



Victims of Monguno explosions receive treatment at the State Specialist Hospital in Maiduguri, yesterday.

PHOTO Omirin Olatunji

## Bombs abandoned by B/Haram kill scores

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garrison town.

Monguno is gradually coming back to life after it was liberated from Boko Haram insurgents who occupied the town for several months ago.

At least 63 bodies, including those of members of the popular civilian JTF, traders and residents were evacuated to the Specialists Hospital in Maiduguri, witnesses said.

Over 40 others, some with grievous injuries are receiving treatment in various hospitals, witnesses said.

It was gathered that the blast happened around 5.30pm on Tuesday and the casualty figure was high because of the influx of people into Monguno from neighbouring villages to attend the market day.

The vigilantes discovered the explosives while on their way back to the town after carrying out operations in some communities around Marte, headquarters of Nigeria's biggest basin authority.

Umar Musa, a vigilante in Maiduguri said the information they gathered was that the bombs were left behind by the roadside near a camp which the

Boko Haram assailants vacated following an onslaught by the Nigerian troops.

"Our colleagues in Monguno picked the strange objects left in a sack and took them to the town. However, instead of handing them over to security forces, they kept them in Bakassi and many people, some from the market gathered in order to have a look...that was when the bombs exploded and left many people dead," he said.

A senior security official in Maiduguri, who confirmed the incident, said investigation was ongoing.

"The preliminary report we got indicates that the vigilantes came across some RPG (rocket propelled grenades) and ferried them to Monguno, probably unaware of the implication," he said.

Other sources said the consignment was specifically taken by one Ali.

Alamin Modu, an official of the Nigerian Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW) said, "We have been suspecting Ali to be a member of the Boko Haram for a long time even though he has been pretending to be a Good Samaritan and sometimes participate in the

activities of the civilian JTF.

He followed them to Marte and from what we gathered, he was instrumental to the picking of the sack and bringing it to Monguno," he said.

Kanna Alhaji Kura, a middle aged woman who was in Maiduguri, yesterday, said her sister was among the victims of the blast.

Daily Trust gathered that throughout the weekend, the Boko Haram assailants have carried out several attacks around Monguno, with a deadly one at a village called Kazallari along Baga road.

Similarly, three suicide bombers also died in separate incidences on Tuesday near Gajiram in Nganzai local government area.

Sources said the incident happened at Tunkushe, a farming village which was severally attacked by the militants.

"All the three female bombers had explosives strapped to their bodies and pretended to be passengers," Mustapha Sainna a resident of the area said.

"They stood by the roadside trying to stop vehicles that were plying the road but none of the drivers stopped. I think their aim was to detonate the bombs after

boarding the vehicles or when they get to a checkpoint.

"However, while they were desperately waiting, one of the ladies attempted to stop a man who was conveying firewood in a van but he refused to stop.

"And when he realized she was pursuing his rickety van, he veered to the other side of the road and somehow the bomb went off, killing her instantly," Sainna said.

A security source said the other two women succeeded in getting close to a checkpoint after boarding two other vehicles but their explosives went off before reaching the spot where soldiers were carrying out stop and search operations.

"We were lucky otherwise the miscreants would have killed us," one of the soldiers said. "The two female suicide bombers killed themselves and the drivers that were conveying them.

"We are being very careful now especially when carrying out search on whoever wants to proceed to Maiduguri from northern Borno.

"The terrorists are on the prowl and they are exploring various methods to kill anybody that does not believe in what they are doing," the soldier said.