

21 killed in Jos Catholic Church bomb blast

RAYMOND GUKAS, Jos and
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EXACTLY two weeks after the deadly suicide bomb killed five in a church in Jos Plateau state, at least 21 persons were yesterday feared killed in yet another suicide attack at St. Finbarr's Catholic Church in Rayfield, Jos south local government area of the state.

This attack which occurred while the church was in its second session, it was gathered left seven parishioners and four suspected suicide bombers

dead with about 20 casualties taken to various hospitals within the city for treatments.

However, 10 people were reportedly killed by Christian youths in reprisal attacks after a suspected suicide bomber hit a Catholic church.

"The situation is bad," health commissioner for Jos Sati Dakwat said. "Several were killed in the reprisal attacks, more than 10."

Trouble started when the suicide bombers, using a Volkswagen vector car

wanted to force itself into the church premises, but the Boys Scout keeping watch, refused it entry, a development that forced the bombers to detonate the object, causing stampede around the church and its environs.

At the time of filing this report, members of the Special Task Force (STF) have cordoned the church area, which ran though the GRA leading to the seat of government in the state.

This development further confirmed the earlier fears

within the last week pointing to the fact that about seven buses conveying members of the dreaded Boko Haram sect members was sighted in the state, thereby leading to security vehicle checks around the city and environs.

Though, the STF spokesman, Captain Mdahyelya Markus could not be reached for comments, the state governor, Jonah Jang visited the scene and called for restraint and vigilance on the part of the people, even as he assured that all would be done to track those behind the dastardly act.

But reacting to the blast, the Catholic Archbishop of Jos Most Rev Ignatius Kaigama expressed sadness over the incident, adding that it was evil and criminal and that it will never stop Christians from worshipping and appealed for calm.

At the scene of the blast, an eyewitness confirmed to our correspondent that a camouflage jacket suspected to be of the military was noticed, but on arrival, it was not cited by reporters.

The church is the traditional worship centre of the immediate past deputy governor, dame Pauline Tallen, who, it was learnt was out of town and was not in church at the time of blast.

Dr. Matawwal Bitrus, Medical Director, Plateau Specialist Hospital, Jos,

confirmed that the hospital had received the corpses of six victims. Another corpse was said to have been deposited at the morgue of Jos University Teaching Hospital. Chief Medical Director, Dr. Ishaya Pam, said: "we received 15 casualties from the attack. One of the victims died while 14 sustained various degrees of injuries and in critical conditions."

"Some sustained varying degrees of burns while three had gunshot wounds. But they are in stable condition and responding to treatment." On its part, the Red Cross indicated that it had taken 22 people injured in the blast to various hospitals in Jos metropolis.

"For now, we have 22 injured at Jos University Teaching Hospital, Plateau Specialist Hospital and Air Force Military Hospital in Jos.

"Many of the injured are in critical conditions but they are stable and responding to treatment. But we also note that some of the injured were taken to different hospitals in the metropolis by different people.

"Those ones that were taken to these hospitals by several people mostly, relatives, we are not able to know their actual numbers for now," Mr. Manasseh Pampe, State Chairman of the Red Cross said. STF spokesman, Capt. Markus Mdahyelya, said the security

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says must be verified by the Bureau.

Sources alleged how a certain contract which was approved at the cost of over N978 million but was cut to about N168 million by the BPP after its verification exercise.

It was gathered that following the desire by the administration to cut costs of contracts, the administration has decided to further empower the Bureau, which has the duty to x-ray contracts whose sums are above N1 billion.

Sources said that the discovery has further encouraged President Goodluck Jonathan has decided to further empower the BPP.

But the Bureau is said to have come under intense pressure in recent times, following persistent complains that it has developed an attitude of cutting the costs of contracts to "ridiculous levels."

The contract papers are always submitted to the BPP after the completion of

Ministers

the procedures within the ministries and parastatals.

A source in the know said: "In 2011 alone, the BPP saved this government the sum of N333 billion. That amount covers contracts whose sums are above N1 billion. Nobody knows how much would have been lost from contracts whose sums are below N1 billion which are not verified by the Bureau."

"In one particular instance, one contract was cut from N978 million to N168 million and it was executed with the new sum after the BPP proved its figures."

The bad blood between the BPP and the Ministries and parastatals is however said to be growing following the adoption by the World Bank of the National Standard Bidding Documents and Request for Proposals, which was prepared by the BPP.

The adoption of the standard procedures for contracts and projects by the World Bank last September is according to sources being seen as a way of further

empowering the BPP.

As a result of the perceived intrusion of the BPP on costing of big projects, some Ministers and Permanent Secretaries were said to have made representations to the President with indications that the Bureau often slows down the projects award process. "As a way of beating the strict procedures of BPP, some Ministries and parastatals have been lobbying for selective bidding while others want to delay their contract awards till late in the fiscal year so that they can adopt selective bidding, but reports have reached the President on such tactics."

Meanwhile the World Bank has asked government to apply its bidding standard documents in what it called international competitive bidding procurement method for award of contract or goods and non-consulting services estimated to cost more than \$200,000.

The World Bank however commended the BPP for the insisting on compliance for standard procedure in the award of contracts.

Zenith Bank's profit hits N44bn after tax

ZENITH Bank has continued with its N192bn, indicating an increasing dominance in its

charge increased to N24.3bn compared to N4.3bn in 2010 Financial Year. The increase

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CP Imo state; Mr. Abayomi Akeremale, CP Nasarawa state; Mr. Ezechukwu Osita, CP Cross Rivers state; Mr. Ikechukwu Aduba, CP Delta state; Mr. Bala Hassan, CP Borno state; Mr. Mohammed Andabawa, CP Rivers state; Mr. Bala Nasarawa, CP Anambra

Police

state; Mr. MJ Abubakar, CP Kaduna state, and Mr. Ambrose Aisabor, CP Abia state.

The list also included Mr. Moses Saba-Sodangi, CP Railways; Mr. James Caurick, CP Airport; Joel Theophilus, CP