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## [Terror hits Police headquarters](#)

« on: June 17, 2011, 03:02pm »

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**Two die, 33 vehicles burnt, 40 damaged in Abuja blast**

**Suicide bomber fingered in explosion**

**Panic in N'Assembly complex, Govs, others condemn incident**

FROM the gate, an unusual disquiet prevailed.

Policemen, some armed, others with their **hands** on their heads stood sentry. Thick smoke and a bellowing flame filled the sky. There were quick movements in and out of the building by aid workers, who struggled with their equipment to put off the



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fire.

A few metres to the structure, charred remains of human flesh dotted the bonnets of some vehicles parked outside the fence. Routes leading to the building were cordoned by the security agents.

The scene was the Force Headquarters of the Nigeria Police in Asokoro District of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), where a suspected suicide bomber in a car detonated an explosive yesterday.

Police authorities confirmed that a lone “suicide bomber” suspected to be a member of the Boko Haram sect (hates of western civilisation) yesterday attacked the Louis Edet House with explosives, killing several persons and wounding others.

Police spokesman, Olusola Amore told reporters that two persons, a Traffic Warden and the suspect died as the high calibre explosive device he carried in his car went off at about 10:46 a.m. But witnesses said the casualty figure was higher.

Meanwhile, President Goodluck Jonathan, who had earlier scheduled a meeting with his close aides, cancelled the meeting when the bomb blast shook the State House precincts.

A source told *The Guardian*: “Yes, the bomb blasts affected the normal schedule of the President, who had a meeting with his national security team, including the

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National Security Adviser, Chief of Defence Staff, Service Chiefs, Director-General of the State Security Service (SSS) and the Inspector-General of Police.”

The explosion rocked the Police building, which provides offices for the Inspector-General of Police (IGP), Hafiz Ringim and other senior police officers, shattering the windows.

Visitors were not spared as an unconfirmed number were allegedly killed or wounded.

It was learnt that 33 vehicles at the car park located within the precincts of the Force Headquarters were burnt beyond recognition. The police said 40 other vehicles were damaged in the blast.

The Guardian saw the burnt body of a man on the driver's seat in one of the burnt cars. He is believed to have been caught in the explosion, which caused fear in the city.

Panic-stricken police personnel were seen in groups discussing the incident, which they said killed many and injured several of their colleagues.

Narrating the incident in tears, one of the food vendors at the Force Headquarters, claimed civilian visitors who patronised the eatery in the complex were affected in the blast.

Unofficial sources said a visitor (suspected suicide bomber) had driven a car into the car park reserved for senior police officers.

On sighting him, a police officer at the gate allegedly instructed a Traffic Warden to direct the driver to park appropriately. It was while in the process of negotiating and heading for the car park meant for the public that the explosive-laden exploded, hitting other vehicles in the premises, which caught fire, and **resulted** in the death of the victims.

A rescue team from the Federal Fire Service, National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), State House ambulances as well as those from the FCT and soldiers led by the Guards Brigade Commander, Brig-Gen. Emmanuel Atewe were on **hand** to render services.

Bomb experts and personnel of the fire brigade service were also sighted criss-crossing the premises to put off the fire **resulting** from the explosion.

Specifically, vehicles approaching the police headquarters from the Federal Secretariat as well as those from the Area 11 in Garki were diverted as the security agents mounted **checks** points.

In a chat with journalists, Amore blamed the incident on the Boko Haram sect.

He said Ringim had expressed displeasure over the attack.

According to Amore, “the unfortunate incident occurred at about 11.00 hours when the suicide bomber’s vehicle was intercepted and directed to the car park for searching and checking.

“The traffic warden who entered the vehicle of the suicide bomber to direct him to the car park was blown off along with him, that is the suicide bomber as soon as they got to the car park.

“The IGP wishes to appreciate the efforts of the rescue workers, who promptly responded to put out the fire. The body of the suicide bomber has been recovered and full investigation has commenced.

