

Kaduna 46



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Military cantonment bombed in Kaduna, dozens killed

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TWIN SUICIDE bomb blasts on Sunday at the St. Andrew Military Protestant Church inside the Armed Forces Command and Staff College (AFC-SC), Jaji, near Kaduna, killed an undisclosed number of persons, living several others seriously wounded.

Sources within the vicinity claimed that about 40 people

- Gunmen attack Sokoto police station, kill two
- Our leaders, cause of insecurity –NLC President

may have been killed by the bombers.

But Army Director of Public Relations, Bola Koleoso, a Brigadier General, said the casualty figures were yet to be ascertained.

He said the incident occurred at about 12.30 p.m.

However, other sources put

Gunmen kidnap ex-UNIZIK VC, Okafor, in Enugu

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the number of dead at five and 34 wounded.

One of the sources said the blasts occurred when the church

service was already over and the congregation had dispersed,

leaving only some elders of the church who were deliberating within the church premises.

The source added that the first car exploded without any casualty. But on hearing the explosion, many people gathered to see the wreckage of the blast.

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"It was at this point that the second suicide bomber detonated his device.

"Many people were killed, I am not in a position to say how many people are dead, but they are many, I saw many dead bodies.

"I think the people that died may be in the region of 40 or 50. I cannot say precisely. Even some of those who are injured, I am not very sure they will survive it.

"This is wickedness of the highest order. How can any human being plan this kind of wickedness? We are now feeling very insecure in the barracks.

"Our security system here has been very porous. When people come and they are stopped from entering, they will call their relations and the people they know and they will be allowed in.

"This is a very serious embarrassment," the source said.

Some of the wounded were taken to the military hospital within the barracks in Jaji while others were rushed to the 44 Army Reference Hospital in Kaduna.

As at press time, the actual figures could not be ascertained, as the authorities of the college could not be reached.

Visitors as well as newsmen were prevented from going into the barracks.

Efforts to speak to Public Relations Officer of the AFCSC, Mohammed Dole, a Lt. Col., was not successful as his telephone lines were switched off.

The Kaduna State Police Command also declined any comment, saying only the army authorities can give details of what happened.

However, the Director Army

Public Relations, who confirmed the incident through a text message, said there were twin suicide bombings few minutes after the Sunday service.

According to him, "There were twin suicide bombings today at the St. Andrew Military Protestant Church, Jaji Military Cantonment at 1205hrs and 1215hrs.

"A bus first ran into the church and exploded about five minutes after service while a Toyota Camry parked outside the church detonated 10 minutes later.

"Figures of casualties are not yet clear but the injured are receiving treatment at military hospitals both in Jaji and Kaduna.

"Investigation into the bombings has commenced and the area already cordoned off."

However, *Daily Independent* gathered that agencies like the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) and the Kaduna State Emergency Management Agency (KSEMA) that rushed to Jaji to assist victims were turned back by the military authorities.

A source close to KSEMA office in Kaduna who did not want his name in print alleged that NEMA and KSEMA were turned back at the gate by the military authorities. "So we do not have any information."

In a related development, unidentified gunmen on Sunday morning attacked a divisional police station in Isa Local Government area of Sokoto State.

A soldier, who is a member of the special military Joint Task Force (JTF) in the state, said he saw several gunmen moving towards the police station and firing ceaselessly.

At the time of this report, three policemen, including a

Sergeant were reported to be among the casualties.

Reacting to the Kaduna bombings, Northern States Governors Forum (NSGF) commiserated with the Nigerian military, describing the attack as not only cruel but act of wickedness.

Chairman of the forum and Governor of Niger State, Mu'azu Babangida Aliyu, described the death of officers, men and their family members as a great loss.

Aliyu in a statement signed by his Chief Press Secretary, Danladi Ndayebo, said all those who lost their lives in the blast were heroes who died in the course of active service to fatherland.

While urging the military not to be discouraged by the dastardly act, the statement said Nigerians would forever remain grateful to the military and other security agencies for the successes recorded so far in the war against terrorism.

Speaker of the House of Representatives, Aminu Tambuwal, also condemned the attack.

In a statement issued by his Special Adviser on Media and Public Affairs, Imam Imam, Tambuwal urged the security agencies not to despair.

He said no religion condones attack on innocent worshippers, and urged all those behind the bombings to stop forthwith.

While grieving with the families of those who lost loved ones in the attack, Tambuwal prayed for the quick recovery for those injured.

He restated the commitment of the House of Representatives to do everything possible to assist security and other relevant agencies to tackle the problems of insecurity in the country.

But commenting on the state

of the nation in Bayelsa State at the weekend, President of the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC), Abdulwaheed Omar, noted that "the greatest threat to national security in Nigeria today is not rooted in any religion or ethnic misconceptions or disputes, but the nation's leaders that have misruled the country, and diverted the citizens' commonwealth to their private use."

Omar made the remark at an interactive session with newsmen after the quadrennial conference of Nigerian Nurses and Midwives in Yenagoba.

"We now have insecurity because the product of their misrule is a growing army of unemployed men and women, some of whom have taken the option of taking up arms against other citizens to survive," he added.

According to Omar, the NLC is a national organisation and "our belief in the unity of this country is deep and we will always be interested in making inputs to every effort aimed at advancing the cause of a united, virile and strong Nigeria, but because of the failure of the nation's leaders, the input seems not to be yielding results.

"We are worried that while other countries are busy developing and implementing policies that are focused on job creation, our leaders have adopted policies that have no national interest, but the interest of institutions historically known to have destroyed people through poverty.

"These institutions, particularly the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, have held our country hostage through the imposition of neo-liberal economic policies that have almost ruined our economy.

"Today, no industry is running at full capacity because of high cost of production, which is a direct result of the mindless increases in the price of petroleum products since business in Nigeria is generator driven.

"Not a few industries that could not cope with the harsh business environment have relocated to other countries", he further said.

Arguing that following the January strike against the last petrol price increase, government promised to use the subsidy they removed to reinvigorate infrastructure and get the refineries functioning as well as create jobs, the labour leader said, "As we speak, none of those promises have been fulfilled."

"Even the buses given to some organisations for public transportation are breaking down one after the other just 10 months after they were given out.

"One of the achievements of the January strike is the exposure of those who have swindled our people through the diversion of over N1.7 trillion meant to subsidise the supply of petroleum products.

"And months after the reports of the various committees were submitted, none of those indicted has gone through effective prosecution.

"None has refunded what was stolen. Rather, what we see are all sorts of diversionary accusations and counter accusations without prosecution," he said.

He added: "If those identified are not prosecuted and what they stole are not refunded, then the objective of January strike has not been achieved."