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Jos Bomb Blasts: How 7 Final-year Varsity Students Died – Witness

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— May 22, 2014

Seven final-year students of Medical Laboratory Science of the University of Jos (UNIJOS) were among the dead victims of Tuesday's twin bomb blasts in Jos, Plateau State.

An eyewitness, who is also a final-year student of the department, Ms Eku Vivan Ijeoma, told LEADERSHIP that the students had just finished their lectures at the Old Campus of Jos University Teaching Hospital (JUTH) and were heading home when they were caught in the bomb blast that killed them instantly.

Ijeoma said the corpses of four of the slain students had been identified by family members.

Their names, she said, are: Michael Ogbote, Francisca Nwafor, Lydia Komolafe Dolapo, Milly Yusuf, Doris Gegunem, Vivian Chiamaka Obilor, and Wungak.

She appealed to the federal government to do everything possible to end the insecurity in the country that has already claimed thousands of lives.

She said: "What happened on Tuesday was unprecedented. We had just finished our lectures and they were ahead of me when they were suddenly caught in the blasts. I was lucky to escape unhurt from the incident."

Adiza Mohammed Nyam, 25, was in the market making her purchase and was about going home when the first blast went off. According to her, she was unconscious, having suffered severe burns on her two hands and some other parts of her body.

Nyam added that immediately the blast occurred she could not hear because she was very close to the scene and the sound blocked her ears. She added that she only realized she was in the hospital early yesterday morning with her two hands and body in bandage and a swollen eyelid.

She also appealed to the federal government to ensure that it offsets the bills of those that are receiving treatment in the various hospitals, as well as compensate the families of those who lost their lives in the blast.

For Ruquyatu Abubakar Mohammed, who was lying critically ill on the bed with her two legs bandaged, she could not utter a word to our correspondent. Her son who stood by her bedside told LEADERSHIP that his mother was passing by when the first blast occurred and a shrapnel from the blast pierced into her two legs, but she was rescued and taken to the hospital. He added that, after a serious search for her, she was discovered at the Plateau Specialist Hospital.

Selina from Shendam local government area of Plateau State was selling roasted corn in the area when the blast occurred. She had her left leg badly injured and was on wheelchair at the accident emergency unit of the Plateau Specialist Hospital Jos when LEADERSHIP visited the hospital.

Meanwhile, following the twin bomb blasts that occurred around the Terminus Market in Jos, business activities have closed down in the affected areas.

LEADERSHIP investigations revealed that shops around the ever-busy Terminus Market remained closed, even as passers-by too avoided the area. Roads leading to those areas were closed by security operatives.

At the University of Jos, both the Old Campus along Bauchi Road and the permanent site, students deserted lectures and other academic activities.

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'Death toll exceeds 200'

Meanwhile, the number of those killed in the twin bomb blasts has risen to over 200. A staff of the National Emergency Management Agency, NEMA, who did not want his name in print told our reporter that some of those injured and hospitalized following the blast died late Tuesday night and in the early hours of Wednesday.

He said that those killed from the Jos explosions have exceeded 200. LEADERSHIP correspondent who visited the Plateau Specialist Hospital in the early hours of yesterday was told by an official that 15 of the injured victims brought to the casualty unit died just before midnight.

Demne, a laboratory scientist at the National Blood Transfusion unit of the hospital, said most of the 15 victims died during treatment due to excessive loss of blood.

He said although there were a few donors who volunteered to donate blood, the hospital needed a lot more to treat the victims.

"Yesterday, we had some persons who came and donated blood freely to the National Blood Transfusion," he said. "We are calling for more donors."

Also, our reporter counted at least 53 other corpses on the floor of the hospital mortuary. Most of the corpses were those of children and women, including seven pregnant ones.

Also at the mortuary of the JUTH's temporary site, adjacent the blast scene, a heap of corpses was seen.

The situation was the same at Bingham University Teaching Hospital. Officials refused to speak but a medical staff of JUTH who pleaded not to be quoted said about 120 corpses were brought to the hospital, while injured people were rushed to the permanent site for medication.

In most of the hospitals visited, the relatives of those who were killed in the blast were seen at the mortuary unit trying to identify the corpses of their loved ones so as to take them home for burial.

The deputy governor of Plateau State, Ambassador Ignatius Longjan, also visited the State Specialist Hospital and JUTH to commiserate with the victims of the blast who were receiving treatment.

IGP vows to unmask perpetrators

The inspector-general of police, Mohammed Abubakar, has also visited the scenes of Tuesday's bomb blasts which left over 200 people dead. He called on the citizens to be calm.