“Members of the public are assured that the criminal elements behind this dastardly act will be fished out as the government, the police and other security agencies will not succumb to the demand of any criminal group or individuals. You agree with me that the matter is still fresh and that is why I have to give you this **press** statement. The IGP will later talk to you.”

The interview went thus:

Is the IGP not embarrassed by this development?

No, the IGP will not be embarrassed because I don’t think this is the first time you will have attack either on a security organisation. You all remember the attack of September 11, the president of the United States did not **resign** because of the

9/11 attack. Definitely, the criminal elements are planning their own attack but I can assure you that the security agencies will rise to the **challenge**.

Do you have an idea of whom these bombers are because you said the police would not succumb to their demand?

Definitely, we will be suspecting those groups that go by the name "Boko Haram" who have been issuing threats upon threats and for which the police is rising up to that challenge. You remember, we just came back from Maiduguri, Borno State, where we took 10 Armoured Personnel Carriers (APCs) to rise up to the challenge of insecurity in the state.

Why were your security people at the gate not able to detect this before the suspect gained entry into the premises?

From what I told you, you can see that it was the interception of the security people that led them to ask a traffic warden to direct him to the car park where it would be properly searched. So, it was in the course of searching and checking the vehicle that the bomb went up.

What about the casualty figure?

I told you the suicide bomber and the police traffic warden that accompanied him.

There were people at the car park!



Well, that is why NEMA and the police were still working and combing and as we get more information, we will inform you.

What type of car did the suicide bomber use?

The vehicle has been blown off, so you cannot actually say this is the type of vehicle.

At what time did the incident occur?

At 1100 hours.

How many people are in the hospital now?

I think it is too early to mention the number of people in the hospital. You will be given briefings at intervals to ensure that members of the public have the necessary information.

Have you recovered the body of the bomber?

The shattered body is there. It has been recovered and you know with the DNA and other means, all those things will be identified.

How are you going to identify the body of the police traffic warden?

Definitely, the tattered uniform of the Traffic Warden will differentiate him from the suicide bomber.

Was he alone in the car?

He was alone.

Does it mean that it was only one device that exploded?

It was only one device.

But it shook the entire Abuja?

We don't know the magnitude. The anti-bomb unit will be able to analyse the explosive and tell us the magnitude, the device used, that is when we will be able to talk about it.

How many vehicles were damaged?

We have about 33 vehicles damaged beyond repair and maybe, some 40 others partially damaged.

From security perspective, was it wise for you to have allowed a traffic warden to conduct a search on the vehicle at the Force Headquarters?

No, he drove in and the traffic was directing him to where to park. It was because he wanted to park at senior officers' car space that the traffic warden entered and directed him to the car park.

Meanwhile, the Niger State Governor and Chairman, Northern Governor's Forum, Dr. Muazu Babangida Aliyu, has joined other Nigerians to condemn the incident.

The governor, in a statement in Minna yesterday and signed by his Chief Press Secretary, Malam Danladi Ndayebo, described the act as horrendous and cowardice, saying that the killings, maiming and destruction of public property would never bring any good to Nigeria.

He called on security agents to launch full inquiry into what he called "dastardly act" with a view to bringing the perpetrators to book.

Also, former Governor of Anambra State, Dr. Chukwuemeka Ezeife, has condemned bomb blast. In a statement made available to *The Guardian*, Ezeife said the recurring incidence of bomb blast and killing of innocent Nigerians in some part of the country be curbed by the government.

According to him: "The Bible does not, nor does the Qu'ran or Haddith, provide any excuse for shedding the blood of innocent Nigerians.

The government has already deployed relevant response teams to combat the

crisis”.

In a statement by NEMA spokesman, Mr. Yushau Shuaib, it said but for the timely intervention of the agency, among other security agencies, the blast could have gone out of hand.

It stated that Director-General of NEMA, Muhammad Sani-Sidi, who immediately mobilised rescue and evacuation teams from the agency to the site of explosion, ordered the release and use of specialised equipment for the operation.

Source: The Guardian.

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