriculture, last year where over 40 students were killed, is located south and about 35 kilometres from the state capital.

Inusa Danboyi, an SSS 3 student of the college was one of those killed. His father, Mallam Danboyi who wept uncontrollably at the morgue of General Sani Abacha Specialist Hospital, Damaturu, where he had gone to collect his son's corpse said: "Inusa is my son, and an SSS 3 student who aspired to get western education and was even preparing for his final SSS 3 examination. But see what fate had in stock for him".

Fear has now gripped Damaturu town following the massacre and the abduction of the students as the residents wondered why the security agents could not contain the insurgents, who appeared to be succeeding in their mission. Many parents are also saying they would seek admission for their children, especially female students in other regions of the country where there is peace.

One of the victims who did not want his name mentioned told *Vanguard* at the specialist hospital that "the insurgents who invaded the school gathered all the girls in one room, where they started preaching against western education and warned all of us not to return to the school, and after killing most of the female students who are mostly SSS 3 students, they absconded with over 16 girls".

### **Pupils burnt alive in the attack**

Adamu Garba, who teaches at a secondary school attached to the college said he and other teachers, who ran away through the bush estimated 40 students died in the assault. Garba who spoke to Associated Press in Damaturu, where he and several other teachers fled to, said "the attackers first set ablaze the college's administrative block, then moved to the hostels, where they locked students in and started bombing the buildings. At one hostel, students were trying to climb out of the windows and they were slaughtered like sheep by the terrorists who slit their throats. Others who ran were gunned down and students who could not escape were burnt alive.

"The gunmen, in fact, had to separate the female students from their male counterparts. They opened fire on the male students including some staff of the college, before abducting many of the female students to the Sambisa Forest".

Another source working at the mortuary in General Sani Abacha Specialists Hospital in Damaturu said, "ambulance services have been bringing in bodies from Federal Government College since morning". Likewise, a senior medical source in the hospital, who is not authorized to speak to the press said: "So far, 43 bodies have been brought and are lying in the morgue".

Spokesman of the Joint Task Force (JTF) in Damaturu, Captain Eli Lazarus confirmed that there was an early morning attack on the school college in Buni Yadi by suspected terrorists, but could not give the actual number of casualties as the figures are still being collated, promising to send details to the press as soon as possible.

However, the Commissioner of Police, Mr. Sanusi Ahmed Rufai told journalists that 29 people were killed, but he was not immediately clear if all of the dead were students.

Rufai said he was on his way to the scene with Governor Ibrahim Geidam to assess the extent of the damage.

The authorities of the school, however, confirmed that 29 of its students were killed by the insurgents. Mr Ibrahim Abdul, a senior master, gave the figure while receiving Governor Ibrahim Geidam during a sympathy visit to the school.

Abdul said that 11 students also sustained various gunshot wounds.

### **Defence HQ vows to track the killers**

Meanwhile, the Defence headquarters, yesterday, vowed that it will go after Boko Haram terrorists who perpetrated the attack noted that troops were now conversant with the methods of the attackers.

Speaking on phone with *Vanguard*, Director of Defence Information, Major-General Chris Olukolade said: “Our troops are on the trail of the terrorists who attacked and killed the students. We have discovered where they came from. We now know their methods and how they plan the attacks. We will get them and we will deal with them appropriately”.

### **Jonathan condemns Yobe killings**

In his reaction to the latest killing by Boko Haram, President Goodluck Jonathan in a statement by his Special Adviser on Media and Publicity, Dr Reuben Abati, said he “received with immense sadness and anguish, news of the callous and senseless murder by terrorists, of scores of students at a college in Yobe State in the early hours of today (yesterday).

“On behalf of himself and the Federal Government, President Jonathan extends heartfelt condolences to the parents and relatives of the murdered students.

“The President wholly condemns the heinous, brutal and mindless killing of the guiltless students by deranged terrorists and fanatics who have clearly lost all human morality and descended to bestiality.

“He assures the nation that his administration will not relent in its ongoing efforts to end the scourge of terrorism in parts of the country which has sadly claimed more innocent lives today.

“The Armed Forces of Nigeria and other security agencies will continue to prosecute the war against terror with full vigour, diligence and determination until the dark cloud of mass murder and destruction of lives and property is permanently removed from our horizon,” he said .

Supervising Minister of Education, Barr. Ezenwo Nyesom Wike in his reaction yesterday, condemned the attack. He immediately reached out to the management and staff of the school to commiserate with them.

While commiserating with families of the bereaved, the Minister noted that the Federal Ministry of Education will continue to liaise with security agencies and relevant stakeholders to improve security around all Federal Unity Colleges.

### **Atiku weeps over massacre of school pupils**

Former vice-president, Alhaji Atiku Abubakar, yesterday, broke down in tears when informed of the killings of the students. The former vice president said in a strongly-worded statement by his media office in Abuja that all the Federal Government had been doing about addressing the security situation in the North-East region of the country amounts to mere chasing of shadows if school walls cannot be protected from armed attacks.