Force public relations officer CSP Frank Mba made the visit known in a statement in which he said the IGP appealed for useful information that could help in unmasking the authors and sponsors of the attacks.

Mba said the IGP, who was in the company of heads of other security agencies, promised to stop at nothing in unmasking and bringing to book those behind the dastardly act. He said the blasts left a total of 75 people dead (73 adults and 2 children) and 70 others with varying degrees of injuries.

75 people killed, 126 injured – Plateau govt

The Plateau State government has disclosed that 75 people were killed in the Jos twin blasts that occurred on Tuesday afternoon.

According to the state government 126 people received various degrees of injuries and were receiving treatment in six hospitals in the state.

The state commissioner of information and publication, Mrs Olivia Dazyem, made the disclosure while addressing newsmen in Jos yesterday night.

Senator debunks report on reprisal attack

Some media reports that there have been reprisal attacks in Jos over Tuesday's twin bombings are false, Senator Victor Lar has stated.

Dispelling the motion in plenary yesterday under a point of order of the Senate Rules, Senator Lar said there had been no such thing and that the security forces in the state had risen to the occasion and calm had returned to the state.

He said: "I say this to underscore the importance and to also correct the impression. This is because, before I came in here, some people called to the effect that they heard that as a result of the bomb explosion there are reprisal attacks on people and that they were slaughtering people in Jos. There is no such thing. The STF has risen to the occasion and they are doing their best."

Boko Haram Received Training From Al-Qaeda – US Congress

Corroborating President Goodluck Jonathan's recent claim on the source of the Boko Haram sect, members of the United States House Committee on Foreign Affairs yesterday declared that members of the sect were trained by Al-Qaeda.

The chairman of the committee, Rep. Ed Royce, who made this known during the committee's hearing on the menace of Boko Haram tagged "Boko Haram – The Growing Threat To Schoolgirls, Nigeria And Beyond" maintained that receiving training from the deadly Al-Qaeda meant greater terror for Nigerians and greater challenges for Nigerian security forces.

Rep. Royce pressed further: "Unfortunately the Nigerian security forces suffer unprofessional elements with poor morale. That has led some to say we shouldn't get involved. But it tells me otherwise that U.S. involvement is critical. U.S. forces are well positioned to 'advise and assist' Nigerian forces in the search for these girls. In this role, U.S. forces, expertly trained to deal with hostage situations and in

jungle environments, could help Nigerians with intelligence, planning and logistics. And if some U.S. laws would hinder such assistance, the Administration should use its waiver authority under these extraordinary circumstances.”

The committee chairman, who said that Boko Haram was a “threat to Western interests”, added that the Islamic sect was one of the highest counter-terrorism priorities in Africa. He pressed further that pressure from his committee was critical in getting the State Department to designate Boko Haram as a Foreign Terrorist Organization.

Also speaking at the hearing, the US under-secretary for civilian security, democracy, and human rights, Dr Sarah Sewall, said that the US military and civilian experts in intelligence, military planning, hostage negotiations, strategic communications, civilian protection, and victim support would give unprecedented access and cooperation to assist Nigeria's efforts to safely recover the kidnapped schoolgirls.

She added that this rescue mission, which she said may take far longer than expected, would necessarily entail not just a military approach but also law enforcement and diplomatic approaches. “This kidnapping, and addressing the threat of Boko Haram more broadly, would be daunting for any government, and that is why the United States is doing all it can to help Nigeria address these challenges, today and longer term,” she noted.

Dr Sewall also made it known to the Congress that peace and security in Nigeria was one of the United States government's highest foreign policy priorities in Africa, adding that the tragedy of the Chibok kidnapping had rightfully focused the attention of the Obama-led administration on the need to return the abducted students to their families, and on Boko Haram's increasingly brazen assaults on youth seeking education.

Saying that the Chibok kidnapping had exposed the long-term security challenges that confronts Nigeria, the US official noted that the fight against Boko Haram required more than just military action. She said the fight against the terrorist sect required a comprehensive approach to improving the lives of the people in northeast Nigeria.

Nigerian exile Deborah Peters tells US Congress how Boko Haram killed her dad, brother

The only female survivor of Boko Haram attack on Chibok on December 22, 2011, Miss Deborah Peters, yesterday told the United States House of Representatives Committee on Foreign Affairs that her mother graduated from Government Secondary School, Chibok, Borno State, where over 200 schoolgirls were abducted by Boko Haram, Deborah stated this while giving her testimony before the committee in Washington, DC. She added that she would never return to Nigeria as a result of the ugly experience that she had when the insurgents carried out an attack that led to the death of all her family members in Borno State.

