

Muslims ‘shielded Christians from Shabaab’



The bus Al-Shabaab militants attacked in Mandera on December 21, 2015 killing one person and injuring three others. PHOTO | MANASE OTSIALO | NATION MEDIA GROUP

In Summary

- **Governor Ali Roba said locals protected non Muslim passengers thereby preventing a massacre similar to last year’s when Al-Shabaab members hijacked and killed 28 people, mainly teachers, in a Nairobi-bound bus.**
- **Last week, elders from Wargadud in Somalia were sent to Kenya to ask the militia to leave Mandera within 36 hours but the terrorists are said to have ignored the ultimatum.**
- **The 7am attack happened between Dabacity Town and Borehole II, according to Deputy County Commissioner Julius Otieno.**

**By LUCAS BARASA, MANASE OTSIALO, and DAVID MUCHUI, DAILY NATION,
21 December 2015**

Two people were killed and three others injured when suspected Al-Shabaab militants attacked a bus and a lorry in Mandera on Monday.

Governor Ali Roba said locals protected non Muslim passengers thereby preventing a massacre similar to last year’s when Al-Shabaab members hijacked and killed 28 people, mainly teachers, in a Nairobi-bound bus.

“They refused to separate from non Muslims and told the attackers to kill all passengers or leave. That is why some locals were injured trying to protect non Muslim passengers,” Mr Roba told the Nation on phone from abroad.

One of the survivors, Mr Abdirashid Adan who is admitted to Mandera County Referral Hospital said the attackers scattered when they heard the sound of an oncoming lorry.

“We were forced to stop after they shot at our bus. One of the bullets injured me in the buttocks. We alighted but one person attempted to run away and was shot dead,” Mr Adan said.

He went on: “As the attackers started separating passengers according to their religions, we heard the sound of an oncoming lorry. They all ran back into the bush thinking it was police. After realizing it was not police, they stopped the lorry as we dashed back into the bus and sped off.”

“I am told the Al-Shabaab killed another person said to be a traffic police officer based in Elwak.” A chief who spoke to the Nation on condition of anonymity claimed many members of the terror group arrived in Mandera South on December 15. “We have reported this to the government but no action has been taken even as the militants continue to terrorise locals,” said the chief.

Last week, elders from Wargadud in Somalia were sent to Kenya to ask the militia to leave Mandera within 36 hours but the terrorists are said to have ignored the ultimatum. The chief warned that locals may be forced to arm themselves to fight the militants.

Mr Roba said Muslims who were part of the 62 passengers shouted at the militants saying non-locals should be left alone, forcing the militants to panic and flee. “The militants left in a hurry fearing retaliation by residents from nearby villages,” he added.

TWO PASSENGERS

The 7am attack happened between Dabacity Town and Borehole II, according to Deputy County Commissioner Julius Otieno.

“Initial reports indicate two people have died and three injured. Those injured are the driver of the bus and two passengers. The militants fled after the attack. Our team is tracking the attackers,” Mr Otieno said.

The militants also seized a lorry that was behind the Makkah bus and the conductor killed after he failed to recite Islamic shahada, Mr Roba said.

Mr Otieno said the killers forced the passengers to alight from the bus and attempted to separate Muslims and non-Muslims.

“They were trying to identify who were Christians and who were not. They told the non-Christians to return to vehicle,” Mr Otieno said.