

Seven killed as suicide bomber attacks Borno Police headquarters

Police: How our men prevented bomber from gaining entry

TWO bomb explosions rocked parts of Maiduguri, Borno State capital yesterday, resulting in the death of seven persons.

The first explosion occurred at the headquarters of the Borno State Police Command where a suicide bomber killed six persons made up of two policemen and four civilians.

A police source said the suicide car bomber believed to be a member of the dreaded Boko Haram sect attempted to force his way into the state headquarters through the main gate with a car laden with explosive devices.

The source said the bomb went off while policemen on guard at the gate prevented the bomber from entering.

He, however, said he could not give further details as "efforts are being made to clear the debris and rescue the affected persons."

Yesterday's attack was the second time a suicide bomber would run into the police headquarters. The first attempt was made in August last year.

Although the bomber was gunned down by policemen at the gate during yesterday's attack, the bomb still went off.

In another explosion that had occurred earlier between 7 am and 8:15 am, an unknown bomber got detonated around 'Gidan Dambe' area of the metropolis.

■ Joseph ABIODUN, ■
Maiduguri and Gbade
OGUNWALE, Abuja

According to witnesses, he was trying to plant an improvised explosive device (IED), which exploded and left him dead.

It was gathered that some suspicious movements had started at Gidan Dambe on Thursday night but residents of the area kept mute for fear of being killed.

According to the source, they saw men carrying weapons around Gidan Dambe but felt they might be security operative in plain clothes.

The town had been experiencing clashes between sect members and security operatives. The source, however, said when they noticed some awkward behaviour in the people, they suspected them to be members of the Boko Haram sect.

"Between 7 am and 8:15 am, we heard the sound of the blast. We knew without being told that it was bomb. I opened the window and looked around the streets and I saw policemen running towards the place where the explosion occurred. It was so powerful that I could still feel blood running through my spine as I speak to you. Just don't come around our area. It is very bad," the source warned.

A JTF spokesman said the IED was concealed in a bag and kept

under a public shed, but it exploded while the victim was trying to plant it.

"There was an explosion in an area of Maiduguri this morning and our men immediately deployed to the area," Col, Victor Ebhaleme, the Field Operations Officer of the task force told newsmen.

"They found a man we believe to be a member of Boko Haram dismembered by the explosion. Preliminary investigation has shown that he was killed when he was trying to plant the device."

At the time of filing this report around 4 pm yesterday, the entire town was deserted while major roads were cordoned off by security agents.

Police authorities yesterday explained how their men foiled the suicide bomber's attempt to attack the command headquarters. A statement by the Force Public Relations Officer, Mr. Frank Mba, reads: "Today 8th of June, 2012, at about 11:30 am, a lone male suicide bomber, driving a light green Toyota Camry car loaded with Improvised explosive Devices (IEDs), attempted to smash through the gate of the Borno State Police Command Headquarters.

"His attempt, however, failed as vigilant and combat-ready police officers on guard at the gate resisted and prevented him from gaining access into the headquarters premises.

"Obviously acting out of frustration and desperation, he detonated the explosives right outside the gate of the headquarters, killing himself in the process.

"One Inspector Ali Bulama, a gallant and very competent officer, and four other civilians who were passersby lost their lives in the incident.

"In addition, three other civilians and a couple of police officers sustained injuries of various degrees. They are all responding to treatment at various hospitals within Borno State.

"Meanwhile, a combined team of detectives from Borno State CID and the Police Bomb Disposal Unit has since commenced investigation, and has indeed made substantial progress in effort to track down and bring to book those behind the dastardly act.

"While sympathising with the families of those who lost their lives in the unfortunate incident, the IGP (Inspector-General of Police) wishes to reassure all Nigerians of the commitment of the Force to do everything within its power to ensure that law and order are restored in every part of the country, warning that lawlessness and criminality in whatever shade will not be condoned. He appeals to the general public to continue to support the Police and other security agencies by volunteering useful information at all times."

Man cured of AIDS, says 'I feel good'