

TOP STORIES

Boko Haram kills 35 in Gombe, Bauchi explosions

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FEW days to the Christmas and New Year celebrations, a suspected female suicide bomber, on Monday morning, detonated a bomb, killing not less that 19 people at the Dukku Motor Park on the Federal College of Education (FCE) road in Gombe, the Gombe State capital.

Also, no fewer than 16 people were killed on Monday evening in a bomb blast that occurred at the busy Central Market in Bauchi.

Nigerian Tribune gathered that the Bauchi blast occurred a few minutes before 6.00 p.m. as the blast occurred in a shop where the bomb was planted.

In Gombe, the park was said to have been a beehive of activities due to high number of passengers travelling ahead the Christmas and Boxing Day holidays declared by the Federal Government.

The bomb blast, the Nigerian Tribune gathered, occurred at about 10.50 a.m., when the suicide bomber, who disguised as a passenger, entered the park with a bag loaded with explosives and detonated a bomb in a Sharon bus.

An eyewitness informed that the bomber placed the explosive-laden bag in the bus and excused herself, only to detonate it later, killing many on the spot, while others sustained varying degree of injuries.

Two vehicles were burnt to ashes after the explosion, while hawkers within the premises were said to have been injured in the attack.

Confirming the incident to journalists, the state Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), Fwaji Atajiri, said 19 people lost their lives in the blast, adding that 25 others were injured.

According to him, the police had already cordoned off the area, adding that the remains of the deceased had been taken to the mortuary, while injured victims are currently receiving treatment at the Gombe Specialist Hospital.

The police spokesman, however, called on members of the public to always be vigilant, as well as assist security agencies in the state with useful information, to ensure safety of the people and their property.

Following the explosion, the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) said it had evacuated all persons affected by the incident.

According to a statement issued by PRNigeria, most of those evacuated were taken to Gombe State Specialist Hospital,

while it advised the public to be vigilant.

More than 30 people were killed on October 31, 2014 when suspected bomber detonated explosives at the Gombe Line park, with about 12 18-seater buses on the premises completely razed.

In Bauchi, as of the time Nigerian Tribune visited the scene, tension was high, while gunshots were being fired by security agencies to scare away angry youths, who had started pelting them with stones and other objects.

An eyewitness, who identified himself as Mu'azu Musa, said he saw charred bodies of victims as they were being evacuated from the scene of the blast.

Musa, who said he was an Okada rider and was by the roundabout near the market when the blast occurred, stated that he fell down from his motorcycle when he saw the charred bodies of the victims, adding that he lost consciousness as a result before he found himself in the hospital.

Victims were seen being evacuated from the scene by Red Cross officials to the Trauma Centre of the Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University Teaching Hospital (ATBUTH).

Speaking with journalists at the hospital, the deputy chairman, Medical Advisory Council (CMAC) of the hospital in charge of clinical matters, Dr Saidu Abubakar Kadas, said the actual figure of the casualties could not be ascertained yet, as victims were being brought in.

He, however, assured that the teaching hospital was in a better stead to handle the situation, as most of its health workers had been mobilised to attend to the victims.

Also speaking, chairman of the ATBUTH branch of the Nigerian Union of Allied Health Professionals, Mr Idris Ado, stated that the incident was unfortunate and regrettable.

According to him, the health workers, currently on strike, had been directed to report for work today, to take care of the victims.

Meanwhile, Bauchi State governor, Mallam Isa Yuguda, has condemned in strong terms the bomb blast, describing it as most unfortunate and barbaric incident aimed at disrupting the peace being enjoyed in the state.

The governor, according to a press statement signed and issued by his Chief Press Secretary (CPS), Ishola Michael Adeyemi, condemned the perpetrators of the heinous act, describing them as cowards always happy in spilling innocent blood.

He reassured the people of the state that his administration would not relent in its efforts to ensure that lives and property of law-abiding citizens were protected at all cost.

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