

24 die in Kano, Taraba, Yobe blasts as police, terrorists clash

From **Saxone Akhaine** (Kaduna), **Hisham Habib** (Kano), **Ndjavara Musa** (Damaturu) and **Charles Akpeji** (Taraba)

TERRIFIED residents of the **Kano** metropolis wore gloomy faces yesterday morning as they woke up to the devastation caused in the city by terrorists.

Armed men, suspected to be members of the **Boko Haram** sect, attacked five po-

Kaduna condemns circulation of fake video-clip on crisis

lice stations with explosives with 17 persons feared killed. Three members of the group were allegedly arrested during the attacks on the police formations.

Two civilians and two suspected insurgents also died during the clashes and explosions in **Yobe** State. The Kano Police Commis-

sioner, Mr. Ibrahim Idris, told journalists yesterday that some extremists launched sporadic attacks with bombs and assault rifles on Dala Police Division, Jakara Police Barracks, Gwaron Dutse Police Division, Challawa 52 Squadron and other places. The terrorists allegedly

planted Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) in some of the affected places.

He said at the Dala Police Station, the insurgents numbering over 30 attacked the facility but were repelled by the police, who killed 10 of them.

The attackers, he said, came in a Volkswagen Golf, a Toy-

ota and a bus in which the sum of N100,000 was recovered.

Idris said at the Jakara outpost, which has been out of use since December 2011, three of the gunmen were killed while a Police Corporal, Saidu Umar, lost his life, adding that another officer, Sergeant Baba Williams was

injured.

The commissioner said an attempt by the terrorists to invade the Gwaron Dutse Prison was foiled with no life lost or damage done to the building. He added that the police were able to take control in the Challawa 52 Squadron attack, but residents said the area was under severe bombardment with

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PENGASSAN, others differ over regime change in NNPC

By Dele Fanimu, Obiora Aduba, Sulaimon Salau (Lagos) and Collins Olayinka (Abuja)

PRESIDENT Goodluck Jonathan's Tuesday's sack of the management team of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) yesterday elicited varied reactions from stakeholders in the body-politic.

While some welcomed the development as long overdue, others rued the sack as

Yakubu is fifth helmsman in five years

one too many, stressing that it was capable of stunting the growth of the petroleum industry.

The new NNPC helmsman, Dr. Andrew Yakubu, is the fifth Group Managing Director (GMD) of the corporation in five years. In April, 2007 the then GMD, Mr. Funsho Kupolokun, was fired from office and Alhaji Abubakar

Lawal Yar'Adua succeeded him.

Twenty months after, Yar'Adua was also sacked. His successor, Mohammed Sanusi Barkindo, spent 15 months on the saddle before getting the boot in April, 2010.

Alhaji Shehu Ladan who took over from Barkindo only lasted one month, as he was sacked in May 2010 when the

immediate past GMD, Mr. Austen Oniwon came on board.

The Public Affairs Department of the NNPC has confirmed that Yakubu assumed office yesterday as his predecessor, Oniwon, handed over to him.

In a reaction, President, Petroleum and Natural Gas Senior Staff Association of

Nigeria (PENGASSAN), Babatunde Ogun, yesterday submitted that incessant change in the top echelon of the NNPC would adversely affect on-going reforms in the oil sector.

According to Ogun, "one of the policy thrusts in the on-going NNPC transformation that is likely to suffer a setback, is the ongoing Turn Around Maintenance (TAM) and repair of the four refineries intended to put them back on stream to operate at their installed capacity."

"The sacked NNPC management had been working assiduously on how to bring back the refineries and there has been results to this effect, as the Kaduna Refineries and Port Harcourt Refineries have started working progressively towards their installed capacities. Also, there are plans to put the Warri Refinery back on stream."

Ogun expressed the fear that the new NNPC management might abandon the on-

going TAM of the refineries, and "thereby allow the government to sell those refineries as scraps."

He also argued that the incessant change at the NNPC would affect the investment drive in the oil and gas sector, saying: "No investor will want to put money in a sector that the government can wake up in one day and just decide to change the drivers of the reforms and policies that can grow such sector."

"Without prejudice, we are against the process of appointment and removal of NNPC Group Managing Director because it has always drawn the industry backward. It does not engender continuity of development policies, as each of the appointed GMDs comes with their governance style and discontinues previous administration's growth policies. "In our various engagements with the government, we demanded that the appoint-

Violence still reigns in Kano, Yobe

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the entire place filled with smoke from the burning structure.

Another suspected attacker died in a private residence at Panshekara where his shattered body was found after an explosion occurred in the area, Idris said, adding that "we are investigating the matter with a view to finding the owners of the building to give us a link."

