

Bomb blasts latest: 90 persons killed in Damaturu

HASSAN JIRGI,

NO fewer than 90 dead bodies were yesterday confirmed dead following last Friday's bombings in Damaturu, Yobe state capital. A similar blast also occurred in Maiduguri, the Borno state capital also last Friday. 53 had been officially confirmed dead.

Our Correspondent in Damaturu gathered that those confirmed dead included including: 11 police officers, two special military, two Federal Road Safety Corps, one Customs officer and many civilians were killed in Damaturu, the state capital of Yobe, shortly after Bomb blasts at the three-story building of the residence of anti-terrorist squad along Maiduguri.

According to our state correspondent, unidentified persons planted bombs at Yobe state police Headquarters and the residence of anti-terrorist squad on Damaturu-Maiduguri road, which destroyed their vehicles just as many property were destroyed during the incident, Friday.

Other areas affected by the bomb blasts included some part of the newly constructed federal secretariat, United Bank of Africa (UBA) and First Bank (FB) on Gashu'a road, where the explosion occurred.

Similarly, in Potiskum Local Government area of the state, some houses and shops at Muhammadu Idrissa way along Kano road were razed down. Many police band, military band, and prison service vehicle were also burnt down. The incident occurred shortly after Juma'at prayer in Damaturu the state capital.

Meanwhile, undisclosed sources close to the Damaturu General hospital said that not less than 90 corps of the police and civilians were deposited in the hospital at Damaturu. Some more critical cases were taken to University of Maiduguri Teaching Hospital (UMTH). Sunday Champion learnt that as yesterday many more of the wounded had died thereby increasing the toll of the dead.

Confirming the bombings and killings on Friday, the commissioner of police, Solaiman Lawan said: "suspected bombers in some vehicles attacked and bombed the three-story building at the 300 housing estates on Maiduguri road at about 4.20pm, destroying the building along with two patrol vehicles.

According to him after the Damaturu blast, the suspects proceeded to Potiskum and threw improvised explosive devices at the police station, but did not destroy the station. Instead, four shops opposite the police station went up in flames killing some civilians which we are still ascertaining from the Potiskum Divisional Police station."

He said that men of from Yobe state police and Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC), Nigeria Civil Defense and Road Safety



Corps were killed, including two special Military Police in the multiple attacks.

However, the commissioner of police said that no arrest was made and urged the public to go about their business.

Residents in Damaturu, the state capital who spoke to journalists said that they heard a loud bang followed by sporadic shootings. They also alleged that it was the police that planted the bomb.

Musa Sani who lives close

to the scene of the incident claimed that he and other members of his family came from Maiduguri, Borno state to Damaturu following the security situation in Borno state and added; "it was a frightening day for us because there were serious gun shots. We hope that Yobe state is one of the peaceful state among the 36 state of the federation, this is unfortunately."

"The blasts are meant to scare people away or to make people living outside Damaturu to think that all is

not well here," he said

Meanwhile, the Joint Military Task Force (JTF) has cordoned off all the areas affected by the blasts. When Sunday Champion visited the areas, some stern-looking military personnel were seen keeping watch over the area and also removing the debris of blasts.

The JTF has also started to keep vigil over public buildings in the state, giving the bombing of some of such buildings recently.

Jonathan commiserates with victims of Borno, Yobe, bomb blasts

BY TONY AILEMEN, Abuja

PRESIDENT Goodluck Jonathan Yesterday cancel all his engagements in honou of those that lost their lives in the bomb blasts incident that occurred in Maiduguri and Damaturu, State Capitals of Borno and Yobe respectively

The President who was scheduled to attend the wedding ceremony of his younger brother Azibabariolu Jonathan in Yenagoa, the Bayelsa State capital yesterday morning was also scheduled to flag off this year's Christian Pilgrimage at the Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport in Abuja later in the afternoon.

The president had to put off personal attendance at the two events as a result of the blasts.

