

# Vanguard

## 30 dead in Boko Haram attack on three villages

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Brutal weekend attacks on three villages by Boko Haram Islamists in the restive northeast of Nigeria have left 30 dead and 20 others wounded, a vigilante told AFP.

“Most of the victims were slaughtered and most of the wounded (had suffered) machete cuts,” Mustapha Karimbe, a civilian helping the Nigerian military fight Boko Haram, said of Saturday’s attacks in the villages of Warwara, Mangari and Bura-Shika in Borno state.

News of the attacks has been slow to emerge because telecom masts in the area have been destroyed in previous Boko Haram raids, hindering communication.

The Islamists invaded the villages, hacking and slaughtering their victims before setting the villages on fire.

The villages are near Buratai, the hometown of Nigeria’s highest military chief Tukur Yusuf Buratai.

Warwara, where 20 people were killed, was the worst affected, said Musa Suleiman, another vigilante.

The attackers killed six people in Bura-Shika and another four in Mangari, he said.

The latest deaths take the number of people killed in Nigeria since President Muhammadu Buhari took office in May to more than 1,530, according to an AFP tally.

Residents of the villages fled to Biu, 30 kilometres (19 miles) away.

Buratai and nearby settlements have recently been the targets of deadly raids by Boko Haram, which have left scores dead and entire villages looted and burnt down.

Residents believe the attacks are in response to the pressure that the army chief is exerting on Boko Haram in counter-insurgency military operations.

On Thursday Boko Haram insurgents killed 14 people — decapitating some of them — when they raided Kamuya village, the hometown of the army chief’s mother, and burnt it down.

Nigeria’s government has vowed to end the Boko Haram insurgency by this month but the deadline looks likely to be missed as attacks persist.

The Islamists’ grip on the region has suffered as a result of offensives launched by local armies, leading to raids like

Saturday's becoming rarer.

There has, however, been a spike in suicide attacks in Nigeria and neighbouring Cameroon, Chad and Niger.

At least 17,000 people have been killed since the conflict began in 2009.

A new 8,700-strong Multi-national Joint Task Force (MNJTF) comprising troops from Nigeria, Niger, Chad, Cameroon and Benin was supposed to have been deployed in late July.

But the African Union-backed force has yet to start operations, with no reason given for the lengthening delay and questions over whether the countries have the resources to commit.

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