As at yesterday morning, there were still sounds of explosions and gunfire in the metropolis amid intense check on motorists and security patrol of the streets.

Most residents preferred to stay indoors and lamented that the terrorists had made life unbearable for them while security agents continued to intimidate them.

In Damaturu, the Yobe State capital, gunmen attacked a police outpost in Sabon Pegi ward and killed two civilians as well as injured a woman and her child during gun exchange with the Joint Task Force (JTF).

Two of the suspects were killed by the JTF, while one was arrested in the 30-minute fierce gun battle that spread to the campus of the Federal Polytechnic in Damaturu.

The state Police Commissioner, Ibrahim Maishanu, yesterday said: "There were attacks on a police and military posts by suspected gun-

men, where two civilians were killed in the Sabon Pegi ward and the Federal Polytechnic staff quarters."

He said that in the 30-minute gun battle between men of the JTF and the police, stray bullets hit a woman and her child, injuring them in their limbs.

Egbuniwe said there were pockets of armed assailants still hiding in the communities in the metropolis, warning that the police and JTF would raid such hideouts, which pose serious threats to security of life and property.

He said the JTF did not record any casualty during the attacks.

Suspected terrorist also struck on Tuesday night in Taraba State killing three persons, including a policeman in Wukari Local Council.

The gunmen numbering over 30 also bombed three new generation banks, a police station and a branch of a brewery firm.

The affected structures, which were badly damaged, have been condoned by security personnel deployed from Jalingo, the state capital, in the council.

The gunmen, according to witnesses, stormed the town at 10.00 p.m. and operated till 4.00 a.m.

The state Police Commissioner, Ibrahim Maishanu, told *The Guardian* in Wukari that one of the three victims was "a policeman."

He said "the police command wishes to inform the public that last night at about 21:30 hours, suspected gang of armed robbers numbering about 30 attacked some locations in Wukari town."

The robbers "attacked GT Bank, UBA, and Zenith Bank, the Divisional Police Headquarters and Area Command

Office in Wukari almost simultaneously exploding large quantity of explosives on the targets."

At the Wukari General Hospital, where the victims are receiving treatment, medical personnel stopped journalists from talking to them.

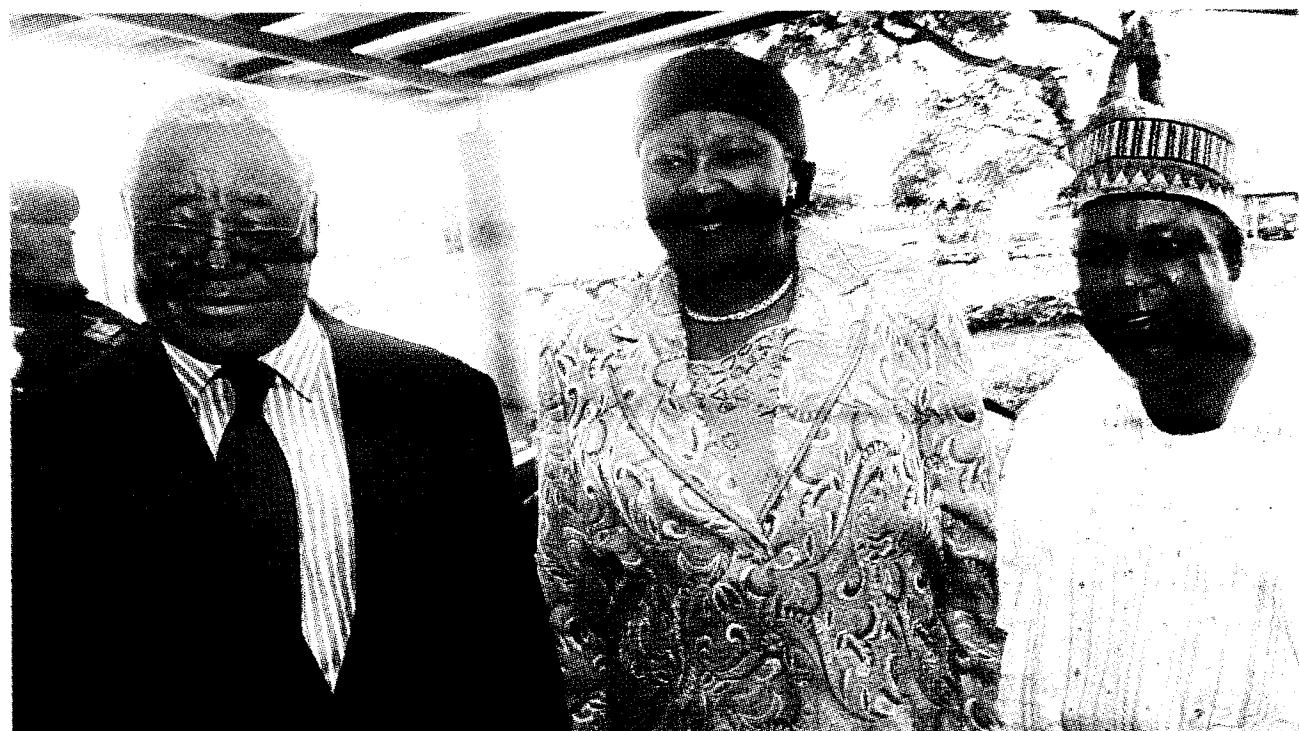
Meanwhile, the Kaduna State government has read the riot act to trouble-makers in the state. It warned them to de-

