

Explosion kills 2 in Port Harcourt

From Bashiru Abdullahi, Port Harcourt & Abdulkadir Badsha Mukhtar

TWO people were killed while several others were injured yesterday when a device believed to be dynamite exploded from a 16 seater bus along a major road in Rumoukoro area of Port Harcourt, the Rivers State capital.

A witness, Thank god Nyewe told *Daily Trust* that, "The bus was carrying four passengers, but two of them came down to help the driver and the conductor to push the vehicle. The vehicle then started emitting smoke, and suddenly exploded".

Another witness, who simply identified himself as Emanuel, said he saw two bodies while several others were rushed to the hospital.

"I saw two corpses while several others were rushed to the hospital. They were four in the vehicle, and it was the driver and his conduc-

tor that died. As the other two passengers were pushing the vehicle, some boys selling sachet water shouted to the driver that his vehicle was emitting smoke, that was shortly before it exploded," he said.

The Rivers State Commissioner of Police, Muhammed Indabawa confirmed that two people were killed in the incident, and that four AK 47 rifles were recovered from the scene.

"We don't know where they were going to. They were in a vehicle, and they had explosives believed to be dynamites. No building was affected", he said.

The commissioner of police, who pointed out that a lady who was selling water by the road was not affected, said there was no damage on the road to show that it was bomb.

"From time to time armed robbers carry dynamites because of the bullet proofs we have in banks", he said.

Rivers State Governor Chibuike Amaechi, who also visited the scene, said the occupants of the vehicle were suspected armed robbers believed to be carrying dynamites, and on a robbery mission.

The National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) has also confirmed that the explosion was from a commercial bus, and not an attack as speculated.

A statement issued by Yusha'u Shuaibu, the agency's Head Public Relations, stated that NEMA rescue team confirmed that the explosion was caused by suspected armed robbers.

"The rescue team from the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) which was mobilized to the scene after the incident, said the explosion may have been caused by combustion/overheat from the engine of the bus," he said.