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Gov Jang when he picked the nomination form to re-contest for Jos governorship at the PDP Hq in Abuja. PHOTO: ABAYOMI FAYESE.

THE fragile peace of Jos, the Plateau State capital, collapsed once again Friday as multiple explosions rocked the city, killing scores of people and leaving hundreds of others severely injured.

Unconfirmed reports at press time indicated that no fewer than nine explosions had occurred in different parts of the city, with two of them happening simultaneously in Angwa Rukuba. Eyewitnesses said the explosions in Angwa Rukuba killed no fewer than 15 people instantly, while another one in Gada Biu killed about 30 people.

The third explosion, which rocked the Sacred Catholic Church at

Kadong part of the city, occurred around 9.30 pm, but the number of casualties could not be ascertained at press time.

Another bomb was said to have exploded at Nasarawa Gwom, a notorious flashpoint of violence in Jos North Local Government.

Eyewitnesses said three bombs were planted along Goodluck Jonathan Road, while two were planted in a Catholic Church in Kabong village.

There had been rumours in the past of plans to disrupt the celebration of Christmas in the city, but they never became real until yesterday's explosions.

Among the landmarks affected by the blasts was a bridge commissioned by President Goodluck Jonathan during an official visit he paid to Plateau State recently. There had been fears in recent times that some places in the city were being targeted for bombing. Two of the places attacked were predominantly occupied by the native inhabitants.

While the city had become the hotbed of deadly ethnic conflicts in recent years, it was difficult to ascertain the people that were responsible for the latest attacks at press time. But many believed that the attacks could have been carried out by a group of religious extremists known as *Boko Haram*, who had had been responsible for some religious

conflicts in parts of the North in recent times.

Even the Special Task Force (STF), the security outfit responsible for maintaining peace in the city, was caught unawares by the attacks.

Addressing newsmen earlier yesterday, the STF Commander, Brig-Gen. Hassan Umoru, had assured the residents of the city of peaceful Christmas celebration, admonishing the youth not to allow themselves to be used for violence during the Yuletide.

A few hours later, however, sounds of explosion rent the air in different parts of the city, leaving the relations of the victims to wail, even as efforts were being made to rush injured victims to different hospitals in the city.

Many of the injured victims rushed to Bingham University Teaching Hospital and Jos University Teaching Hospital (JUTH), however, died on the way. At press time, Birghan (Jankwanu) University Teaching Hospital was bristling with the casualties of the blast.

The Medical Director of JUTH, Dr. Ishaya Pam, yesterday ordered all the doctors in the hospital, who were on leave to return to work immediately in order to save as many lives as possible. He also called on members of the public to donate blood to injured victims.

Many churches in the city where services that would usher in Christmas were being conducted had to hurriedly abandon the churches and flee for dear lives.

Condemning the blasts yesterday, the Plateau State Commissioner for Information, Mr. Gregory Yelong, said it was unfortunate that the blast occurred in spite of the efforts the state government had been making to see that lasting peace returned to the city.

Soldiers yesterday cordoned off Birghan Teaching Hospital and the road leading from Polo to Old Bukuru Park, while men of the STF completely took over those streets. Men of the STF also barricaded the roads leading to Rukuba Barracks and Zaria Road. An eerie silence pervaded the city as scared residents remained indoors.

The Police Public Relations Officer in the state, Muhammed Lerama, an Assistant Superintendent of Police, could not confirm the incident yesterday because he had travelled out of Jos. The spokesman of the Special Task Force, Charise Ekocha, said: "We are yet to get the details."

The Commissioner of Police in the state, Abdulrahman Akano, however, confirmed the explosions, saying that men of the Bomb Disposal Unit had been dispatched to the trouble spots and other strategic parts of the city. He assured that further investigation would reveal the source of the bombs as well as those that were responsible for them.

Governor David Jang yesterday sent out a condolence message to families who lost their loved ones in the multiple explosions.

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morufu ajibade on 25/12/2010 03:59:58



oh God! Help us.