

UN flays Kaduna bombing as protesters storm N'Assembly, demand minister's resignation

From Saxone Akhaine (Kaduna)
and Sodiq Omolaoye (Abuja)

PROTESTERS yesterday invaded the National Assembly complex in Abuja, over the killing of scores of innocent citizens by a military drone on Sunday in Kaduna State after a misinterpretation of activities at the scene. This is as the United Nations (UN) deplored the airstrike, which is one of the country's deadliest military bombing accidents.

The UN Human Rights Office deplored the attack, noting that it was the latest of at least four airstrikes that have resulted in significant civilian fatalities since 2017. The army had acknowledged one of its drones mistakenly struck the village of Tudun Biri as

- **Death toll hits 127, injured victims 75**
- **Relatives intensify search for missing persons in hospital**
- **'Body parts picked on nearby trees, many victims yet to be found'**
- **Killing of civilians won't stop fight against terrorism, says Matawalle**
- **Speaker Abbas seeks U.S. assistance on security, anti-corruption**

residents celebrated a Muslim festival.

The death toll increased to 127 by Wednesday afternoon, while the number of people hospitalised at the Barau Dikko Specialist Hospital stood at 75.

"While we note that the authorities have termed the civilian deaths as accidental, we call on them to take all feasible steps in future to ensure civilians and civilian infrastructure are protected," UN Human Rights Office spokesperson, Seif Magango, said in a statement.

"They must review rules of engagement and standard operating procedures to ensure that such incidents do not happen again."

Bandits have long terrorised parts of northwestern Nigeria, operating from bases deep in forests and raiding villages to loot and kidnap residents for ransom. The military said troops were carrying out aerial patrols when they observed a group of people and "misinterpreted their pattern of activities to be similar to that of bandits", before the drone strike was launched.

"We are particularly alarmed by reports that the strike was based on the 'pattern of activities' of those at the scene, which was wrongly analysed and mis-

interpreted," said Magango.

"There are serious concerns as to whether so-called 'pattern of life' strikes sufficiently comply with international law. We urge the Nigerian authorities to thoroughly and impartially investigate all alleged violations of international human rights and international humanitarian law, including deaths and injuries from air force strikes, and hold those found responsible to account," said Magango.

"The government should also provide victims of any unlawful strikes and their families with adequate reparations."

In Kaduna, many relatives of missing people trooped to the Barau Dikko Special-

ist Hospital in search of their loved ones. Idris Dahiru, one of the survivors, told newsmen that more people were brought to the hospital yesterday. "This morning, some people were picked up in the forest and brought to the hospital."

Also speaking, Idris Yalo said: "I'm traumatised. I couldn't eat since Tuesday. While we were in hospital, one of our relatives affected by the drone attack died."

"We thank the state government. They were kind to our people in the hospital. We were sleeping on the bare floor, but they've now provided us with beds and mattresses. Many of the victims have not even been found as body parts were picked on nearby trees."

For more than two hours, demonstrators in Abuja surrounded the National Assembly entry gate, demanding justice for the victims and putting pressure on the Minister of Defence, Abubakar Badaru to fulfill

his obligations or step down.

Addressing reporters, leader of the protesters under the aegis of National Youth Council of Nigeria (NYCN), Northwest Zone, and Arewa Youth Movement, Nasir Ishaku, demanded justice for the victims. He declared it intolerable and said innocent Nigerians could no longer be killed, particularly in the country's north 'daily.'

To rescue the nation, Ishaku asked the National Assembly to look into the massacre and act decisively.

"We observe with total dismay the lackluster performance of Badaru. As a result, the security situation in the country keeps deteriorating since his (Badaru) inception as Minister of Defence. The lawmakers have a moral obligation to express our grievances because Nigeria is in shambles in terms of security of lives and property, most especially, in Northern Nigeria."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 28

TRUEFACT: PROCESS OF RECONCILIATION WITH GOD IN CASE OF BACKSLIDING

ADMITTING ONE'S WRONG

If I ever shut off the supply of rain from the skies or order the locusts to eat the crops or send a plague on my people, and my people, my God-defined people, respond by humbling themselves, praying, seeking my presence, and turning their backs on their wicked lives, I'll be there ready for you: I'll listen from heaven, forgive their sins, and restore their land to health. (2 Chronicles 7:13-14 MSG).

Email Address: g.truefact@gmail.com