Explosion kills masquerader in Kogi, many others injured

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AN explosion, on Thursday evening, claimed two lives, including that of a masquerader and left many others injured in Idoji, Okene Local Government Area of Kogi State.

The incident occurred at a location where Echeane, an annual masquerade festival, was ongoing.

Eyewitnesses claimed that an improvised explosive device had been detonated in the gathering of spectators at the festival, killing the masquerader and a spectator and injuring many others.

A resident of the area who witnessed the incident, Usman Animuko Sani, stated that the explosion occurred around 6.00 p.m. when some people, including masqueraders, had gathered to celebrate the festival.

Sani, who disclosed that the explosion affected many residents of the area, stated that a yet to be identified man lost his two his legs while others sustained varying degrees of injury.

He said one of the victims of the explosion died being conveyed to the hospital where many of the victims were taken to for treatment.

According to him, some of the victims whose injuries were deemed too severe were referred to other medical facilities in Lokoja, the state capital.

Following the attack, the chairman of Okehi Local Government Area, Abdulraheem Ohiare, has suspended the masquerade festival.

In a statement, Ohiare directed custodians and traditional heads to obey the new development and gave the assurance of his commitment to peaceful coexistence.

Confirming the incident in a telephone interview with *Saturday Tribune*, the state Police Public Relations Officer, William Ayah, said unconfirmed information reaching him revealed that one of the victims of the explosion died in the hospital.

He said the state Commissioner of Police, Edward Egbuka, had deployed bomb experts in the scene to unravel the cause of the explosion.

The explosion occurred just a few weeks after two explosions in Kabba, in one of which a woman, an Ebira resident of Kaaba, was killed and her younger brother lost one of his legs.