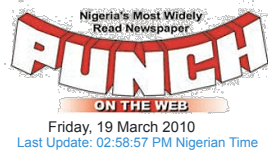


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Three killed in Delta car bomb blasts

By Sola Adebayo and Ibanga Isine, Published: Tuesday, 16 Mar 2010

A A A A A

Governors Emmanuel Uduaghan, Adams Oshiomhole, Ikedi Ohakim and other prominent Nigerians escaped being hurt on Monday when two car bombs exploded near the Delta State Government House annex, Warri, venue of a post-amnesty conference of governors from the Niger Delta.

But three people were unlucky as they were burnt to death in an inferno caused by explosions which occurred within 15 minutes from cars parked on the NPA Expressway where the DSGH annex is situated. Six others who were injured were rushed to the clinic of a major oil company in Warri for treatment.



Scene of the bomb blasts in Warri, Delta State... on Monday.
Photos: Sola Adebayo

The explosions reverberated and shattered the window panes in the hall, a development which led to pandemonium.

The other dignitaries that escaped unhurt were the the Minister of Niger Delta Affairs, Chief Ufot Ekaette, who represented Acting President, Goodluck Jonathan; a former Chief of Defence Staff, Gen. Andrew Azazi (rtd.); Publisher of Vanguard Newspapers, Mr. Sam Amuka; the Presidential Adviser on Niger Delta, Mr. Timi Alaibe; and a former Governor of Edo State, Chief Odigie Oyeagan.

Others were Senator Stella Omu; an elder statesman, Chief Hope Harriman; and traditional rulers in the Niger Delta, including the Olu of Warri, Ogiamé Atuwatse 11.

The Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta, which claimed responsibility for the incident, said it had earlier in the day (Monday), warned that invitees should stay away from the conference venue.

Many vehicles plying the expressway at the time of the explosions were trapped in the inferno.

Our correspondent saw the burnt remains of the three victims, identified by eyewitnesses as a woman, a cyclist and a passerby.

The first bomb exploded at 11am as Governor Uduaghan of Delta State was walking into the hall with Ohakim (Imo State) and Oshiomhole (Edo State).

While securitymen were busy assuring the invitees that the situation was under control, 15 minutes later, the second bomb went off. At this point, the hapless invitees scampered for safety.

The conference which was organised by Vanguard Newspapers to proffer further solutions to the Niger Delta crisis ended abruptly. Its theme was "Post-Amnesty Dialogue-Restoring Hope in the Niger Delta."

Azazi, who chaired the occasion, had made his opening remarks, which paved the way for Amuka to read his welcome address when the second explosion occurred.

The Commissioner of Police, Delta State Command, Mr. Yakubu Alkali, told one of our correspondents on the telephone that only a woman died in the explosions.

Alkali, who added that investigation into the incident had begun, vowed that the masterminds would be unmasked and punished.

Delta State Government, in a statement by the Commissioner for Information, Mr. Oma Djebah, blamed the development on a few people "opposed to a peaceful and non-violent approach of resolving the historic grievances of the region."

Vowing that Niger Delta people would not be "intimidated nor deterred by the cowardly act" of "few individuals," the government said the participants were evacuated to a safe location.

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The statement reads, "This morning (Monday, March 15, 2010), explosives mounted in two cars stationed at about 200 metres away from the venue of the conference entitled 'Post-Amnesty Dialogue- Restoring Hope in the Niger Delta,' were detonated.

"To protect lives and properties, the Governor of Delta State, Dr. Uduaghan, ordered the immediate evacuation of participants to a safe location. The event was also halted by the organisers.

"The people of the Niger Delta will not be intimidated nor deterred by the cowardly act of a few opposed to a peaceful and non-violent approach of resolving the historic grievances of the region."

A statement by the General Manager (Publication)/Editor-in-Chief, Vanguard Newspapers, Mr. Gbenga Adefaye, said the conference was "designed to promote sustainable peace and development in Niger Delta.

He said, "It is therefore most regrettable that this noble project was aborted by the same people for whom it was designed to elevate.