Special Adviser to the President on Media and Publicity, Dr. Reuben Abati stated this while speaking with Journalists in Abuja yesterday evening

The President, he said "is very sad over the incident particularly when it is happening at this time of the Holy Season of Eid-El-Kabir.

"The President had to cancel all his engagements including the wedding ceremony in Yenagoa in Bayelsa State and the flagging off of this year's Christian Pilgrimage to commiserate with families of those who lost their lives in the incident and others who were injured", Abati said Adding "Whoever is behind the dastardly act cannot be said to be a true Muslim, particularly at this Holy season of the Eid-El-Kabir when we

are to reflect on the ideals and virtues of brotherly love, peace, harmony, selflessness, tolerance, honesty, fairness, justice and equity taught by Islam and other religions"

Dr Abati also dismissed insinuations that the President was not in Yenagoa to attend the wedding ceremony of his brother because he was avoiding lobbyists who may be trying hard to pressure him to intervene in the Bayelsa State governorship ticket of the Peoples Democratic Party.

According to him, the President is unhappy with the incident and he is calling on all Nigerians to eschew violence and embrace tolerance, brotherly love, harmony and peace needed to bring about development and progress of the country

Two shot in another Kaduna attack

BY AGAJU MADUGBA Kaduna

REPORTS from southern part of Kaduna state say unknown gun men shot two persons at Kurmi Bi village, behind the palace of the Agwam Bajju, in Zangon-Kataf local

government area, on Friday evening.

Earlier on Thursday, at about midnight, unidentified gun men had attacked a church at Tabak village, near Zonkwa, killing two persons and injuring at least eleven others.

According to eyewitness accounts, the latest incident occurred at about 10. 30 pm on Friday, during which one person died on the spot while the other person was rushed to the St. Louis Hospital, Zonkwa.

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Security agents are said to have cordoned off entrance and exit points in the area but there were no reports of arrest.

The interim Chairman of Zango-Kataf local government area, Dominic Yahaya, who confirmed the report, but said the situation had been brought under control.

Jonathan promises end to 'tortuous' transformation agenda soon

KENNETH OFOMA, Abakaliki

PRESIDENT Goodluck Jonathan has appealed to Nigerians to be patient with the federal government over the current socio-economic challenges facing the nation, assuring that although the journey to the realization of the transformation agenda was tortuous, he was optimistic of taking the nation to the Promised Land sooner than expected.

President Jonathan who spoke yesterday in Abakaliki during the civic reception in honour of some Federal Government's appointees from Ebonyi State noted that the federal government was resolute in the pursuit of plans for the country to develop critical infrastructure that will galvanize the economy and create employment to teeming youths.

President Jonathan who was represented by the Minister of Defence, Mr. Haliru Morhammed Bello, reiterated the determination of his administration to establish and equip more new federal universities in some states of the federation to ensure qualitative education and even distribution of federal government projects across the country.

He said that the establishment of new Federal Universities in some state was a far reaching measure to

bring tertiary institution closer to the people.

According to him; "the sitting of the new Federal University in Ebonyi State is deliberate. As a far reaching measure to bring tertiary education closer to the people, the Federal Executive Council took the bold decision to create more new federal universities and Ebonyi state which coincidentally happens to be one of the new states that were up and coming was considered so that more federal presence shall be registered in the young state."

"This is without prejudice to the fact that the policy is a continuous one and more federal universities shall be sited in more states subsequently," he said.

The representative of President Jonathan regretted the delay in the release of the funds for works undertaken on behalf of the Federal Government by the Ebonyi state adding that the delay would be communicated to the president for necessary payment to the state government.

He stated further that the takeover of the Fistula Center in Ebonyi state to a National Fistula Center were all done in good faith to ensure equitable distribution of the Nation's scarce resources and projects.

President Jonathan commended the state government for organizing the civic reception in honour of the appointees adding that it is noteworthy and heartwarming to witness a state government celebrating the just and equitable distribution of positions and portfolios due to them from the Federal Government as enshrined in the constitution.

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