

# Nigeria military restores phone service in Maiduguri

Nigeria's military has restored the mobile phone service in the embattled city of Maiduguri, a day after a major raid by Islamists, which prompted a round-the-clock ban on movements.



Phone services have been restored in Nigeria's north-eastern town of Maiduguri. Image: Wiki Images

The phones were switched off in May when a state of emergency was declared in the area, a move the military said would help block Boko Haram from co-ordinating attacks in the north-eastern city.

"The telephone lines in and out of Maiduguri were switched on. They should be working now," defence spokesman Chris Olukolade told AFP but he added: "I cannot say how long this will last."

The mobile network also worked briefly for one day in July. It was not clear if service had been restored across Borno state, of which Maiduguri is the capital.

Several calls made from Lagos to Maiduguri went through on Tuesday (3 December) and Olukolade said the decision was made "because the situation on the ground is conducive to phone services being restored."

## Boko Haram attacks bases

That explanation raised questions, however, as it came a day after a daring Boko Haram attack on air force and army bases in the city that caused heavy damage to military hardware.

Maiduguri residents voiced frustration over the impact of the order to remain indoors, saying it left families without access to food and water.

"We are being punished unnecessarily," said Gambo Datti, a grocery seller and resident of the Damboa road neighbourhood. "I have a wife and five children. As I am talking to you now, we have nothing for lunch," he added.

The Borno state government has announced the relaxation of the curfew, ordering residents to stay off the streets from 7:00 pm and 6:00 am.

Maiduguri had been the epicentre of the four-year Boko Haram insurgency, which has killed thousands. The city had become safer in recent months and the military claimed the Islamist rebels had been largely chased out of their historic stronghold.

But experts said the Boko Haram attack served as a clear reminder that the insurgent group remained strong and was still capable of attacking major urban centres.

Source: AFP via I-Net Bridge

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