

Six dead in suicide bombers' attacks in Damaturu

•22 injured •Gaidam sad

Two teenage suicide bombers yesterday killed six persons, including themselves, at two locations in Damaturu, the Yobe State capital.

The first attack, which occurred at the entrance of the Damaturu Central Terminus, was triggered off by a girl believed to be about 14 years and the second one occurred at the Pompomari axis of the Damaturu Ring-road Bypass, involving a boy of about the same age.

The first attack claimed five lives, including the bomber, while in the second one, according to an eyewitness, the suicide bomber detonated the bomb on his body after he escaped from passengers, who wanted to arrest and hand him over to the military after they suspected that he was carrying Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs).

Mani Gambo, one of the local security personnel at the terminus, said the female suicide bomber ran close to a vehicle carrying passengers before detonating the IEDs.

He said: "We saw the girl. As I was about to screen her, she ran away towards a car, which was coming out of the terminus. Then I heard a loud bang. I was thrown on the ground. It was later I saw the mutilated body of the girl."

Musa Abdul, who was in the same tricycle with the boy-suicide bomber, said: "I saw the boy when he boarded our *keke NAPEP*. I was not comfortable with him.

"I asked him where he was going and he answered that he was going to Tasha (terminus). I asked him what he wanted to do at the place or where he was travelling to, because he did not carry bag. But he couldn't give me a satisfactory answer. I then held him and surprisingly, I discovered he was carrying a bomb around his waist. I then held his two hands and told the other passengers to alight.

"I told the driver of the *keke NAPEP* to make a U-turn so that we could go to the nearest military checkpoint. But the boy escaped and started running. Then we heard a loud bang. That was how he killed himself."

Police spokesman Toyin Gbadegesin confirmed the incident.

He said they were working to fish out the sponsors of suicide attacks.

The Executive Secretary of the Yobe State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA), Mr. Musa Idi Jidawa, also confirmed the death of six people, including the suicide bombers, saying about 22 persons were injured.

Governor Ibrahim Gaidam expressed sadness about the attacks. He sympathised with the deceased's families.

In a statement by Abdullahi Bego, his spokesman, the governor said: "I'm heartbroken. I mourn with the families of the victims of these callous, senseless and condemnable attacks."

He prayed Almighty Allah (SWT) to grant repose to the souls of the dead and a quick recovery to the injured.

The statement said: "The governor has directed that the injured be treated free at the Sani Abacha Specialist Hospital.

"In line with the governor's directive, SEMA officials are supporting the victims.

"Governor Gaidam urges people to continue in the tradition of vigilance, prayer and support to security agencies as they move to rid our state of violence."