



■ Vice President Kashim Shettima visits victims of Gwoza multiple bomb attacks at the State Specialist Hospital, Maiduguri yesterday

Photo: State House

## Death toll rises to 32 in Borno suicide attacks

- ACF calls for action against extremism, banditry
- Fish out perpetrators, southern senators tell security agencies

From Olatunji Omirin (Maiduguri), Maryam Ahmadu-Suka (Kaduna), Saawua Terzungwe, Balarabe Alkassim (Abuja) & Hamisu Kabir Matazu (Makkah)

**V**ice President Kashim Shettima said the death toll from the multiple suicide bomb attacks last Saturday in Gwoza, Borno State, had risen to 32.

He disclosed this during his visit to the State Specialist Hospital in Maiduguri, the Borno State capital yesterday. The attacks, which bore the hallmarks of Boko Haram's terror tactics, targeted a wedding party, a funeral and hospital.

During his visit, Shettima made personal donations to all the victims and offered condolences to the families of those killed in the explosions.

He said 42 individuals were brought to the hospital following the attacks.

Fourteen of them, he said, had since been discharged after receiving treatment, while 26 remained hospitalised.

"So far, we have recorded 32 deaths. Forty-two people were brought in from Gwoza and about 14 have been discharged, but 26 are currently receiving medical attention," Shettima said.

He expressed gratitude to the Borno State Government, the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), the State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) for their support and swift

response to the crisis.

The vice president was accompanied by Babagana Kingibe, Senator Ali Ndume, Minister of Agriculture and Food Security Senator Abubakar Kyari, former Nigerian Ambassador to China, Baba Ahmed Jidda, the Director-General of the NEMA and other government officials.

Meanwhile, the Arewa Consultative Forum (ACF) has called for renewed efforts to combat religious extremism, banditry, and all forms of insurgency.

In a statement by its national publicity secretary, Professor Tukur Muhammad-Baba, the forum noted, "The fight against criminal elements must be relentless and comprehensive, addressing both immediate threats and the underlying ideological challenges."

"The government must intensify efforts to engage with bandits, extremists and insurgents to reintegrate them into normal society."

Also, southern senators urged the federal government and security agencies to apprehend and prosecute those responsible for the attacks.

In a statement on Monday by Senators Mukhail Adetokunbo Abiru and Barinada Mpigi, chairman and secretary of the Nigerian Southern Senators Forum respectively, the senators expressed deep shock and sadness over the brutal attacks.

They urged security agencies to escalate their efforts in combating terrorism and ensuring the safety of all Nigerians.

The Deputy Speaker,

House of Representatives, Benjamin Okezie Kalu, said that Nigeria under President Bola Ahmed Tinubu would not allow the resurgence of terrorism but would secure and protect the lives and property of the citizenry.

In a statement by his media aide, Livinus Nwabughio, he assured that the 10th House of Representatives would give all the needed legislative support to ensure that terrorists did not have the chance to make Nigeria their haven again.

**Borno pilgrims pray for victims**

A congregation of Borno State pilgrims led by clerics

in Saudi Arabia prayed for the victims of the suicide bombings.

Leading the supplication, a member of the Hajj committee, Sheikh Abubakar Kachalla, implored Allah to bring an end to Boko Haram terrorism, banditry and all other forms of insecurity in Borno and the country.

"We must devote time to pray and seek divine intervention for Allah (SWT) to deal with the perpetrators of this heinous act, to fix the insecurity in Borno and other parts of the country and guide our leaders to succeed on the right path," he said.



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