

Blast, Attacks Mar Anniversary

- 19 Killed in Zamfara, 3 in Maiduguri Attacks
- Tight Security in Abuja as Jonathan Celebrates in Villa
- Gowon, Shagari, Ukiwe Concerned About Security
- Nigerians Have Lost Confidence in Govt -Balarabe Musa

From Lawan Danjuma Adamu, Gusau, Hamza Idris
& Yahaya Ibrahim, Maiduguri

At least, 22 persons lost their lives yesterday in a bomb blast and gun attacks that took place in Maiduguri, Borno State and Ligyado village in Zamfara State. The assaults took place on a day that the police deployed 13,000 men to maintain tight security as Nigeria marked the least exciting Independence anniversary in the last 51 years.

In Ligyado village in Maru Local Government Area of Zamfara state, suspected armed robbers launched what residents referred to as a reprisal attack, and killed 19 persons, including women, while seven others were injured. Two persons were killed in a Maiduguri bomb blast, while another, a butcher, was shot dead by some unidentified gunmen.

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Parade march at the Presidential Change of Guards parade to mark 51st Independence

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Low-key celebration of Independence Day: Nigerians have lost confidence in govt –Balarabe Musa

From Isa Sa'idu, Kaduna

According to Alhaji Abdulkadir Balarabe Musa, the former civilian governor of Kaduna State, the low key celebration that characterised the 51st anniversary of the Nigerian independence was an indication that Nigerians have lost confidence in the government.

He said: "Nigerians have been indifferent to the ceremony because they feel it is not justified because of the suffering they keep enduring without end and the general negative state of the nation and the bankruptcy of the political leadership. It is an indication that Nigerians have lost confidence in the regime."

In the same vein, the President of the Civil Right Congress (CRC), a human right organisation, Shehu Sani, said the low key celebration is not about prudence or economics as the government officials want the public to believe.

"The spin doctors want us to euphemistically believe that the low key celebration was about prudence

and economics. The down grade of the festivities is an exigent move to cleverly frost and deflect the reality of the doddering nation in a security emergency. The deceptive rationality averred by the government makes no meaning to the conscious. The government decision only physically attests to our stasis and paralysis as a nation and visibly affirms the impotency and ineptitude on their side. Under the watch of a succession of self serving intellectually bankrupt leaders, our once great country is becoming a clone of North Waziristan and Columbia.

"A nation that cannot roll out its drums to celebrate its birthday has in its conscience something to hide, something to be afraid of or something to be ashamed of. Low key celebration affirms to the reality of a nation in official mourning or a state of bereavement. Our 51st birthday will forever be remembered for its fear, bloodshed, surrender and moral resignation of its leadership," Sani said.

From Lawal Ibrahim, Gombe

As a result of the trailer tragedy which has so far claimed 17 lives in Gombe State, the state governor, Ibrahim Hassan Dankwambo, has cancelled the 51st Independence and the state's 15th anniversary celebrations, to mourn the colossal loss of lives in the incident.

In a statement issued by the Secretary to the State Government Abubakar Sulei Bage government

Trailer tragedy: Dankwambo suspends celebrations

said the governor had agreed to put off all the activities slated at Gombe stadium yesterday, owing to the trailer accident, which claimed several lives in its wake.

The statement urged people of the state to devote the time in praying for the repose of the souls of those who died in the incident and the speedy recovery of those who sustained various injuries. He also urged them

to pray that such incident never occurred again in the state.

Sunday Trust investigation revealed that seven people lost their lives a day after in the hospital when a trailer lost control opposite Dukku market in the metropolis and crushed 10 at the spot. Nine others are still in critical conditions at both Gombe Specialist Hospital and Federal Medical Centre.

From Hir Joseph, Lafia

A senior police officer and two rank and file – one of them a woman, collapsed yesterday, while on parade for the celebration of Nigeria's 51 Independence anniversary at Government House in Lafia, Nasarawa State.

The senior officer, an Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP), whose name *Sunday Trust* got only as ASP Adamu, slumped at exactly 10:50am. It when Governor Umaru Tanko Al-Makura was taking salute from the Guard of Honour laid by officers and men of the police, and those of other sister services including the Federal Roads Safety Commission

3 policemen collapse during parade in Lafia

(FRSC), the Civil Defence Corps and the Prisons Service as well as Boys Scout. The three who collapsed policemen.

The state commissioner of police, Musa Abdulsalam Daura, was there in ceremonial attire, but refused to speak to newsmen who sought comments from him. The police commissioner remained in his seat while his officer and men were held and rushed to the ambulances.

The two junior officers collapsed 30 minutes before their senior, and were rushed out for resuscitation by men of the Red Cross. The space

their ordeal created in the parade were immediately closed by officers next to them, who had to move in line to cover up.

The three officers were rushed to two waiting ambulances, and allowed to remain there, on drip throughout the period of the ceremony.

A doctor, who attended to ASP Adamu, confirmed the collapse, but did not disclose his identities. He said the senior officer collapsed from hypoglycemia (low blood sugar), because "he stood in the sun for too long, on empty belly."

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The attack in Zamfara State came less than two months after a suspected retaliatory attack by men suspected to be armed robbers invaded two villages in Dansadau town in Maru Local Government Area.

The attack was launched on Ligyado village around 5:00am yesterday morning by a group suspected armed robbers numbering about 150, relations of victims told *Sunday Trust*. Eyewitnesses said the attackers were armed with AK47 assault rifles, cutlasses among other weapons.

It was gathered that the community was targeted for the deadly attack because of alleged support that was rendered by its vigilante men to neighbouring villagers during an operation for flushing out suspected robbers from their midst.