She said: “On December 22, 2011, about 7pm, my brother and I were at home when we started hearing some guns shooting. My brother called my dad and told him not to come home because some people were shooting guns. But my dad said he should not worry because it was not the first time he had come home when people were fighting. When my dad came home, he said that he was going to take a shower because he was hot.

“At 7:30pm, three men knocked on the door. My brother answered the door because he recognized one of the men as a Muslim in our community. The men asked where my dad was and I told them he was in the shower. The men waited. After three minutes, they went into the bathroom and dragged my dad into the main room. They said that my dad was wasting their time and that they did not have time to wait on him. The men told my dad that he should deny his Christian faith. My dad told them that he would not deny his faith. They said that if he did not deny his faith they were going to kill him. My dad refused, saying that Jesus said whoever acknowledges him in front of man will be acknowledged in front of God. My dad said he would rather die than go to hellfire. After he told the men that, the men shot him three times in his chest.

“My brother was in shock. He started demanding, ‘What did my dad do to you? Why did you shoot him?’ The men told him to be quiet or else they were going to shoot him too. Then, the men discussed whether they should kill my brother. One of the Boko Haram people said they should kill Caleb, my brother. The second man said that he was just a boy and that he was too young to be killed. But the third man said that they should make an exception in this case because Caleb would only grow up to be a Christian pastor. Caleb asked me to plead with them for his life but they told me to shut up or they would kill me too. The leader agreed that they should kill him and shot my brother two times. My dad was still breathing but when he saw them shoot Caleb, he died.

“My brother fell down but was still alive gasping. The men shot him in his mouth. Then my brother stopped moving and died. I was in shock. I did not know what was happening. The men put me in the middle of my dad and brother's corpses, told me to be quiet or be killed, and left me there. I stayed there until the next day when the army came. They removed my dad and brother's bodies and took me to the hospital.

“I was traumatized. A nearby pastor paid for me to get out of town when he discovered that Boko Haram members said they made a mistake by not also killing me. Boko Haram decided later that they should have killed me because I am a daughter of an apostate Muslim mother who converted to Christianity. So the pastor paid for me to get out of that region. I fled and Jubilee Campaign helped me to come to a 9/11 Child Survivors Terrorism Camp in America. On May 15, 2013, that pastor, Rev. Faye Pama, was killed by Boko Haram in front of his kids.

My mum graduated from Chibok- Deborah Peters

“I decided to tell the world my story when I heard about the kidnapping of over 200 female students in Chibok because everyone needs to know how horrible Boko Haram is. And also my mum graduated from the school where they were kidnapped.”

173 Teachers Killed in Borno, Yobe – NUT

The Nigeria Union of Teachers, NUT, yesterday stated that 173 teachers comprising 190 from Borno State and 3 from Yobe State had been killed by Boko Haram members. The NUT further directed the closure of all schools nationwide in protest of the abduction of over 200 girls in Government Secondary School, Chibok, Borno State, and the killings of 173 teachers by insurgents.

National president of NUT Comrade Michael Alogba stated this while addressing journalists in Abuja.

He said the union feels depressed and sad over the continued incarceration of the Chibok girls by insurgents.

The union urged the federal government and the governments of Borno and Yobe to exhibit true concern for the families of the 173 teachers.

The NUT boss said: "The NUT has resolved to hold 'Bring Back Our Girls' rallies simultaneously across the 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory on Thursday, 22nd May, 2014.

"All schools nationwide shall be closed as the day will be our day of protest against the abduction of Chibok female students and the heartless murder of 173 teachers. We remain resolute in our resolve to continue the campaign even as we mourn the death of our colleagues until our girls are brought back safe and alive and perpetrators of the heinous crime are brought to book."

He called the abduction of the Chibok girls an assault to humanity and an attack on education sector. "May we be quick to tell the Boko Haram insurgents that the school system remains the proud industry of teachers and that the innocent school boys and girls are the raw material we process for the human resource development of the nation."

He added: "It is also important to take insurance cover for both students and teachers in the vulnerable political environment of the country. Education should be publicly declared as a fundamental human right and abridgement should be criminalised. As teachers, now living under constant fears of attack with their social condition further plummeted, a national concern for our plight must take immediate national importance.

"It is important, like we had called at different times, to declare an emergency on the state of education. Making lives secured in the school system and guaranteeing conducive and peaceful

learning environment of the country."

Governors' Forum condemns Jos bombings, consoles victims

The Jonah Jang-led faction of the Nigeria Governors' Forum (NGF) on Wednesday condemned the twin bomb blasts in Jos in which over 200 people died and property were destroyed.

This is contained in a statement signed by the administrator of the Forum, Mr Osaro Onaiwu, in Abuja.

