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10-year-old female suicide bomber, two others arrested in Katsina

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•Another kills six in Kano •Boko Haram massacres 17, injures 35 in Yobe mosque attacks

By Stella Omona (Abuja) and **Onoja Audu** (Jos)

The security forces said on Wednesday they have arrested three suspected suicide bombers, among them two female teenagers, 10-year-old Hadiza Musa and 18-year-old Zainab Musa.

The third suspect, a male, was identified as Iliya Dahiru.

They were arrested along Zaria road in Katsina.

Also, another female suicide bomber was said to have exploded an Improvised Explosives Devise (IED) at the Kano State Polytechnic where some students had gone to collect their call up letters for the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) posting.

Six of the students were killed and another set of six people injured.

Wednesday's attack brought to four the number of suicide bomb attacks in the Kano city involving young female bombers.

Coordinator of the National Information Centre, Mike Omeri, who disclosed this in Abuja, said the suspects were arrested in a Honda CRV car when they were asked to disembark for security checks.

Hadiza was discovered to have been strapped with an explosives belt and immediately, Iliya and Zainab made attempt to escape with the car but were blocked by concerned Nigerians, Omeri said.

“It is on this note that we appeal to parents to consciously observe and watch their children’s activities to prevent them from participating in unwholesome activities, particularly acts of terrorism,” he said.

He also warned parents against engaging private Koran teachers for their wards, advising rather that they be taught in selected regular Islamic schools.

He denied rumours that the abducted Chibok schools girls were the ones being sent out as suicide bombers.

Force Public Relations Officer, Frank Mba, who gave reasons why terrorist groups engage the use of females as suicide bombers, warned that Nigerians should be prepared henceforth to see more female security personnel on the roads and other places as a counter strategy to checkmate the trend.

“The major reason terrorists use females is because women generally raise fewer suspicions, particularly when there are security layouts and they take advantage of this to try to indoctrinate and recruit suicide female bombers.

“The suspicious is even less when the female is a minor.

“Again, by our rule of engagement, male security officers are not allowed to search females but we are developing counter-terrorism strategy to deal with that.

“You will begin to see increased female security personnel on our roads and other places.

“We equally want to appeal to parents and local government authorities to help in stamping out hawking on our streets, particularly hawking where minors are involved, if possible keep off the streets so that when you see them on the streets, it will be easier to control

them,” Mba stated.

Director, Media and spokesperson for the Directorate of State Security (DSS), Marilyn Ogar, called for scrutiny of methods for vetting religious leaders, advising religious leaders and the media to collectively work together with government and the security forces to fight insurgency and terrorism.

Also on Wednesday, Centre for Advocacy of Justice and Rights, a Jos based civil society group, raised the alarm over introduction of young girls into the bombing squad of Boko Haram in the last two weeks in some Northern states.

The group in a statement in Jos by its Programme Officer, Conflict Mitigation and Management, Pwakim Jacob Choji, said: “We hope it is not the Chibok girls that are being brain washed by their captors to commit such acts.

“If our fears are true, then it is already a national tragedy as many of these girls were yet to be accounted for,” the statement added.

Meanwhile, the police in Yobe State on Wednesday confirmed that there were bomb attacks in Potiskum on Tuesday.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that bombs planted in two mosques had exploded at about 7.30 p.m. on Tuesday when Muslims in the area were preparing for the evening prayers.

State Police Public Relations Officer, Nansak Chewang, told NAN that police were working on the details to know exactly those involved.

Reports said no fewer than 17 worshippers were killed 35 injured by the suspected insurgents, who launched attacks on two separate mosques in the town.

The mosques were located at the Kalli Alkali area, around the Emir of Fika’s palace, and the Sakafa Mosque close to the Potiskum Central Market.

President Goodluck Jonathan later on Wednesday reacted by deploring the continuing terrorist assault on Kano and the bombing of the Aminu Kano College of Islamic and Legal Studies.

He similarly deplored the attacks on two mosques in Potiskum.

Jonathan's reaction was contained in a statement signed by his spokesman, Reuben Abati.

He condemned the repeated targeting of worshippers "and innocent students who are the nation's future by depraved terrorists".

He believes that "the callous attacks on soft targets fully affirm that the terrorists are nothing but bloodthirsty adherents of a warped and retrogressive ideology.

"No amount of intimidation and violence would stampede the government into abandoning its goal of giving education a new lease of life and opening up access to all young Nigerians who wish to improve themselves."

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