"For a successful dialogue, Vanguard had lined up all representatives of all tiers of government to come and discuss their scorecards for development in a way that must ginger all to action.

"These were supposed to be discussed by the militants, members of the civil society, international organisations and the road map for development clearly re-defined with stated deliverables and timelines."

The MEND, in an e-mail statement to one of our correspondents, said it breached security at the venue and planted the devices.

Its spokesman, Mr. Jomo Gbomo, explained that the action was taken to prove to the governors of the Niger Delta states, especially those of Delta and Bayelsa, that MEND was real.

It referred to a statement where the Bayelsa State Governor, Mr. Timiprie Sylva, allegedly said the group only existed on the media.

The group recalled that Uduaghan had also said that MEND was a media creation and that an oil pipeline could be destroyed by one man armed with a bottle of petrol.

Part of the e-mail statement reads, "Thinking of no better way to announce our continued presence in the Niger Delta to Dr. Uduaghan, operatives of MEND today, March 15, 2010, successfully breached the security at the Delta State Government House in Warri and planted three explosive devices in and around the compound."

Gbomo said the group advised the "immediate evacuation of the the Government House Annex Warri and its immediate surroundings up to the Delta State Broadcasting Corporation," before the detonation of the devices.

He alleged that "the Niger Delta had been partitioned into oil blocks which have been distributed amongst mostly Northerners while indigenes of the Niger Delta can barely survive. One such example being Lt.-Gen. Theophilus Danjuma."

Gbomo described the governors of the Niger Delta as "shameless and visionless stooges who are more concerned with looting their state treasuries and seeking a second term in office, even against the wishes of their people."

MEND said it would attack any gathering designed to propagate falsehood and warned members of the public to desist from attending them.

It added that in the coming days, its men would carry out a number of attacks on installations and oil companies across the Niger Delta.

Comments :

Men are really justified because this so call governors are doing nothing than thinking how to loot our money, you can see with your eyes, meeting meeting every day no result no action, sitting money has never been delayed, infact our greedy police and army are ready to smuggle them out from place to place because of five hundred naia, monkey tail and a plate of eba

Posted by: Adebayo Odukola , on Tuesday, March 16, 2010

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MEND IS AGAINST ANY INTERNAL SAUDI ARABIA CONFERENCE FLEASING THE MONEY MENT FOR DEVELOPMENT IN THE NAME OF :::SITTING ALOWANCE, HOTEL BILLS FOR TWO DAY OR A WEEK, FEEDING OF PARTICIPANTS, LOGISTICS AND FUELLING OF THIEVING CARS....MEND SAID GO AHEAD AND SHOW US WHAT U HAVE DISCUSSED OVER THE YEAR TEY U WANT ANOTHER MEETING....FOR WHAT>? NORTH IS KILLING CHRISTIANS AND U NEED A MEETING HERE WHY?? '##/

Posted by: TRUTH , on Tuesday, March 16, 2010

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Kill and bomb them alive while having animal talk conference. After--all, the casualties from JTF and Hausa Fulani recent mayhem on innocent NigerDeltans and that of Berom people of JOS is enough justification to bring our co-existence to abrupt end. Our forced Unity as Nigeria was not born on N-Deltan Oil that became the elemetary fueling factor for killing and truncating our nation oneness. therefore, MEND is Justified in actions taken to correct and arrest the excess of our t

Posted by: osagie oscar asemota , on Tuesday, March 16, 2010

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We have been talking for over 50yrs/the records are all there/abrogate the land use decree and petroleum acts/all talking when Bako Haram struck/still on their sick bed talking when the massacre in Jos took place.talking when Yaradua vanished from Aso rock/talking as we pray for the families that lost their lives.Talks do not end stealing it increases it/fiscal federalism/does not need too much talk its action prone. Was GJ an d governors not der when they bombed dem villages?

Posted by: amadu jos , on Tuesday, March 16, 2010

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D three govs are lucky d overseas bank they dump their money could hv been lucky if d bomb scattered them, civilian thieves

Posted by: Ozor Emmanuel , on Tuesday, March 16, 2010

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