



confirmed that some arrests have been made. Police Affairs Minister, Ibrahim Lame, said Inspector General of Police, Ogbonnaya Onovo, has been directed to ensure the security of lives and property nationwide. In as much as the government is committed to the freedom of religion, he stressed, it will not condone fundamentalism that breaks down law and order. The explosion in Maiduguri happened five hours after the Borno State police command paraded members of a notorious Islamic sect caught with locally made bombs and other explosives. The incident, which occurred at the railway terminus area at about 7 p.m., claimed the life of Hassan Sanni Balami, the owner of the home, and also blew up the roof of his apartment and almost led to the collapse of the building. State Commander of Operation Flush II, a joint security task force set up by the state government, Colonel Ben Ahanotu, described security in Maiduguri as tense. He said for bombs to explode right in the bedroom of a sect member showed that other sect members possess such lethal weapons all over the city. Eyewitnesses to the explosion, which chopped off the arms and legs of Balami, said it catapulted the other sect member who was with him over the blown off roof and landed him outside the compound. The bones and pieces of flesh of Balami littered the compound, as explosives from the components of the bombs continued to blast off, sending reporters scampering for cover. Security analysts said the bomb must have gone off accidentally as the deceased and his wounded colleague were inspecting or trying to couple the weapon. A page of a book with sketches of how to make bomb and explosives was recovered from the debris in the room, which suggested the bomb might have blown off at the time of coupling. Balami's wife, Zainab, a mother of two who is also pregnant, said she was not aware that her husband had a visitor in his room as she was busy cooking in the kitchen when she heard the explosion. She disclosed at Operation Flush headquarters, where she was questioned, that she had time without number warned her husband, who was a Prison Officer until he abandoned his job to follow the Islamic sect led by Muhammed Yusuf. The sect members had on Friday told journalists at police headquarters that they were arming themselves with lethal weapons to fight against the police and everyone else who are against their views and existence. According to Ahanotu and police officers, the sect members had named rival Islamic scholars who oppose their doctrine as targets, and promised to blow off their mosques and other worshipping places. Governor Ali Modu Sheriff described the incident as unfortunate and condemnable, and pledged that the government is on top of the situation, and will continue to protect the lives and properties of all residents. He urged all to be calm and go about their normal activities as security measures are in place. On the concern of the public that Yusuf, 39, who has been named as the one inciting them to build arms, Sheriff said: "We have severally arrested him but when tried in the court of law, he is released for want of evidence. "But we will not give up until we see the end of this menace." Some normalcy has returned to Maiduguri, even with the fear and tension all over the metropolis. The presence of Operation Flush personnel provides assurance for people to go about their businesses.

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#### Columnist

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