

Table of Contents

- ***Satellite images show horrific scale of Boko Haram attack on Baga***
 - ***Girls aged ten used by Boko Haram in suicide attacks***
 - ***Nigeria girls' abduction: Protest march in Abuja***
-

Satellite images show horrific scale of Boko Haram attack on Baga

Amnesty International (15.01.2015) - [Satellite images released by Amnesty International today](#) provide indisputable and shocking evidence of the scale of last week's attack on the towns of Baga and Doron Baga by Boko Haram militants.

Before and after images of two neighbouring towns, Baga (160 kilometres from Maiduguri) and Doron Baga (also known as Doro Gowon, 2.5 km from Baga), taken on 2 and 7 January show the devastating effect of the attacks which left over 3,700 structures damaged or completely destroyed. Other nearby towns and villages were also attacked over this period.

"These detailed images show devastation of catastrophic proportions in two towns, one of which was almost wiped off the map in the space of four days," said Daniel Eyre, Nigeria researcher for Amnesty International.

"Of all Boko Haram assaults analysed by Amnesty International, this is the largest and most destructive yet. It represents a deliberate attack on civilians whose homes, clinics and schools are now burnt out ruins."

The analysis shows just two of the many towns and villages that fell victim to a series of Boko Haram attacks which began on 3 January 2015.

In Baga, a densely populated town less than two square kilometres in size, approximately 620 structures were damaged or completely destroyed by fire.

In Doron Baga more than 3,100 structures were damaged or destroyed by fire affecting most of the 4 square kilometre town. Many of the wooden fishing boats along the shoreline, visible in the images taken on the 2 January, are no longer present in the 7 January images tallying with eye witnesses' testimony that desperate residents fled by boat across Lake Chad.

Thousands of people have fled the violence across the border to Chad and to other parts of Nigeria including Maiduguri, the capital of Borno State. These people are adding to the hundreds of thousands of internally displaced people and refugees, who have already stretched the capacity of host communities and government authorities. Amnesty International is calling on the governments of Nigeria and Chad to ensure these displaced people are protected and provided with adequate humanitarian assistance.

The destruction shown in these images matches the horrific testimonies that Amnesty International has gathered. Interviews with eyewitnesses as well as with local government officials and local human rights activists suggest that Boko Haram militants shot hundreds of civilians.

A man in his fifties told Amnesty International what happened in Baga during the attack: "They killed so many people. I saw maybe around 100 killed at that time in Baga. I ran to the bush. As we were running, they were shooting and killing." He hid in the bush and was later discovered by Boko Haram fighters, who detained him in Doron Baga for four days.

Those who fled describe seeing many more corpses in the bush. "I don't know how many but there were bodies everywhere we looked," one woman told Amnesty International.

Another witness described how Boko Haram were shooting indiscriminately killing even small children and a woman who was in labour. "[H]alf of the baby boy is out and she died like this," he said.

Boko Haram fighters have repeatedly targeted communities for their perceived collaboration with the security forces. Towns that formed state-sponsored militia groups known as the Civilian Joint Task Force (Civilian JTF) have suffered particularly brutal attacks. Civilian JTF groups were active in Baga and a senior military official confirmed to Amnesty International confidentially that at times the military took these members on operations to attack Boko Haram positions. A witness told Amnesty International that during the attack on Baga that he heard Boko Haram fighters saying they were searching for Civilian JTF members, as they went house to house shooting men of fighting age.

After the attack on Baga, witnesses describe how Boko Haram drove into the bush rounding up women, children and the elderly who had escaped. According to one woman who was detained for four days "Boko Haram took around 300 women and kept us in a school in Baga. They released the older women, mothers and most of the children after four days but are still keeping the younger women."

Amnesty International is calling on Boko Haram to stop killing civilians. The deliberate killing of civilians and destruction of their property by Boko Haram are war crimes and crimes against humanity and must be duly investigated.

The government should take all possible legal steps to restore security in the north-east and ensure protections of civilians.

"Up until now, the isolation of Baga combined with the fact that Boko Haram remains in control of the area has meant that it has been very difficult to verify what happened there. Residents have not been able to return to bury the dead, let alone count their number. But through these satellite images combined with graphic testimonies a picture of what is likely to be Boko Haram's deadliest attack ever is becoming clearer," said Daniel Eyre.

"This week, Nigeria's Director of Defence Information stated that the number of people killed in Baga including Boko Haram fighters "has so far not exceeded about 150". These images, together with the stories of those who survived the attack, suggest that the final death toll could be much higher than this figure."

Girls aged ten used by Boko Haram in suicide attacks

The Times (12.01.2015) – Three young girls with explosives strapped to their bodies have killed at least 22 people in northern Nigeria in the latest spate of deadly attacks to be blamed on the Islamist militants Boko Haram.

While the insurgents have used female bombers in the past – and once sent a bomber disguised as a student in a school assembly – local officials said that the girls were all thought to be aged ten, the youngest bombers of Boko Haram’s five-year insurgency.

