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Suicide bomber attacks church, injures many in Gombe

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•Two killed in Kaduna tanker drivers' clash

•Yuguda urges Bauchi residents to be vigilant

•Terrorists won't get away with their acts – Jonathan

By **Juliet Oyoyo** / *Special Correspondent, Kaduna With Agency Reports*

The Police on Thursday confirmed a bomb explosion at the entrance of Tudun Wada ECWA Church, Gombe, Gombe State.

The Spokesman of the state Police Command, DSP Fwaje Atajiri, told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Gombe that a suicide bomber rode on a motorcycle and tried to enter the church a few minutes after 8 a.m.

“He came on a motorcycle and tried to enter the place but as a result of the security measures put in place, he was blocked and the bomb exploded instantly and he was killed,” Atajiri said.

He called on the public to remain vigilant and also report

any suspicious movement around them.

An eye witness, Aminu Muhammad, whose house was close to the blast scene, told NAN that he was indoors when he heard a loud sound.

“When I heard the sound, I immediately came out, and what I saw was horrible.

“I just saw human parts scattered everywhere with blood and pieces of motorcycle which the suicide bomber rode on,” Muhammad said.

Malam Abdullahi Isah, the Secretary, Gombe Specialist Hospital, said 10 injured persons were brought to the hospital.

He said the victims received various degrees of injury and were undergoing a treatment, adding that one of them was taken to the theatre.

In another development, two people have been reportedly killed as violence erupted on Thursday in Kaduna between two factions of the Petroleum Tanker Drivers Association (PTDA).

An eye-witness, Malam Aminu Umar, who is a tanker driver said trouble started around 7.30 a.m. when hoodlums who claimed they were representing one of the factions of the group came to shut down the secretariat so as to prevent the other group from gaining access.

He said this resulted into a free-for-all following the arrival of the other faction, adding that dangerous weapons were freely used.

In the fracas that ensued, a petroleum tanker and two cars were set ablaze before the arrival of the security agents.

Some residents of the area told Daily Independent that they heard gunshots from the secretariat, as the fight started around 7:30 a.m. by the tanker drivers' parking lots and their offices, as each group wanted to occupy the office of the Chairman to take over control.

Another eyewitness said “the drivers threw stones at each other while some were mauled into pulps with clubs, while others drew daggers and chased their

enemies and some groups went into bare fist brawls causing the death of two of their members and many other wounded.

All the banks within and around the KRPC shut their gates while the main gate of the oil giant was shut with hundreds of persons stranded as they could neither leave or gain entry.

As the fighting continued, many of those trapped in the fiasco kept wondering how such lawlessness could happen right in the centre of the biggest government investment north of the Benue and Niger.

It finally took the intervention of men of the Nigerian Army who arrived the refinery at about 9:30 a.m. to quell the situation.

Among those arrested were the two factional leaders, Tuge and Marafa. Normalcy however returned to the area around 11 a.m.

The General Manager, Public Affairs of the KRPC, Abdullahi Idris, refused to make any comment on the incident other than that it was completely a security issue which he had no authorisation to speak on.

It would be recalled that Tuge and Marafa have been in and out of courts since 2012, after a controversial election unseated Marafa, who seems to still enjoy more popularity among his members.

Tuge, who has the backing of the National Headquarters of the PTD union, easily flexes his muscles, by ordering the stoppage of loading of fuel, which always makes government jittery when fuel queues appear at filling stations.

Unconfirmed reports said he had the backing of his national executive to stop all tanker drivers from loading fuel at the KRPC in protest of his arrest and that of others.

Meanwhile, Governor Isa Yuguda of Bauchi State on Thursday urged residents of the state to be vigilant and support security agents to enable them to curb the rate of crime and insurgency in the area.

Yuguda made the call in Bauchi in his New Year message to the people of the state.

He said the state was the most peaceful in the North East but had witnessed incidents of kidnappings, murder and bomb blast in the last one year.

The governor, however, assured citizens of the state that government, in collaboration with security agencies was doing everything possible to bring to an end the present security challenges ravaging the state.

He urged the people to emphasise the need for peaceful co-existence as the New Year begun, irrespective of their religious, cultural and political differences.

He called on the people to pray for an end to the current security challenges bedevilling the country.

He reassured that the state government would do its best to ensure that citizens continue to enjoy peace and move freely without molestation.

President Goodluck Jonathan had on Thursday reassured Nigerians that terrorists operating in the North-East would not get away with their atrocities.

In a New Year broadcast to the nation, Jonathan restated his administration's determination to rout the terrorists and bring them to justice.

He said that the Federal Government had done the necessary groundwork to finally resolve the current security challenge in the country.

“Regrettably, terrorists have unleashed much pain and agony on our land. They have made widows of our mothers and sisters and orphans of our children.

“They have shut down businesses, desecrated places of worship and brought untold hardship to both men and women.

“They have violated the culture and peaceful way of life in our country, which took generations to build.

“They have destroyed countless schools and displaced people from their communities, driving them into exile.

“I want to assure you that the terrorists will not get away with their atrocities: they will not win; they will be routed.

“As President, I feel the pain of all affected communities

and families. I hear their cries and share their sorrows and pains.

“We will not forget; we will not look the other way. We have done a lot of painstaking planning and work to resolve the current security challenge.

“We will bring to justice the terrorists known as Boko Haram. They will be defeated,” he said.

The president paid special tribute to personnel of the nation’s Armed Forces and other security agencies for their dedication and commitment to the war on terror.

He said the federal government was “re-equipping and re-positioning” the armed forces to boost their capacity to win the war.

Jonathan also commended all Nigerians for remaining vigilant and co-operative with the security agencies in the fight against “the common enemy”.

He urged citizens to renew their zeal and patriotism to serve the nation with “love, honesty, faithfulness and hope for a greater tomorrow.”

“As I have always maintained, none of the challenges before us is insurmountable.

“We must come together as a people and work with single-minded unity of purpose to overcome them.

“Let us continue our march to the future, toward the attainment of our collective vision of a strong, united, prosperous and harmonious nation – a secure nation for us and for our coming generations,” the president said.

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