Alhaji Abubakar particularly frowned at the impression given by President Goodluck Jonathan at his Presidential Media Chat on Monday that the government has been successful at pushing armed attacks to the fringes of the country.

“My heartfelt condolences go to families of the slain students. It is unfortunate that innocent school children, will become

victims of armed attacks.

“This will not be the first time in recent times that school children are being attacked, and it is particularly disheartening that the Federal Government is yet to devise a strategy of keeping our schools safe from terror attacks. If our counter-insurgency strategies are not strong enough to keep our children safe inside their schools, then one must wonder if such a strategy isn’t mere chasing of shadows,” Atiku said.

According to him, “it is important that the Federal Government ups its counter-insurgency strategy and desists from taking credits in pushing armed attacks to the fringes, as the president would like to put it. No Nigerian’s life is less in value to another.”

He said it is imperative for government to ensure security in schools, in particular the Federal Government Colleges because of their unique role in forging national unity among pupils from diverse backgrounds in the country.

### **Why Boko Haram attacks persist—Interior Minister**

Minister of Interior, Patrick Abba Moro also said yesterday that the Boko Haram insurgents were successful in their attacks because they have changed their tactics and are now wearing camouflages of the soldiers.

The minister also said that the attacks persist because the Nigerian security outfits have not been able to provide security personnel in all the localities of this country.

He stated these in Abeokuta during the commissioning of an administrative block and 36 unit staff quarters of National Security and Civil Defence Corps at the college of Security management.

He said: “In recent times, the insurgents have changed tactics. They have started wearing camouflages of the soldiers. They have started claiming to be members of certain organisations like welfare organisations, Red Cross organisations and infiltrate the local communities. In the process, they mingle with the local communities, and assume the colour of the vigilance groups and security outfits.

“And once they mingle with civilians, it becomes very difficult for the military and security agencies to identify very quickly who is a civilian or not.

“ In the circumstances, the security men don’t have any choice but to make sure that these insurgents, in the midst of civilians, are located but, in the course of this action, civilian casualty certainly will occur.

### **It’s satanic, unjustifiable, says Labour**

Association of Senior Civil Servants of Nigeria, ASCSN, has described the massacre of the 43 students as satanic and unjustifiable in any way.

The trade union (ASCSN) which workers of all the 104 FGCs in the country, otherwise known as unity schools, belong to, said the unprovoked killings of the innocent students was the height of barbarism.

Visibly shaken Secretary General of the Association, Lawal Basir, said though the association was compiling details of the incident for a formal statement today “it is a sad development in our educational sector and national life. It is condemnable in its entirety. It is not justifiable in any way or under any circumstance- be it religion or otherwise. Are

these killers Nigerians? I can't imagine fellow Nigerians killing Nigerian citizens as if they were chicken. We claim we have security in those areas, yet innocent students were murdered without provocation. It is hard to believe. Please, I cannot say more. It is a sad day. We will issue a formal statement tomorrow (today)."

### **APC slams Jonathan's comments on Borno**

The All Progressives Congress (APC) has condemned President Jonathan's vituperation against Borno State Governor, Kashim Shettima during his media chat on Monday night, saying it was unwarranted, unpresidential and petty.

In a statement issued in Abuja, yesterday, by its Interim National Publicity Secretary, Alhaji Lai Mohammed, the party said President Jonathan was wrong to have threatened, no matter how subtly, to withdraw from Borno the troops who are battling against Boko Haram insurgents, and urged him to apologize to the people of Borno and to all Nigerians for the presidential indiscretion.

It said the threat, which was in response to the statement credited to the Governor, that the soldiers needed to be better equipped and more motivated, showed clearly that President Jonathan does not have a full grasp of what is expected of him as President and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces.

"Mr. President, your most important duty as President is to ensure the welfare and security of all Nigerians, irrespective of the criticisms you may face or whether or not they voted for you. Therefore, you are not doing anyone a favour by performing that duty. It is the role you swore an oath to perform.

"Also, even if you feel that the Governor should not have made the statement he made, it is incumbent upon you, as the President and the father of the nation, to take the higher road, instead of choosing a public forum to air your grievances. Wittingly or unwittingly, Mr. President, you have played into the hands of the insurgents who must by now be gloating at the discordant tunes in government over the battle against them," APC said.

Using the President's exact words to the Governor during his media chat, the party said: "A (President) should be mindful of what they say. Yes there are issues, but no matter how frustrated you are you, don't make this kind of statement."

It said based on the anger exhibited by President Jonathan while commenting on Gov. Shettima's statement, the party was justified in its call on the President not to go ahead with his reported plan to remove the Governor and replace him with a military administrator.

"President Jonathan should know that a leader cannot afford to be taking decisions on the basis of a perceived slight or criticism, because such decisions are most likely to be wrong and counter-productive. He should also use his enormous powers as President for the benefit of the people, not to their disadvantage.

"By his threat to pull out the troops from Borno for one month, he has further victimized the good people of the state, who have been at the receiving end of the senseless attacks by Boko Haram. A retraction of his threat and an apology to the people will be a good starting point for Mr. President to make amends," APC said.

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