

Jos explosions: Death toll rises to 35

• Survivors recount ordeal • IED materials recovered



Mrs. Enejo



Mallam Buba

ISAAC SHOBAYO - JOS

THE explosion that rocked the commercial nerve centre of Jos, Plateau State on Thursday has claimed more lives *Saturday Tribune* gathered on Friday.

The incident perpetrated by two female suicide bombers has caused the death toll to rise to 35, just as the anti bomb squad of the state's Police Command has also intercepted some yet-to-be-packaged Improvised Explosive Device (IED) materials in Jos North Council Area of the state.

Two female suicide bombers had on Thursday at about 6:30 pm, detonated explosive trapped in their bodies at Jos Business Centre otherwise called Terminus and killed mostly workers and traders who were heading home after the day's work.

Saturday Tribune's visit to the major hospitals, namely, Plateau State Specialist Hospital, Bingham Teaching Hospital and OLA Hospital within the Jos city, where the bodies of those who died in the explosion were kept and those who sustained injuries were being treated, portrayed a sight of anguish. Most of those who have not seen their loved ones since the incident besieged the hospitals for enquiries.

Saturday Tribune findings at the three hospitals revealed that 12 corpses were deposited at OLA Hospital, 10 at Plateau Specialist Hospital and eight at Bingham Teaching Hospital. It was further learnt that no fewer than 10 bodies were buried in the early hours of Friday while there were those whose bodies were shattered beyond recognition by the explosion.

One of the survivors, Mrs. Mary Enejo who is being treated at OLA Hospital told *Saturday Tribune* that she escaped death by the whiskers at the explosion scene in Terminus where he had gone to buy foodstuff from a customer.

"When I got to the market about 6:30 pm, she was already packing her goods to close for the day. I begged her to sell for me before shutting shop for the day and she obliged. While she was measuring the foodstuffs, I bent down to help her so that we could leave together.

When still on the bending posture, the next thing I heard was an explosion and later found myself on the ground. While people were running for safety, the second one exploded just very close to the scene of the first one.

"My daughter who was three years old was with me, but nothing serious happened to her, she just suffered few scratches. A man came and took my daughter away. The man that picked her also sustained injuries. He took her to Chilas hospital where my husband later found her. Up to this moment I don't know how I got to this hospital," she explained.

Another survivor, Mallam Hassan Buba who works with NASCO Group of Companies was trapped in the explosion while returning from his place of work.

"I was on my way back home from the office and decided to stop at Terminus to see my landlord. While discussing the way and manner the first bomb exploded as we were all running towards ECWA Good News Church, the second one exploded and soon after, I found myself covered in a pool of blood. Some good Samaritans took me to this hospital."

Musa Abdullahi who sells second-hand clothes said no one envisaged that suicide bombers would storm the area considering existing firm security in place.

Abdulahi whose legs were badly damaged, said he was attending to customers when the incident occurred

adding that he was lucky to have survived because the two customers with him were killed instantly by the explosion.

The state's Commissioner of Police, Nasiru Oki said the terror act was carried out by two female bombers at about 6:25 pm who came to Terminus and detonated IEDs trapped in their bodies adding that the explosion happened at about three minutes' interval to each other.

Meanwhile, men of the anti bomb squad of Plateau State Police Command on Friday intercepted a consignment of materials used in manufacturing IED at a densely populated area called Shagari corner in Jos North Local Government Area of the State.

The State's Police Public Relations Officer, Emmanuel Abu who confirmed the incident to *Saturday Tribune* said men of anti bomb squad stormed the area following a tip off and recovered the materials which are yet to be packaged.

However, Plateau State's Commissioner for Information and Communication, Abubakar Muhammad Badu said 32 people were killed and 45 injured as a result of the blast.

Badu stated this during a joint press briefing held on Friday in Jos. He was joined by men of the National Emergency Management Agency, State Emergency Management Agency, Nigeria Red Cross, Special Task Force (STF) and the Nigeria Police.

Badu said the tragedy was regrettable but urged Plateau citizens to be calm and watchful.

"Reports so far received from the security and other relevant agencies this morning indicate that 45 persons were injured while 32 others were killed by the twin bomb blasts," he said.

He added: "Government wishes to assure all that it will give the necessary support to the security agencies in order to unravel those behind this wicked act. We sympathise with families that lost their loved ones and pray for the quick recovery of those injured.

"Members of the public are advised to be on the alert, be vigilant and cooperate with the security agencies to ensure that this unfortunate incident is averted in the future," he stated.

It was further learnt that no fewer than 10 bodies were buried in the early hours of Friday while there were those whose bodies were shattered beyond recognition by the explosion.