Following the said campaign in which many suspected robbers were reportedly lynched to death, armed robbery gangs stormed Guru and Tungal Baushe villages during the Ramadan fast in August, where they killed 10 persons and injured more than a dozen others in a predawn attack.

Yesterday's attack was, however, deadlier, according to eyewitnesses, as the attackers were said to have gone house-to-house, pretending to be visitors, while they shot at anyone that came out to receive them.

Most of the victims were fired severally by the attackers, while others were machete to death. When our correspondent visited the Federal Medical Centre (FMC) Gusau yesterday night, corpses of the deceased were seen being deposited in the mortuary in the presence of relations and the traditional ruler of Dansadau.

Similarly, about four victims were reported to have been admitted at the hospital with

Bomb blast, attacks kill 22

gunshot and machete wounds, among them a woman said to be shot in the abdomen. One of the survivors, Sa'adu, who suffered bullet and cutlass wounds, lost his parents and a sibling to the rampaging robbers.

Another victim, Junaidu, also sustained multiple bullet wounds and was waiting to be operated.

A brother of one of the victims who gave his name as Ahmad Tsauri Linyado disclosed that they survived the attack by fleeing into corn fields, while he stated that the robbers had threatened to rape women.

"When they entered Malam Shehu's house, they slaughtered him and his wife as well as his brother and his son," he said. The survivor added that the robbers also set ablaze several houses and all the vehicles in the village. *Sunday Trust* also gathered that the robbers, who were believed to be of Fulani extraction, plundered valuables and stole money from their victims during the raid.

Meanwhile, detachments of soldiers and policemen have been deployed to the area after the incident, the villagers told our correspondent. It was gathered that the corpses were transferred to FMC Gusau at the instance of the state governor, Alhaji Abdul Aziz Yari Abubakar.

Confirming the attack on phone earlier, the Emir of Dansadau, Alhaji Husaini Dansadau, said he was at the FMC to assess the condition of the survivors and to wait for the arrival of the bodies of those killed to the hospital. He however said he could not confirm the number of the dead.

The emir had in the wake of the first attack, called on authorities to establish police division

and station troops in order to forestall recurrence.

When contacted, the state police command public relations officer, ASP Sanusi Amiru, said the command had dispatched its men to the scene to maintain law and order, adding however that he would get back to our correspondent as information available to him about the attack was scanty. He did not however give details up to the time of filing the report.

Maiduguri killings:

An improvised explosive targeted at a patrol vehicle of the Joint Task Force (JTF) at Ngarnam area of Maiduguri metropolis yesterday killed two civilians as Nigeria marked its 51st Independence anniversary.

Journalists could not confirm from authorities whether there are casualties or not. However, an impeccable source told *Sunday Trust* that the explosive was thrown at the vehicle of the JTF operatives, who were moving from one duty post to another, distributing food to their colleagues.

A witness, who was at a wedding ceremony, which was not far from the scene of the blast, said he saw two civilian corpses.

"I was there, I saw all that transpired. The bomb was targeted at JTF members, but it did not hit them or their vehicle," the witness, who does not want to be named, said.

"The blast was thunderous and soon after the explosion, the whole surrounding was enveloped by dust. Sporadic gunshots soon rent the air for several minutes and all of us at the wedding venue fled the scene to nearby buildings," he said.

"When the confusion subsided, we returned and saw two corpses," the witness said. The blast, which witnesses said went off in the morning was the first of its kind in the last five weeks in Maiduguri, the city which had witnessed series of bomb attacks in the past months.

When contacted on phone, JTF spokesman Hassan Mohammed confirmed that there was an explosion but did not give details.

"Yes, we had an explosion today, but I don't have much details to give you," the spokesman said.

He did not say whether they had arrested anyone as at the time of filing this report; no group has claimed responsibility for the attack.

Members of the Jama'atu Ahlis Sunnah Lidda'awati Wal Jihad, also known as *Boko Haram* have been claiming responsibility of virtually most bomb blasts in Maiduguri.

The JTF had last week reportedly arrested one Saleh Ladan, a commander of the sect, who was said to be an expert in fabricating improvised explosives.

The Ambassador Gaji Galtimari-led federal government committee on security challenges in the North-East, which submitted its report to the federal government last week, had, among other things, recommended that government should explore the option of dialogue with the members of the sect.

The sect, on the other hand, had, through its spokesman Abul Qaqa, said they will not shield their sword until government meets some of their demand. "If some of our demands are met, we would agree to a temporary cease fire," he said.

In a telephone interview with newsmen in which he responded to the recommendations of the Galtimari Com-

mittee, Qaqa said there major demand was the establishment of a Shari'a state.

"It is not that we are against meeting anybody who is willing to meet us," he said. "But our uncompromising condition for a temporary cease fire is that all our brethren who have been incarcerated in various prisons must be set free, unconditionally," he said.

He vowed that the group will continue its onslaught until its members are released and yesterday's attack, if the group finally claims responsibility, may be the beginning of fresh attacks after the submission of the Galtimari's report.

Meanwhile, some unidentified gunmen shot and killed a butcher in broad day light at the popular Baga road market.

The gunmen, *Sunday Trust* gathered, stormed the area where fish is sold in the market around 10am and started shooting sporadically.

The whole market as deserted people quickly close their shops and fled the market for safety.

The gunmen were said to have fled the scene, leaving their victims in a pool of blood. Men of the Joint Task Force (JTF) were said to have gone to the scene after the incident.

The commissioner of police in Borno State, Simeon Midenda, who confirmed the incident to our reporter on phone, said he could not say if it was an armed robbery incident. According to him, some armed men enter into the market and killed a butcher.

He also said that the gunmen injured an apprentice with the deceased butcher before they fled the scene. CP Midenda added that the butcher was apparently the target because they shot at only at him when they stormed the market.