The first attack on Saturday struck a chicken market in Maiduguri, the capital of Borno state, killing at least 19 people. Survivors said that the bomber was blown in two as she was frisked by vigilantes. They said it was not clear if she knew what she was doing. One man told a local newspaper that he thought the bomb had been remote controlled.

The second attack struck Potiskum, a trading hub in neighbouring Yobe state, killing at least three people as well as the two bombers.

The blasts which injured at least 44 people came days after the insurgents slaughtered up to 2,000 people in raids around the banks of Lake Chad, close to the borders with Chad, Cameroon and Niger.

Local officials said that the militants seized at least a dozen towns and villages last weeks, burning shops and homes to the ground and sending up to 20,000 people fleeing.

Yanae Grema, a resident of Baga where the militants overran an international military base last week, said that once he managed to escape from the town, he was stepping over corpses for five kilometres.

Military officials said that militants had also tried to overrun the capital of Yobe state on Friday night but they were eventually repelled after fierce gun battles that destroyed a mosque, a market and the nearby shops.

President Jonathan of Nigeria, who is running for re-election next month, has blamed the army failure to defeat Boko Haram on Muhammadu Buhari, his main rival and a former defence minister who the president claimed had failed to equip the armed forces.

However, rights groups have accused the army – which is riven by corruption – of committing arbitrary arrests, rapes and extra-judicial killings, which have driven ordinary people into the arms of the insurgents.

A Pentagon official told Congress that the Nigerian army was becoming afraid to even engage the insurgents who seem to be shifting from attacks such as suicide bombings to seizing territory and towns.

President Jonathan said that the insurgents who are fighting to establish an Islamic state, threatened the territorial integrity of Nigeria. He declared a state of emergency in three states in 2013. Yet he has faced widespread criticism for failing to stem the violence, which has become ever more frequent and ferocious.

More than 200 girls kidnapped from a school in Chibok last April are still missing and the head of Boko Haram said that anyone who thought they might be released “was day dreaming”.

Boko Haram whose name means “western education is forbidden” started its armed insurgency in 2009 after its leader was beaten to death in police custody. It is fighting to revive a mediaeval caliphate in Africa’s most populous country. Maiduguri has borne the brunt of the attacks. At least ten people were killed in the same market on December 1, and 45 people died in a similar attack in November.

Nigeria girls' abduction: Protest march in Abuja

BBC (30.04.2014) / <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-27216931> - Demonstrators are to march through the Nigerian capital Abuja to press for the release of more than 200 schoolgirls abducted by militants two weeks ago.

They say they will march to the National Assembly and demand more action from the government, which has been criticised for not doing enough.

The Islamist group Boko Haram has been blamed for abducting the girls from their school in Chibok, Borno state.

Boko Haram has not yet made any response to the accusation.

The group, whose name means "Western education is forbidden" in the local Hausa language, has been blamed for 1,500 deaths in attacks this year alone.

'Million-woman march'

A "million-woman protest march" has been called by the Women for Peace and Justice organisation on Wednesday to demand more resources for securing the girls' release.

They will hold a rally at Unity Fountain in central Abuja and then march to the National Assembly to hand over a letter demanding Nigeria's missing daughters are returned home.

Anger has mounted in recent days. Parents have criticised the government's search and rescue efforts and the number of missing girls has been disputed.

March organiser Hadiza Bala Usman told the BBC that the women wanted to know why soldiers seemed so ill-equipped to find the girls.

She warned that the abductions would discourage parents from sending their daughters to school in an area where few girls are given an education.

Saruta, a woman from Chibok, told the BBC's Newsday that the community was desperate for help.

"For how long are we going to wait for the government to help us? We can't bear it anymore. We can't," she said, breaking down in tears.

"We just want the government to help us, we want the whole world to hear this and help us," she said.

On Tuesday, a local official said some of the girls may have been taken to neighbouring states and forced to marry the militants.

Mr Bitrus, a Chibok community leader, said 43 of the girls had "regained their freedom" after escaping, while 230 were still in captivity. He was adamant that this figure - higher than previous estimates - was correct.

Swathes of north-eastern Nigeria are, in effect, off limits to the military, allowing the militants to move the girls towards, or perhaps even across, the country's borders with impunity, says the BBC's Will Ross in Abuja.

On Tuesday, dozens of women from Borno state staged a demonstration outside Nigeria's parliament, calling for the rescue of their daughters, AFP reports.

"Our grievance is this: for the past two weeks and this is the third week, we have not heard anybody talking to us," protest leader Naomi Mutah was quoted as saying.

The government has said the security forces are searching for the girls, but its critics believe more could have been done.

The students were about to sit their final year exam and so are mostly aged between 16 and 18.

Boko Haram leader Abubakar Shekau first threatened to treat captured women and girls as slaves in a video released in May 2013.

It fuelled concern at the time that the group was adhering to the ancient Islamic belief that women captured during war are slaves with whom their "masters" can have sex, correspondents say.
