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Female Suicide Bomber Kills 10, Injures 40 In Yobe

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A female suicide bomber yesterday struck at a motor park in Bayana, near a market in Damaturu, the Yobe State capital, killing 10 persons and injuring 40 others. The incident occurred at about 12:45pm.

An eye witness at the motor park said that he counted eight dead bodies after the explosion and more than 40 persons wounded.

A bus driver, Mallam Musa Isa, who confirmed the incidence, told LEADERSHIP over the phone that "somebody dropped her in a car and zoomed off. She went into the park and detonated the explosives."

The charred body parts of the suicide bomber were gathered by angry witnesses and set ablaze, LEADERSHIP learnt.

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A source at the specialist hospital who sought anonymity said that nine persons died while another 40 people were injured in the blast.

"So far, nine persons have died; three of the victims were burnt beyond recognition, while another 40 were injured and brought here to receive treatment," he said.

Security operatives and National Union of Road Transport workers (NURTW) officials were seen evacuating corpses and injured persons. Most of those evacuated were taken to the Damaturu Specialist Hospital where they are now receiving treatment.

When contacted, the Yobe State police commissioner, Mr Marcus Danladi, said its officers could confirm eight people dead and many other injured persons in hospital.

He said that the security agents had condoned off the blast scene and that investigation was ongoing, but that no arrest had been made.

Panic after blast

Witnesses told Reuters news agency that the people at the Damaturu's central motor park "descended into panic as a result of loud blast.

According to Hausa service of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), no one has claimed responsibility for the attack which bore the hallmarks of Boko Haram, whose use of female suicide bombers has been an emerging trend over the past year.

On Saturday, heavily armed Boko Haram militants attacked and attempted to overrun Gombe but were repelled.

2 insurgents killed, 2 others arrested in Kano

Kano State police command has confirmed the killing of two gunmen suspected to be Boko Haram members in Kibiya local government area of the state.

The command's spokesman, Magaji Majiya, an assistant superintendent of police, confirmed the incident to newsmen in Kano.

He said that on Saturday, gunmen numbering about six stormed the police station on two motorcycles but the police repelled the attack, adding that one of the gunmen was killed during a shootout while the other was lynched by the community while trying to escape.

According to him, two of the gunmen were also arrested and were now assisting the police in their investigation.

According to him, two of the gunmen were also arrested and were now assisting the police in their investigation.

"No policeman was killed or injured during the incident," he said.

Majiya said the gunmen also abandoned one of their motorcycles before fleeing the area.

He said security had since been beefed up in the area, adding that neighbouring states had been alerted in order to arrest the fleeing hoodlums.

Auto crash claims 11 visitors of First Lady

One of the close associates of the First Lady Dame Patience Jonathan and former state commissioner for transport in Bayelsa State, Mrs Marie Ebikake, yesterday recounted the last moment she spent with the 11 Bayelsa female politicians that died in a ghastly road accident near the Old Ahoada Market road, along the East-West road of Rivers State.

Marie Ebikake, who was last month sacked by Governor Seriake Dickson as the transport commissioner due to her close relationship with Dame Patience Jonathan, came to the Okirika community home of the first lady in a separate vehicle due to the ill-health of her husband.

Ebikake, who was still in shock over the sad event, said: "On Wednesday I spoke with the First Lady, Dame Pateince Jonathan and she said she was in Okirika. I told her that I may not be able to come due to the ill-health of my spouse. She expressed concern and said I should come so that we could discuss ways to get better medical attention for him."

"When I arrived at Okhirika on Thursday, I saw the women and they welcomed me happily. We hailed each other as usual and we were all happy.

"The women, after the brief meeting with the first lady, were supposed to go back on Friday. Unknowingly to the first lady, they had waited to see her off at the Port Harcourt Airport before heading for Bayelsa. When the first lady met them at the airport, she was surprised that they were still around."

"The women, who were in a jolly mood, replied the first lady that they had wanted to make sure that Mommy left for Abuja before they would return to Yenagoa. That was the last we saw of them."

The women, who were mostly members of the non-governmental group, Women for Change Initiative, as well as members of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), were on their way back to the Bayelsa State capital from the airport when they perished in the crash.

According to the preliminary report from the men of the Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC) issued by the Bayelsa Commander, Vincent Jack, 29 passengers in three separate vehicles were involved in the accident. 18 persons were reported injured and 11 others burnt beyond recognition.

The three vehicles involved were a Toyota Hiace Bus with registration no. GBB591FS, a Toyota Siena (ABU640AE) and a Toyota Highlander Jeep (YEN 371R). The FRSC attributed the cause of accident to tyre burst.

According to the FRSC, the injured were taken to Madonna Hospital in Elele by the police who were first came to the scene. The corpse of one dead woman was deposited at Oepdem Mortuary in Ahoada while police took the corpse of another to Rumuji. Nine others were burnt beyond recognition.

LEADERSHIP gathered that the Bayelsa women leaders involved in the accident include a former member of the State House of Assembly from Brass local government and special adviser to Governor Seriake Dickson, Mrs Ruby Benjamin; a former commissioner for women affairs under the administration of Governor Timipre Sylva, Hon. Gimbra Panowei; the wife of the secretary to the state government, Mrs. Elizabeth Allison-Oguru, and a woman leader from Otuoke Community in Ogbia local government, Madam Consider Amadi.

Also killed in the accident was the wife of the owner of a popular Montessori School known as Ayakpo International Schools, Mrs Inamamu Ayakpor, and a retired permanent secretary at the Ministry of Education, Mrs Pere Kalama.

Also confirmed dead is a grassroots politician Mrs Clara Abila, and a former commissioner, Civil Service Commission Mrs Immaculate Amasimua.

LEADERSHIP confirmed that one of the women and former Bayelsa State commissioner, Ebisinte Ayabowei, survived the accident. The former commissioner for transport, Mrs Marie Ebikake, who was also in Okirika, on a private visit, was reported to have driven back to Yenagoa in a separate vehicle and could not be part of the ill-fated convoy.

A political leader from Ogbia local government and State Assembly flag bearer of the All Progressives Congress (APC), Sir Tonye Okio, expressed shock at the accident, and described it as a huge loss to the people of the state.

The members of the state chapter of the Transformation Ambassadors of Nigeria (TAN), led by the former deputy governor of the state, Hon Werinipre Seibarogu, were early callers to the bereaved families in the state capital.

Bayelsa declares 3-day mourning

The Bayelsa State governor, Seriake Dickson, has expressed deep shock and grief over the tragic incident, describing it as a monumental and painful loss to the state.

According to him, the women that lost their lives in the accident were "our mothers and sisters."