

# DAILY TRUST

Airforce officer arrested with weapons at Abuja airport

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EFCC, NNPC, 41 others refuse auditing for years

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PHOTO: LAWAL IBRAHIM

## Gunmen bomb Gombe Mopol base, 4 dead

From Lawal Ibrahim, Gombe

A policeman and three attackers were killed yesterday when gunmen launched a pre-dawn bomb attack on a Mobile Police base in Gombe State.

Fifteen vehicles were burnt and a building destroyed when the bomb tore through the 34th Mobile Police Force Squadron base at about 2.30am yesterday in Kwami, five kilometres from the edge of Gombe city, witnesses said.

Security sources said the gunmen detonated two bombs and broke into an

armoury and took away weapons, but the police authorities declined to confirm or deny this.

A reporter for the *Associated Press* saw two bodies burnt beyond recognition after the blast. A *News Agency of Nigeria* correspondent also reported two corpses lying outside the perforated wall of the barracks.

Gombe State Police Commissioner Orubebe Ghandi Ebikeme said it was not clear who was behind the attack but it bore the hallmarks of similar strikes

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SCENE of the destruction after gunmen bombed a Mopol base in Gombe yesterday.

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carried out by Boko Haram, whose home base is in neighbouring Borno State.

Yesterday's attack was the first of its kind in Gombe State since the Boko Haram sect launched a campaign of violence last year.

A resident of Kwami, civil servant Ibrahim Musa, told AFP news agency he had heard three blasts in the space of five minutes, which panicked local residents who did not leave their homes to investigate until the morning.

"At the barracks I saw the admin block completely razed down," he said. "Some of the adjoining buildings were also torched."

The gunmen made their way into the premises through the surrounding bushes and engaged the police in a heavy exchange of fire resulting into the death of at least three gunmen and a police mobile sergeant who was burnt in one of the vehicles.

The vehicles included Hilux pick up vans, a lorry and other patrol vehicles which were parked in the premises few meters away from the damaged armoury.

When our correspondent visited scene of the incident, men of the police anti-bomb squad were seen combing the area which was littered with fragments from the exploded bombs.

The front wall of the barracks was seen littered with bullet holes, and there was a large hole in it which was believed to be the way created by the attackers to flee after a shootout with the police.

Security officials suspected that the gunmen raided the base so as to get weapons.

Assistant Inspector General of Police in charge of Zone 3, AIG John Mourenike, who inspected the bombed base along with the state police commissioner, said the situation was not as bad as it was painted but declined to comment about the extent of the damage.

He said though the front door of the armoury was damaged the armoury itself was intact, adding that it was too early to suspect anybody or rush into judgment before investigation.

The AIG said the gunmen might have made their way into the barracks through a porous wire fence that surrounded the base.

Mourenike said security agencies were now on red alert in the state and neighbouring Adamawa, Taraba and Bauchi states.

Police commissioner Ebikeme said he had invited men of bomb disposal unit from Yola to investigate the incident and promised to give after the experts have completed their job. He said the base was cordoned off because "there are still unexploded bombs around the area."

There was an unusual presence of security personnel in and around Gombe city in the wake of the bombing.