

8 killed, scores injured after IED explosion along Maiduguri-Damboa highway



By Ndahi Marama, Maiduguri

At least a driver and other seven passengers were killed with others sustained serious injuries when their bus stepped onto an Improvised Explosive Devices (EIDs) suspected to have been planted by Boko Haram terrorists along the Maiduguri- Damboa- Biu- federal road.

The incident took place on Saturday at about 11:30 am when a retinue/convoy of private and commercial vehicles was being escorted by troops from Damboa to Maiduguri.

It was learnt that the incident occurred near Gidan Kaji (Poultry House) located in the Konduga local government area of the state. The Poultry House has remained closed and deserted for over a decade following the Boko Haram crisis.

This is coming barely a few hours when an Ex-Borno Commissioner of Trade, Commerce and Industry, Hon. Yerima Lawan Kareto lambasted the Minister of Information and National Orientation, Mohammed Idris, who argued that Borno is safe, contrary to reports that security agencies seem to be overwhelmed by terrorists following renewed attacks.

According to the District Head of Damboa, Lawan Maina in a telephone call to our Correspondent, all those who sustained injuries have been evacuated and admitted at the State Specialists Hospital Maiduguri, while the remains of the victims are under profiling.

“It is very saddened to inform you about the explosion that took place along Damboa-Maiduguri road this morning.

“A driver of a hummer bus and seven passengers died at the spot, while many others sustained various degrees of injury.

“I want to appeal to the federal government and the security agencies to redouble their efforts in complementing Borno State Government's support and cooperation to defeat Boko Haram terrorists in the North East sub region”. Maina stated.

At press time, Governor Babagana Zulum and his entourage were at the State Specialist Hospital where he ordered free treatment for the injured ones. Meanwhile, the Chieftain of the ruling All Progressives Congress, APC and former Commissioner of Trade, Commerce and Industry, Hon.Yerima Lawan Kareto has extended an invitation to the Minister of Information and National Orientation, Mohammed Idris to find time, come to Borno and follow him to Damasak, the Council Headquarters of Mobbar local government area alone.

Kareto who hails from Damasak, hitherto a liberated border town with Niger Republic and about 190.5km drive from Maiduguri, the state capital said, he will personally drive the Minister through the thick and thin, so as to see things for himself, before making any statement on the increasing renewed Boko Haram onslaught across the region.

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Recall last Tuesday at the end of an Expanded Security Council Meeting comprised of Heads of Security agencies, traditional rulers and other stakeholders in Maiduguri, Governor Babagana Zulum, who chaired the important and timely meeting suggested that the state may be losing control to Boko Haram insurgents, due to the renewed Boko Haram attacks which have so far killed many lives as well as dislodged Military Formations in Wulgo, Sabon Gari, Wajirko, Izge among others.

However, in a press statement issued to Journalists on Wednesday signed by the Minister, Idris disagreed with Zulum's claim. The minister emphasised that the administration remains committed to combating terrorism and banditry across the nation. He argued that the security agencies are working round-the-clock to bring the situation in parts of Borno and other states under control.

The Minister's statement attracted wider public condemnations. Although, a day after (Thursday 10th April 2025), the minister's media aide, Rabi'u Ibrahim 'back-pedalled' and described the report credited to his Boss as "categorically false and a gross distortion of the minister's remarks."

Ibrahim stressed that, at no point did the minister say, "Ignore Zulum, Boko Haram has not taken over Borno."

However, reacting in a press statement signed by Hon. Kareto, a copy which was made available to our Correspondent at the week end, the former Borno Commissioner said, such terse statement from the Minister's Media aide alleging that he (the Minister) was misquoted, is not enough, but inviting Idris to Borno would also avail him the opportunity to personally tender apology to Government and the good people of Borno.

Kareto expressed shock at the Minister who sits at his comfort zone in Abuja and be dishing out statement himself or through his media aide on the subject matter. He insisted that such back - pedalling tactics were not enough to make Government and the good people of Borno believe that he (Minister Idris) was actually misquoted.

"Let me informed the Minister that such statement is not enough to cool the high tensions raised on the resilient Borno people who have trust and confidence on Governor Babagana Zulum's good governance, this can be attested to numerous people oriented projects and the unrelenting support in cash and kind to security agencies since 2019 to date.

"Minister Idris have to come to Borno under my personal invitation to follow me to Damasak. This would avail him the opportunity to tender an unreserved apology and to tell Nigerians whether Governor Zulum, the Shehu Of Borno, Dr. Abubakar Garbai Al-Amin El-Kanemi and other security agencies who deliberated extensively on the renewed attacks, were all better informed that Borno is losing ground to terrorists or not".

Kareto who said Borno people stood firmly and in solidarity at all times with the present administration, urges Governor Zulum and the security agencies, especially the troops on the frontline not to be deterred by the Minister's outburst, but to remain committed and focused on the fight against the renewed killings and other criminalities bedevilling many communities in the state.