

Nigeria: 28 Feared Killed in Kano, Yobe Blasts



Photo: Leadership

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THE fragile peace in Kano was yesterday punctured as an explosion rocked the busiest motor parks in the city, killing about 12 and injuring others, including the two bombers. The blast occurred at Kano Line, located at Naibawa Area, along Zaria Road.

In Yobe State, a suspected female terrorist with an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) hidden yet in her flowing veil detonated the substance yesterday, killing 16 people at a crowded motor park in Yobe State.

The incident occurred barely 48 hours after a female suicide bomber killed herself and five other people with Improvised Explosive Device (IED) hidden in her veil at the Potiskum Global System of Mobile Communications (GSM) market in the same state.

(file photo).

In Borno State, authorities of 7 Division of Nigerian Army have warned against the "indiscriminate parking" of campaign vehicles in Maiduguri metropolis other than designated parties' offices for proper identifications and security in the state.

In a statement by the Deputy Director Army Public Relations, Col. Tukur Gusau, yesterday in Maiduguri, the indiscriminate parking of campaign vehicles posed security risks to lives and property.

"Any vehicle seen parked outside such offices, will be treated as security risk," Gusau further warned in the statement.

The House of Representatives and the Human Rights Writers Association of Nigeria (HURIWA) have paid glowing tributes to President Goodluck Jonathan, and the nation's military for the current tempo in the fight against Boko Haram insurgents.

The HURIWA, however, urged Nigeria to introduce sustainably long term effective counter-insurgency mechanisms to stop a resurgence of even more deadly insurgencies in the near future.

But the All Progressives Congress (APC) has said that President Jonathan bore a huge moral responsibility that would haunt him for a long time to come for deliberately allowing Boko Haram insurgency to fester, leading to the deaths of over 15,000 Nigerians and the displacement of over three million others in the past six years.

The Kano explosion sounded at about 3:15p.m. with thick smokes immediately billowing towards the sky and residents scampering to safety. The vicinity of the scene of the incident has been deserted as security agencies and aid workers tried to evacuate injured people to hospitals.

Residents fear heavy casualty "because of the busy nature of the garage".

According to the Police Commissioner, Kano Command, Ibrahim K. Idris, the two suicide bombers entered the park while disguising as passengers before the blast occurred.

"They are two male suicide bombers while disguising as passengers one of them was able to board a Sharon bus then blew himself and the passengers in the bus," Idris added.

He further disclosed: "The investigation is still at preliminary stage that is why we cannot give a comprehensive account of the injured ones. But we learned that some people sustained various degrees of injuries. They have since been conveyed to an hospital for immediate attention."

On the issue of the security system around the motor park, Idris said that detailed investigation would reveal further information about the bomb blast.

The incident, the police commissioner disclosed, involved two Sharon buses and a Golf car that were burnt down by the blast. He, however, dismissed notion that the two suicide bombers were set ablaze by the angry youth surrounding the scene of the incident.

But an eyewitness account revealed that the number of casualties was above what the police gave. The suicide bombers were said to be teenagers between the ages of 17 and 18 years.

Details were still sketchy and the police in the state were yet to make any comment on the incident.

The spokesperson for the Kano State Police Command, Magaji Majiya as well as the Police Commissioner, Ibrahim Idris, did not answer or return calls.

The Yobe park blast also injured about 53 passersby and passengers, who were later rushed to the hospital for treatment.

According to an eyewitness, Bukar Hamidu, the suspected female suicide bomber alighted from a tricycle opposite Dan Borno Motor Park, on Kano road and ran into awaiting passengers, before detonating the explosive hidden in her flowing veil.

"I was shocked and terrified, when the girl ran into the crowd of passengers here, thinking that she wanted to deliver a message to someone before taking off. Unfortunately, the girl brought sorrow from her veil.

Casualties

Also, a nursing officer at the hospital also told The Guardian: "So far, 16 dead bodies have been deposited at the mortuary, while 53 injured passengers are lying critically ill at the Accident and Emergency Unit (A&EU)."

She said: "This is the worse suicide bombing so far recorded in Potiskum since the commencement of Boko Haram insurgency as it has recorded over a dozen deaths so far, while 53 persons are lying in critical condition and there is a high possibility that the death toll may rise, considering the severity of injuries the passengers sustained in today's (yesterday) blast."

The Yobe State Police command also confirmed the incident, stating that suicide bombers were cashing in on congregation of many people to kill many at a single blast.

The state House of Assembly specifically commended the Army for facilitating the re-capture of some towns which had fallen under the control of the sect, particularly in Borno State.

The commendation followed a motion of urgent national importance introduced by Muhammad Tahir Monguno, who noted that prior to the new offensive; the Islamist group had subdued some communities, hoisted their flags in the local council headquarters and subjected the people to alien lifestyles.

"Almost all the local governments taken by Boko Haram have now been liberated, so the armed forces require some encouragement from us in the parliament," the lawmaker stated.

Speaking in support of the motion, Abubakar Momoh also commended the effort of the military in chasing out the insurgents.

"We were aware that few months ago Boko Haram unleashed a reign of terror on many parts of the Northeast. But today, this has been curtailed. "We need to commend the military and the Commander-in-Chief (C-in-C), President Jonathan, who made it possible for the soldiers to operate effectively," he said.

HURIWA has also for the umpteenth time canvassed bipartisan counter-terrorism platform to incorporate all facets of the political and civil society communities in Nigeria to work out effective synergy and partnership with the Nigerian Government and the 36 states of the federation on measures for waging relentless counter-insurgency battles that can stand the test of time.

In a statement jointly signed by the national coordinator, Emmanuel Onwubiko and the Media Affairs Director, Miss Zainab Yusuf, it also cautioned politicians of all affiliations against playing "deadly" and "internecine" politics with the war on terror because, according to the body, the continued existence of a united entity called Nigeria surpasses mere mundane and divisive politics.

In a statement issued in London yesterday by its National Publicity Secretary, Alhaji Lai Mohammed, the party also hailed the military for the successes it had recorded in the battle against Boko Haram in recent times, saying the string of victories confirmed the party's stand that the Nigerian military could hold its own anywhere and anytime, if provided with the necessary equipment and if the morale of the troops was not undermined.

It said by his own admission that he and his team 'underrated the capacity of Boko Haram', President Jonathan had finally owned up to his globally-acknowledged incompetence, a development which, in truly democratic societies, should be part of a statement of resignation by a leader whose terrible error of judgment had caused so many deaths and inflicted so much pain and sorrow on his compatriots.

APC said that the truth was that Jonathan deliberately allowed the Boko Haram crisis to fester because he and his team saw it as a their trump card for winning re-election in 2015 by currying local and global sectarian sympathy with a Muslim-group-killing- Christians narrative that totally distorted the fact that Boko Haram was a band of marauders who had no consideration for ethnicity, regionalism, religion or any other thing beyond their mad disposition to terror.

The party said that the marauders were equal-opportunity killers who went after Christians, Muslims, Northerners, Southerners, men, women, the old, the young, the rich and the poor.

The party said: "Is it not curious that the same President who has stood by while Boko Haram decimates a whole section of the country over the past six years has suddenly realised there is something he could do to crush the sect in six weeks? Is it not curious that a military that has been globally acknowledged for its successes in peacekeeping at regional and international levels has suddenly found itself unable to tackle a band of criminals? Is it not curious that the necessary fighting equipment that have not been made available to the military, despite the injection of over \$32 billion into the defence and security sector since 2008, have suddenly become available?"

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