

NIGERIA AT 51

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SSS Arraigns Six Boko Haram Suspects Over Suleja Bomb Blast

From Lemmy Ughogbo, Abuja

SIX suspects, Shuaibu Abubakar, Salisu Ahmed, Umar Babagana, Mohammed Ali, Musa Adam and Umar Ibrahim who were alleged to have committed acts of terrorism by causing the death of 16 persons at the office of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in Suleja, Niger state with an improvised explosive device on March 9, this year, yesterday pleaded not guilty to the charge.

The trial judge, Justice

Bilkisu Aliyu had on Thursday prevented men of the State Security Service (SSS) from arraigning the suspects on the ground that they lacked legal representation.

She told the SSS that the suspects ought to be served the charge through their lawyers for them to read, understand and determine what plea to enter before the court.

The judge therefore adjourned the case till yesterday to enable the six accuse persons look at the charges for which they are

charged and get lawyers to represent them. She also ordered that they should remain in the SSS custody.

When the court reconvened yesterday, the accused persons pleaded not guilty to a five-count charge preferred against them by the SSS.

They were also charged with causing the explosion of improvised explosive device on the May 23, 2011 which resulted in the death of three Peace Corps officers in Dakna village, Bwari.

The SSS also said the suspects at various locations in Suleja, Niger state, Azare, Nasarawa

State and the Federal Capital Territory, engaged in acts of terrorism by training persons now at large in the use of arms and ammunition and the preparation, planting and detonation of improvised explosive devices for the purpose of terrorism contrary to section 15(2) of EFCC Establishment Act 2004, which stipulates life sentence upon conviction.

The trial judge remanded the suspects in custody and adjourned the case to October 20 and 21, 2011 for trial.



Children praying for Nigeria at 51.

PHOTO: PAUL OLOKO

Borno, Yobe Inaugurate Hajj Committees, Bar Pregnant Women, The Aged

From Njadvare Musa, Damaturu

GOVERNORS Kashim Shettima and Ibrahim Gaidam of Borno and Yobe states have inaugurated two Almirul hajj committees that would ensure hitch-free airlifting of over 5,000 intending pilgrims to Saudi

Arabia this month, warning that pregnant women and Muslims beyond the age of 75 are not allowed to participate in the hajj exercise.

Borno Deputy Governor, Zannah Umar Mustapha and the Emir of Jajere, Alhaji Hamza Buba Masio, are

to head the committees and appointed by the governors as the states' Almiruls.

Inaugurating the committee yesterday in Maiduguri, Governor Shettima disclosed that N180 million has been earmarked for the

pilgrims' accommodation in Saudi Arabia, assuring that this year's hajj exercise will be hitch-free, as a three-star hotel with three apartments has been rented.

"This year's hajj exercise will be free of rancor and bitterness as all measures have been taken by the state government to ensure the welfare and safety of the over 3,000 intending pilgrims from Borno State," he said.

On his part, Governor Gaidam while inaugurating the hajj committee at the Government House,

Damaturu, said that besides the subsidization of pilgrims' accommodation in Saudi Arabia, they are also to enjoy free feeding, healthcare and rams while in Muna and at Mount Arafat.

While urging the emir to justify the confidence reposed in him for a hitch-free hajj exercise, Gaidam said: "This administration is determined to support and assist you and other committee members to overcome the challenges of hajj exercise. The intending pilgrims should pray for the good health and prosperity of all our people, including the state and the country at large." The airlifting of 5,000 pilgrims to Saudi Arabia from the Maiduguri International Airport has been slated for Monday, October 10.

17 Killed In Gombe Auto Crash

From Chuks Collins, Awka

THE Gombe State Sector Commander of the Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC) Mr Fidelix Osakwe, said 17 persons were killed while 19 others sustained injuries in a motor accident in Gombe metropolis on Thursday evening.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that the accident occurred around 3.30 p.m. when a trailer loaded with cement lost control at the motor park on Dukku Road.

Osakwe, who conducted Alhaji Abubakar Bage, Secretary to the Gombe State Government (SSG) round the Federal Medical Centre (FMC) and Specialist Hospital in Gombe, said 11 corpses were deposited at the FMC, while six other bodies were deposited at the Specialist Hospital.

12 Escape Death As Three-Storey Building Collapses In Anambra

The FRSC officer also said that 13 injured persons were brought to the FMC for treatment, while six wounded persons were taken to the Specialist Hospital. He said three of the six persons brought to the Specialist Hospital have been discharged.

The SSG, who commiserated with the families of the deceased and the injured, announced that the government would foot the hospital bills of the victims.

Meanwhile, no fewer than 12 persons, including a family of seven, two girls and another family of three escaped death at Nkpor community of Idemili North council of Anambra State when a three storey building collapsed on

Wednesday night.

The unfortunate experience, first of its kind in the community occurred at 6, Oraukwu Street, off Akuzor Road, off Tarzan Bus stop, Nkpor.

The lucky occupants of the uncompleted building managed to escape with various degrees of injuries.

The building which was nearing completion had already been roofed and was undergoing plastering when it collapsed. According to neighbours and eyewitnesses, there were obvious signs of danger which prompted some of the occupants to relocate to other places some days earlier just as work continued on the building.