sist from actions capable of instigating violence, saying that security agents had been put on the alert to deal such persons.

The government's action was prompted by video clips being circulated through phones apparently to instigate the residents against the state.

In a statement, the Senior Special Assistant to the Gov-

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Administrator, National Judicial Institute (NJI), Justice Umar Eri (left); representative of the Chief Justice of Nigeria (CJN), Justice Maryam Aloma-Mukhtar and Nigeria Deposit Insurance Corporation (NDIC) Managing Director, Umar Ibrahim, during the NDIC sensitisation seminar for judges in Abuja... yesterday.

CHANGE OF NAME

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SOLOMON OLOLADE OGUNTIMHIN

NOW:

SOLOMON OLOLADE JAMES

FORMER DOCUMENTS REMAIN VALID

PUBLIC NOTE

Airlines may be grounded over insolvency

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package of bail-out fund given to the carriers by the Federal Government through the Central Bank of Nigeria has put them more in crisis rather than assist them.

The government made the cash available following complaints by the major airlines that the global economic recession was having adverse effects on their operations as they were being bogged down by debts. Also, there were high interest rates, low working capital, absence of medium/long-term funding, high custom duties, VAT, other taxes and high cost of maintenance.

The carriers are usually confronted with huge challenges each time their aircraft are due for comprehensive checks like the D and A checks. The C-Check is performed approximately every 15 to 21 months or a specific amount of actual Flight Hours (FH) as defined by the manufacturer.

This maintenance check is much more extensive than a B Check, as pretty much the whole aircraft is inspected.

This check puts the aircraft out of service and until it is completed, the aircraft must not leave the maintenance site and it costs about \$1 million for a B737 and more than \$15 million on B767, B777, A330 and A340 aircraft types.

The D-Check is - by far - the most comprehensive and demanding check for an airplane. It is also known as a Heavy Maintenance Visit (HMV). This check occurs approximately every 5 to 6 years. It is a check that, more or less, takes the entire airplane apart for inspection and overhaul. Also, if required, the paint may need to be completely removed for further inspection on the fuselage metal skin. Such a check will usually demand around 40,000 man-hours and it can generally take up to two months to complete, depending on the aircraft and the number of technicians involved. The cost of this check ranges between \$2 million and \$2.5 million according to aircraft maintenance engineers.

Experts have argued that

the insolvency of the airlines has led to insinuations of corner-cutting in the maintenance of their aircraft.

Sources said that the NCAA as constituted, after the 2005 and 2006 crashes involving Bellview, Sosoliso and ADC Airlines made the regulatory authorities to focus on safety without necessarily regulating the financial health of the operators.

Just last week, Air Nigeria was grounded for alleged bankruptcy after the outcome of the financial audit carried out on the carrier by the aviation regulator. More airlines are expected to receive the same pill following disclosure from a source in NCAA that, "many of the airlines are in a financial bad shape."

"The result of the audit revealed that Air Nigeria and many other airlines are indebted to aviation agencies and marketers. We cannot overlook the result of the audit because what we discovered showed that Air Nigeria is insolvent. There are many others like that.

We don't want the airline to start cutting corners and endanger the safety of passengers," the source said.

President, Sabre Network, West Africa, a United States (U.S.)-based airline global distribution system, Gbenka Olowo, said not a single Nigerian airline was liquid, stressing that working capital was permanently inadequate.

He disclosed that they had advocated intervention funds, but that the response to this came so belatedly and the funds were absolutely wrongly applied.

According to him: "Indebtedness to banks was addressed rather than continued healthy operations of the airlines that will conveniently service rescheduled debts. We also advocated debt forgiveness on some user charges and single digit interest rate. No action as we speak along this direction."

On factors that have made the carriers insolvent, Olowo listed uncontrollable high fuel cost (up to

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