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50 feared dead in Gombe twin blast

By Kelvin Ebiri (Port Harcourt), Odita Sunday, Laolu Adeyemi (Lagos) and Auwal Ahmad (Gombe) on July 17, 2015

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- Five die in Rivers inter-communal clash
- Gunmen kill APC stalwart in Lagos

NO fewer than 50 persons were feared dead and many injured following double explosions yesterday in Gombe Central Market, Gombe State.

A witness, Ahmed Bappah Dukku, who told The Guardian that the thunderous blasts caused several traders to flee, said security and other aid workers were trying to evacuate the dead and injured persons from the scene of the explosion.

Also, a clash between Wakama and Gio communities in Okrika and Tai local councils of Rivers State has claimed no fewer than five lives.

The Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP) condemned what it described as another unprovoked invasion of Kporghor and Gio villages that left innocent people dead and houses destroyed.

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In another development, a chieftain of the All Progressives Congress (APC) in Amuwo Odofin Local Council of Lagos State, Mr. Shalewa Daramola was yesterday shot dead by suspected assassins at K Close, 3rd Avenue, Festac Town.

Dukku said the explosions were caused by two suspected female suicide bombers shortly after two fighter jets flew over the market, adding: "The explosions occurred at 5:30 p.m. the area where fowls are being sold inside the market very close to a bank."'

Also speaking with The Guardian, a member of the Nigerian Red Cross, who pleaded anonymity, said they counted about 48 bodies that were deposited the mortuary of the Specialist Hospital and Federal Teaching Hospital Gombe.

Confirming the incident to newsmen yesterday, the Commissioner of Police, Mr. Kudu Nma, said there was a bomb blast either on a suicide mission or explosives kept somewhere with the view to cause panic and apprehension.

According to him, the bomb exploded at the Central Market where people were busy shopping preparatory to Sallah festival.

The Guardian gathered that unknown gunmen suspected to be from neighbouring Gio community invaded Wakama in the early hours of yesterday and killed two persons. It is believed that the killing is not unconnected with the frosty relationship between both communities over boundary dispute that has lingered on for years.

Policemen have been deployed to the community to beef up security and prevent the crisis from escalating.

Confirming the renewed hostilities between the two communities, the Media/Public Affairs Adviser to MOSOP President, Bari-ara Kpalap, alleged that armed men from neighbouring Okrika communities, especially Wakama, launched an attack on Ogoni communities yesterday.

Daramola, who was in his early 40s, was shot at a very close range.

According to an eye witness, the gun men who came on a motorcycle at 1:12 p.m. yesterday shot Daramola four times at close range.

He was immediately rushed to the local government Primary Health Centre and was later referred to a superior hospital in Festac Town, only to be confirmed dead on their way to Festac Town Hospital.

The incident has been reported at Festac Police station, 2nd Avenue, Festac town.

Lagos State police spokesman, Ken Nwosu who confirmed the killing to The Guardian on telephone said the police had commenced investigations into the matter with a view to unearthing the mysteries behind the killing.

Nwosu who said the command wished all Muslims well during the holidays and urged members of the public to be wary and provide the command with credible information that will help the police to curb crime.

His words: "While the Command felicitate with all Muslims on this occasion, members of the public are implored to be vigilant, law abiding and enjoined to avail us of credible information and report any suspicious persons or objects at the nearest Police Station or reach the Lagos State Police Command on the following numbers, 08063299264, 08127155071, 08079279349 or 08023265025 (SMS only), 112 and 776 (Toll Free)."

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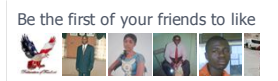


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