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Andrew Ahiente: "Police Arrest Taliban Leader"

The Nigerian Police said yesterday it has arrested a Taliban leader, one Abubakar Aliyu Abubakar, a radical Islamic fundamentalist from Yobe State, and a 200 level drop-out from the University of Maiduguri.

The feat, the police said, was a fallout of the renewed onslaught against armed radical youths and Islamic fundamentalists whose activities have been threatening the peace of the nation.

"During investigation, Abubakar claimed to be an indigene of Yobe State and the son of Alhaji Madugu Karfi, former secretary to the Military Government of Borno State between 1987-1990, and presently, a Commissioner in Yobe State Population Commission", the police said.

A statement made available by the Force Public Relations Officer (FPRO), Mr. Chris A. Olakpe (DCP), said the suspect gave the name of their gang leader as one Mohammed Ali, who recruited them after being trained as a Sharia law enforcer.

Among other things, the suspect further told the police "that on the night of Monday, September 20, 2004, their gang of about 30 men attacked Bama Police Station in Borno State, killing the Area Commander, Turayo Ismaila, an Assistant Commissioner of Police and Mallam Modu Chelube, a member of a vigilante group".

The suspect also said that they attacked Gwazo Police Station where they killed one Sgt. James Kwagga and W/Pcx Marry Hassan. The police said the hoodlums burnt four police vehicles and also made away with several arms and ammunition.

With the combined efforts of the men of Operation Fire for Fire, mobilised to the scene, the police said 14 members of the gang were shot dead as they tried to escape through Gwoza Hills.

Among the things recovered from the gang, according to the police, include some arms and ammunition hitherto carted away from the police stations.

Assuring members of the public in the North-eastern zone of the country of safety of life and property in the area and all the trouble zones across the nation, Olakpe said the Inspector General (IG), Mr. Tafa Balogun, has vowed that the police will not rest until all the members of the gang presently at large were arrested and brought to book.

He also warned other troublemakers across the country, emphasising that the nation has no place for them, among other social miscreants, religious zealots and all forms of undesirable elements.

The Islamic Fundamentalists known as Taliban have lately been terrorising the people of Borno and Yobe State.