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NIGERIA | Over 70 Dead in Boko Haram Attacks

Over 70 people died this week in a series of attacks by members of the Islamist terror group Boko Haram on towns and villages in Borno and Yobe States of northeastern Nigeria.

The renewed attacks come among reports on May 28 that five more of the girls abducted from their school in Chibok by Boko Haram on May 14 are now free and are being kept in an undisclosed location. Some news sources stated four of the girls were released after they fell ill, while the fifth escaped. The arrest of a suspect in the May 20 bombing in Jos, Plateau State was also announced on the same day.

On May 28, sect members reportedly attacked Gurmushi Village in Marte Local Government Area (LGA), Borno State, killing at least 40 residents and razing the village to the ground.

An estimated 33 people were killed in separate attacks by Boko Haram in Borno and Yobe States on the evening of May 26. Eight people died and several were wounded when Boko Haram gunmen attacked Chinene village in the Chikide-Joghode-Kaghum Ward of Gwoza LGA in Borno State, destroying six churches and razing several homes. Sect members also attacked Amuda Village, where one person was killed and several others were injured. Reportedly the insurgents hoisted their flags in the Ashigashiya Ward of Gwoza LGA, declaring it their headquarters and vowing to launch further attacks on surrounding villages.

In neighboring Yobe State, at least 14 soldiers, 11 policemen and two civilians were killed in Buni Yadi, Gujba LGA, after troops were taken unaware by Boko Haram gunmen. The Divisional Police Officer (DPO) and the Divisional Crime Officer (DCO) are believed to be among the victims of the two-hour night attack, during which the divisional police station, the Emir's palace, the District Head's residence and office, and several military posts were either vandalized or destroyed. One eyewitness told Nigerian news sources the insurgents, who arrived in Armoured Personnel Carriers (APCs) and Toyota Hilux vans, informed civilians they had nothing to fear since the attack was aimed at the military. This was Boko Haram's third assault on Buni Yadi this year.

On May 25, Boko Haram members targeted a market in Kumuyya Village in Biu LGA, Borno State, killing around 20 people and destroying market stalls. Sect members were reportedly angered because the villagers managed to collect a little over \$418 after being given two months to hand over \$1,500 for "God's work".

Meanwhile, villagers in Borno State appear increasingly to be fighting back. On May 23, women reportedly assisted in repelling an evening attack on Attagara Village in Gwoza LGA, when 10 members of Boko Haram descended on the area on motorcycles, seven of whom died at the hands of vigilantes after the women raised the alarm. On the evening of May 25, several sect

members died following an encounter with the Civilian Joint Task Force (JTF) and the military in Kawuri Village in Kandunga LGA. According to the news agency Sahara Reporters, villagers and local hunters had killed at least 100 Boko Haram militants in three different Borno villages by the evening of May 26.

On May 20, the Nigerian Senate approved the renewal of the states of emergency in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe.

Mervyn Thomas, Chief Executive of Christian Solidarity Worldwide said, "While rejoicing at news that more girls have escaped their captors and at the breakthrough in Jos, we also extend our deepest condolences to the families of those killed in these senseless and seemingly relentless attacks. Particularly reprehensible is the reprisal attack on Kumuyya Village, which underlines the fact that as well as indulging in terrorism, Boko Haram is essentially a criminal syndicate that uses religion to extort protection money from vulnerable villagers. The renewal of the state of emergency in, Adamawa Borno and Yobe may stem some of their attacks, but clearly not all. There is a pressing need for a comprehensive overhaul of security arrangements, especially in rural areas, in order to counter Boko Haram and secure the safety of Nigeria's citizens in both urban and rural settings."