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## Suicide bomber kills 30 in Maiduguri

JANUARY 15, 2014 BY FIDELIS SORIWEI, SUCCESS NWOGU AND KAYODE IDOWU

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**A scene of the bomb blast in Maiduguri, Borno State  
... on Tuesday.**

| *credits: NAN.*

This year's Eid Malud Festival was marred in Maiduguri, Borno State by a bomb blast at the busy Post Office Roundabout in Maiduguri, Borno State on Tuesday.

A lone suicide bomber, believed to be a member of the Islamist militant sect, Boko Haram, carried out the attack which eye witnesses said left no fewer than 30 people dead and about 50 others injured.

The attack which occurred at about seven hours after eight people died in an accident on the Osara-Okene Express Road, Kogi State, sparked protests by youths, who alleged that it was traceable to politicians.

The angry youths damaged former governor Ali Modu Sheriff's office on Kashim Imam Way before they left for the Government Reservation Area where they also torched a building belonging to him.

It was gathered that the former governor, who was still in the state as of the time the explosion occurred, was hurriedly driven to the Maiduguri Airport en route for Abuja. He was said to have been escorted by a well armed police team.

Soldiers fired shots into the air to disperse the youths before cordoning off the roads around the blast site and the GRA.

Investigation, however, revealed that Improvised Explosive Devices were wired to a vehicle and detonated at the roundabout which also leads to the Monday Market, the busiest market in the troubled city.

There were however conflicting reports on how the lone suicide bomber arrived and detonated IEDs close to a roadblock mounted by the military near the roundabout.

While the spokesman for the 7 Division of the Nigerian Army Maiduguri, Col. Mohammed Dole, said the bomber drove a Honda car, *Reuters* said he arrived at the area in a tricycle laden with IEDs.

Dole, who blamed the attack on Boko Haram, said, "At about 14:13 hours on Tuesday, January 14, a Honda car laden with IEDs exploded near the Post Office area in Maiduguri metropolis. Members of the frustrated Boko Haram terrorists are suspected to be behind the bomb explosion.

"Many deaths and injuries were recorded and 10 vehicles and five tricycles are confirmed damaged and one suspect is arrested. This incident happened after a long period of relative peace in Maiduguri and environs."

But the state Police Commissioner, Lawan Tanko, told *Reuters* that his men counted 17 bodies as of 2pm on Tuesday.

"My men counted 17 dead persons as of 2pm and they are still counting. I instructed my men to go to the University of Maiduguri Teaching Hospital and the Specialist Hospital in Maiduguri to verify if there are others," Tanko added.

Tanko confirmed that the explosion was caused by a suicide bomber who drove a firewood seller truck and detonated a bomb in the middle of the road.

Tanko, who claimed that only five people were injured, added that security operatives were immediately sent to public buildings to prevent attacks on them by the rampaging youths.

A journalist working at the state television office, Abba Kankami, also told the British news agency that he counted 29 dead bodies.

"The attack happened just behind the fence of my office. I counted 29 bodies, including two kids and a mother. Lots of others seriously injured," he said.

However, health workers claimed that 30 bodies were deposited at different hospital mortuaries in the city. They added that 50 injured persons were also brought in.

Another eyewitness, Aisha Hassan, said she saw two boys whose bodies were cut into pieces.

Hassan, who added that two cars immediately caught fire when the explosion happened, said, "I ran away because there was too much blood."

A source told one of our correspondents that operatives who rushed to the scene of the blast which occurred at about 1.30pm, evacuated the injured and the dead to the hospitals.

When contacted, the Director of Defence Information, Maj.-Gen Chris Olukolade, also confirmed that security operatives had arrested a suspected insurgent in relation to the explosion.

He said the suspect was already assisting a team investigating the incident.

The state Governor, Kashim Shettima, condemned the blast, saying it was regrettable it happened at a time people were enjoying the return of peace to Maiduguri.

In a statement by his spokesman, Isa Gusau, Shettima expressed condolences to the families of those who lost their lives.

The statement reads in part, "He (governor) has directed the security to carry out a full scale investigation into the bomb explosion which resulted in the unfortunate youths' rampage that led to the breakdown of law and order.

"The governor also condemned the uprisings in the last three days in the state capital which he described as unfortunate even though avoidable."

He also said that the governor had directed the Ministry of Health to ensure that all the injured received proper medical attention.

The statement added that the governor had met with the National Security Adviser in Abuja on issues of security of lives and property in Borno State.

The governor appealed to all the residents of the state to remain law abiding and reminded them that peace was a collective duty of all.

In Kogi State, an accident involving a *Toyota Hiace* bus, a trailer and a truck claimed the lives of eight people on the Osara-Okene Express Road at about 6.30am on Tuesday.

The Police Public Relations Officer, Kogi State Command, Mr. Redengha Tampa, said the trailer collided with the truck and the bus.

All the dead were said to be the bus passengers. Two other occupants of the bus, who sustained injuries, were rushed to Abobo Clinic, Itakpe, for treatment.

The corpses were taken to the mortuary of the Federal Medical Centre, Lokoja.

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