The statement said the bombings were "cowardly and designed to shake the faith of citizens in a united Nigeria".

It stated that the governors of the forum had sent condolences to the people of Plateau and the families that lost loved ones in the attack.

Atiku condemns Jos blasts, calls for political parties' conference

Former vice president Atiku Abubakar has called for the convoking of all political parties' conference to forge a united approach in dealing with insecurity in the country.

This is contained in a statement issued in Abuja on Wednesday and signed by his media officer, Malam Garba Shehu.

Abubakar, in the statement, described the persistent terrorist bomb attacks as the greatest enemy to the peace and unity of the country.

According to the statement, the constant terrorist violence against innocent people is embarrassing and intolerable.

Deal with this monster, JNI, ACF tell FG

The Jama'atu Nastril Islam (JNI) and the Arewa Consultative Forum (ACF) yesterday told the federal government to rise up against the monster of terrorism.

The JNI in a statement by its secretary-general, Dr Khalid Abubakar Aliyu, said government at all levels and all security agencies must rise to the occasion of taking proactive measures in dealing with the monster of terrorism.

JNI said Nigerians are tired with verbal assurances and need government to step up action.

"We have had a lot of verbal assurances. Something positive in curbing the tide of this terror must be on ground for the citizenry to for once have a sigh of relief," said JNI.

Reps urge FG, Plateau govt to pay victims' medical bill

The House of Representatives has urged the federal government to liaise with the Plateau State government to offset the medical bills of all victims of the twin bomb blasts that rocked the state on Tuesday.

While describing the attack as "callous and despicable", the lawmakers called on Nigerian citizens and the security outfits to always be on the alert in order to avert such occurrences.

This was sequel to a motion of urgent national importance raised by Hon. Bitrus Kaze during plenary on Wednesday.

US condemns Jos bomb blast

The United States government on Wednesday condemned Tuesday's multiple bomb blasts in the city of Jos, Plateau State, as well as the bombing in the Sabon-Gari neighborhood of the city of Kano on May 18 that have resulted in the deaths of more than 100 people.

A press statement made available to journalists in Washington, DC, by Ms Jen Psaki, Department spokesperson, said that these vicious attacks on defenceless Nigerian civilians and Boko Haram's abduction last month of more than 200 girls in Chibok were unconscionable, terrorist acts demanding accountability and justice.

"We extend our deepest condolences to the families of the victims. We continue to stand with the Nigerian government and people in their efforts to defeat violent extremism in a manner that protects civilians and ensures respect for human rights," the statement reads.

Mark condemns attack

President of the Senate David Mark has again condemned in strong terms yesterday's bomb blasts in Jos that claimed many lives, just as he charged Nigerians to be more vigilant within their environment.

Senator Mark urged Nigerians to remain resolute in the fight against terrorists even as he assured that government would not leave any stone unturned to guarantee security in the land.

He said: "From the issue of kidnapping now we are battling insurgency. This must stop, Nigeria needs peace, our children need better lives because nothing thrives well in a precarious environment. We will not relent. With God on our side, this shall come to pass."

CAN calls on nigerians to rise against boko haram insurgency

The president of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), Pastor Ayo Oritsejafor, has condemned the bomb explosions in Kano and Jos that claimed hundreds of lives and property worth billions of naira destroyed, calling on all Nigerians to rise against Boko Haram insurgency.

In a statement forwarded to LEADERSHIP, Oritsejafor said the dastardly act was a reminder of the evil that has continued to ravage communities, villages and other productive segments of the society.

According to him, CAN condemns the unprovoked attack on innocent Nigerians in the name of religion, politics or ethnic ideology and called on Nigerians to rise strongly against such acts. The war against Boko Haram is not about the military alone but all Nigerians, he noted.

80 US troops now in Chad for schoolgirl search- Obama

United States President Barack Obama has said that the US has deployed 80 military personnel to Chad Republic to help locate the more than 200 girls kidnapped in Nigeria, the *CBS* reports.

Obama has sent a letter to House Speaker John Boehner and to the Senate notifying lawmakers about the steps underway to assist in the return of the abducted girls.

According to Obama, the service members will help with intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance aircraft for missions over northern Nigeria. He says the force will stay in Chad until its support is no longer necessary. Chad shares a portion of its western border with northeastern Nigeria.

The girls were kidnapped last month by Boko Haram members.

The Nigerian government and military's failure to curtail the 5-year-old Islamic uprising led by Boko Haram, highlighted by the April 15 abduction of the schoolgirls and lack of progress in rescuing them more than a month later, has caused national and international outrage.

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