

# Death toll in Gwoza blasts rises to 32




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## • Shettima leads condolence delegation

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The death toll from the bomb attack in Gwoza area of Borno State on Saturday has risen to 31, Vice President Kashim Shettima said yesterday.

However, another person died later, thereby bringing the number of the dead to 32.

He spoke yesterday during a condolence visit to the families of the victims in visit to Gwoza.

In a statement by Senior Special Assistant to the President on Media and Information, Office of the Vice President, Stanley Nkwocha, Vice President Shettima described the incident as pathetic. He quoted the late Dele Giwa, saying, "One life lost in cold blood is as gruesome as millions lost in cold blood."

Speaking with reporters after meeting and commiserating with victims of the attack at the State Specialist Hospital, Maiduguri, Shettima conveyed the condolences of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu to the Borno State government and the people of Gwoza.

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He said 42 persons were brought to the specialist hospital but 14 had been discharged after receiving treatment. He said 26 were still receiving treatment.

The VP, who made a personal donation to the victims, condoled with the families of those killed by the multiple explosions.

Shettima was in company of the Borno State Acting Governor Umar Usman Kadafur, Babagana Kingibe, Senator Ali Ndume, Minister of Agriculture and Food Security, Abubakar Kyari, former Nigerian Ambassador to China, Baba Ahmed Jidda, the Director-General of NEMA and other government functionaries.

The Acting Governor said: "We are here on behalf of Governor Prof. Babagana Umara Zulum to sympathise with the victims and see firsthand the treatment they are receiving.

"We urge the people to accept this as an act of God and not lose hope in the emerging peace in the state."

Kadafur further said the State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA) had evacuated and transported some victims from Gwoza to Maiduguri for medical attention.

He announced the state government's donation of N5 million to support the victims receiving treatment at the State Specialist Hospital.

To avert a recurrence, the Northern Senators Forum (NSF) has pledged to work to reinforce security measures, swift responses to threats, in the region.

In a statement, its Chairman, Senator Abdulaziz Yaradua (APC-Katsina) said: "We salute the unwavering courage and dedication of the medical teams, rescue workers, and the Nigerian Army who have responded with valour and selflessness in the face of adversity.

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"Your commitment to preserving lives in the midst of turmoil exemplifies the true spirit of service and sacrifice.

"As representatives of the Northern Senators Forum, we stand in solidarity with you, unwavering in our commitment to seeking justice and holding accountable those responsible for these vile acts.

"We pledge to work tirelessly to reinforce security measures, ensure swift responses to threats, and prevent the recurrence of such atrocities."

On the hand, their southern counterpart, The Southern Senators' Forum, condemned the heinous suicide bombing attacks that took place in Tashan Mararaba, Gwoza town,

The Forum in a statement by its Chairman, Senator Adetokunbo Abiru, Secretary-General, Senator Barinada Mpigi and Publicity Secretary, Senator Asuquo Ekpenyong, in Abuja, commiserated with victims of the incidents even as it called for collective and robust response to the menace of terrorism in the country.

"We are deeply shocked and saddened by the barbaric attack and our thoughts and prayers are with the victims, their families, and the entire community affected by this senseless acts of violence," they said.

"These heinous acts of terrorism are a stark reminder of the persistent security challenges facing our nation. The despicable act once again highlights the urgent need for a collective, collaborative and robust response to terrorism in our country."

"We call upon the Federal Government and security agencies to intensify their efforts in combating terrorism and ensuring the safety and security of all Nigerians."

They added: "Those responsible for this atrocity must be swiftly brought to justice. We commend President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's swift condemnation of the attacks and the resolve of his administration to bring the perpetrators to book, and the re-assurance to continue to secure the lives and properties of citizens."

Meanwhile, the Arewa Consultative Forum (ACF) has condemned the bomb attack, calling for renewed efforts by the military to decapitate religious extremists, banditry and insurgency.

The ACF National Publicity Secretary, Prof. Tukur A. Muhammad-Baba, in a statement yesterday expressed sadness at the attacks.

"The Arewa Consultative Forum (ACF) is greatly saddened to receive news about coordinated suicide bomb attacks on Gwoza community of Borno state, as experienced on Saturday, 29th June, 2024. The sordid events led to the death of at least 19 persons, including women and children (perhaps still counting), with scores of people wounded.

"Although no persons or groups have claimed responsibility for the cowardly attacks, they had all the hallmarks of the well-known terror strategies of Boko Haram religious extremist insurgents. ACF observes that the attacks were specifically targeted, for maximum impact, at a wedding party, a funeral and a hospital, all soft and defenceless targets, as undertaken by brainwashed female agents.