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Gunmen attack police SARS headquarters, free 30 suspects

By Wisdom Patrick, Tamiayo Akinsuyi (Lagos) and Hassan John (Abuja)

• 25 detainees re-arrested, five still at large

BARELY 24 hours after Sunday's suicide bomb attack on the Protestant Church inside the Armed Forces Command and Staff College (AFCSC), Jaji, near Kaduna, where at least 11 people were killed, gunmen again struck on Monday at the Federal Special Anti-Robbery Squad (FEDSARS) detention facility in Garki Area II in Abu-

ja, freeing 30 detainees.

Policemen on duty were said to have responded swiftly by engaging the gunmen in a battle that lasted some minutes, at the end of which the attackers were successfully repelled. Two policemen were killed in the gun duel.

A resident of the neighbourhood who watched the scene

18th National Sports Festival starts today

of the incident from afar told *Daily Independent* that he saw five civilian casualties during

the exchange of fire between the attackers and policemen.

The main gate outside the

police unit was heavily guarded after the attack.

Two armoured vehicles, six

police trucks and more than a dozen armed policemen were at the scene.

In June 2011, a suicide bomber attacked the police headquarters in Abuja. But though the special anti-robbery unit is in Abuja, it is located within the police headquarters.

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Israeli defence minister Barak quits politics

Israel's Defence Minister Ehud Barak on Monday announced he was quitting political life after a decades-long career that also saw him serve as prime minister.

Barak, 70, made the surprise announcement at a press conference in Tel Aviv, adding that he would retire from politics after a new government is formed in the wake of January elections.

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Politics

Judiciary should expedite action on my case — Obanikoro

You will recall that our stolen mandate of October 22, 2011 was returned by the election tribunal panel led by Justice Dele Akinsanya of

News

Gunmen attack police SARS headquarters, free 30 suspects

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No group has claimed responsibility for the latest attack but it has the trademark of the Boko Haram sect.

Police spokesman, Frank Mba, confirmed the attack, saying, "In the confusion that ensued, about 30 suspects in the detention facilities of SARS broke out of the cells and attempted to escape."

"Tactical and coordinated efforts to re-arrest the fleeing suspects yielded instant result.

"So far, 25 of the suspects have been re-arrested, while five suspects originally being held in relation to robbery related offences are currently at large."

Mba reiterated that no suspect held for terror related charges escaped from SARS detention facilities and that "no explosive or IED-related materials were used in the botched attack."

The detention centre is used by the police to hold very vio-

lent criminals.

The centre reportedly holds some senior commanders of the Boko Haram, including wife of Kabiru Sokoto, the mastermind of the 2011 Christmas Day Catholic Church bombing in Suleja, Niger State.

Inspector General (IG) of Police, Muhammad Abubakar, Mba said, has personally visited the scene of Monday's incident to assess the situation.

He has equally ordered a high-powered investigative panel headed by a senior police officer to investigate the circumstances surrounding the incident.

The IG has also ordered watertight security around all government and police facilities nationwide.

"The Police High Command uses this medium to appeal to Nigerians for be calm while reassuring them of the Force's preparedness to perform its constitutional and statutory responsibilities of providing adequate security for the state

and the entire citizenry.

"The Force therefore, enjoins the public to continue to go about their lawful duty without fear or intimidation as adequate strategies have been put in place to guarantee the general security and safety of all Nigerians," the police spokesman said.

Meanwhile, another report from Borno State on Monday said five residents of Jere, outside Maiduguri, were killed by members of Boko Haram.

Spokesperson of the Joint Task Force (JTF), Sagir Umar, confirmed the incident to *Daily Independent* in a telephone interview from Maiduguri.

According to him, Boko Haram accused the five people of being police informants.

A villager said the incident occurred in Shokari village around 2.00 a.m. when a group of men besieged about 10 houses and slaughtered the five men before escaping.

Military personnel have

been stationed in the village to track down the fleeing assailants.

Meanwhile, Pat Utomi, Presidential candidate of the African Congress for Democrats (ACD) in the last general election, has condemned the attack on the SARS detention facilities.

Utomi in a statement wondered how such an attack could be carried out in Abuja, the seat of power despite chains of security measures put in place by government to checkmate the operation of the terrorist sect.

He also called for a speedy interrogation and trial of the captured members of the sect, while urging government to do all it can to ensure that their sponsors were also brought to book.

"This should not have happened in Abuja again, but now that we know that some of the invaders were captured, we are looking forward to a speedy interrogation, then trial and finally conviction of those captured and their sponsors if possible," he said.

Again, FG set to shift gas flaring deadline

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that flaring has dropped by only 15 per cent.

Group Managing Director of the NNPC, Andrew Yakubu, who, according to a statement, revealed this at the 42nd Annual General Meeting, Conference and Exhibition of the Nigerian Society of Chemical Engineers (NSChE), assured that a lot of investments have been put in place to end gas flaring.

The corporation's Group Executive Director, Gas and Power, David Ige, had earlier said Nigeria is currently flaring 1.2 billion cubic feet (BCF) of its 7.8 billion cubic feet gas wells production per day, which is worth over \$1 billion (about N157 billion) annually.

But Yakubu stated that export initiatives on gas have been stepped up and plans are under way to achieve zero flare down in the country.

The corporation, he added, has exceeded its target for gas-to-power aspirations and is taking steps to grow the nation's crude