

Many feared dead, 15 hospitalised as massive explosion rocks Ibadan

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NO fewer than 10 persons were feared killed and 15 others hospitalised on Tuesday at the University College Hospital, Ibadan, Oyo State, following an explosion that rocked the Ibadan metropolis.

The PUNCH reports that there was serious panic in the ancient city around 8 pm over the explosion, whose cause could not be confirmed on Tuesday night.

Among the affected areas were a section of the Governor's Office, Secretariat, Oyo State House of Assembly, the residence of the former Attorney General and Minister of Justice, Chief Bola Ige, some buildings at Ologuneru, Apete, New Garage, Bashorun, Akobo, Sango and Eleyele.

One of our correspondents, who was at the scene of the explosion that occurred at Adeyi Avenue, Bodija Estate, Ibadan, Oyo State capital on Tuesday, reported that no fewer than 10 bodies were recovered from the site and taken away in ambulances.

As of press time, rescue workers believed that some persons were still trapped under the rubble and efforts were ongoing to rescue them.

A social worker at UCH, who did not want his name in print because he had no authority to speak on the matter, told one of our correspondents that the hospital had received no fewer than 15 victims.

"The victims will not be less than 15," he said.

Glass windows, doors and ceilings were shattered in the affected areas.

Major roads were deserted while residents were forced indoors by security operatives, including the police, Western Security Network, code-named Amotekun, and local vigilantes, who took over the

affected areas.

The cause of the blast could not be confirmed. Some residents of the affected areas claimed it was caused by earth movement while others described it as a blast of an Improvised Explosive Device.

Thick smoke rent the air in the affected areas which resulted in the hospitalisation of the victims in various hospitals.

Security vehicles were sighted conveying the victims to some selected hospitals in the state capital for medical attention.

There was no record of death at the time of filing the report but some victims, our correspondent reliably gathered, were on life support.

Also, it was gathered that at least three buildings collapsed as a result of the explosion.

In separate videos seen by *The PUNCH*, a white pickup van with the inscription Bodija Patrol van was seen conveying what was suspected to be the dead bodies of some of the victims, though the state police command told our correspondent via a WhatsApp message that casualties could not be ascertained.

Another short video also

showed some of the places affected by the explosion, with an accompanying male voice calling for help.

"Please, we need help here. These are the people. We need help. Police, Army, and everybody else should come and rescue people here," the male voice pleaded.

In a video currently in circulation, a yet-to-identified lady said the apartment her mother lived in collapsed as a result of the impact of the loud bang.

The distraught lady said, "I was not there, but my mum stays in Adeyi with my sister and my son. They are badly injured. The house collapsed on them. They are stitching their legs and arms. They are in the hospital beside Ace Mall."

Another person, who claimed he escaped with his wife and two daughters, recounted how the house they were in practically caved in due to the explosion.

Also seen at the supposed site of the explosion was a mangled body as the sympathisers around the victim lamented the absence of police and emergency responders.

In a statement, the state government, through

the Commissioner for Information, Dotun Oyelade, confirmed the explosion.

He said, "There are various interpretations of the incident but it is important for us to state categorically that the state government has taken over and is in full control of the unfortunate occurrence in order to mitigate the incident."

"All security service chiefs, including paramilitary chiefs and fire service operatives, have been deployed by the governor to reign in the spillover from the explosion."

"The Governor, Seyi Makinde, therefore, implores citizens to calm down and rest assured that their interests are being looked after."

Also, on its verified X handle, the Oyo State Government urged residents to remain calm, noting that an investigation was underway to unravel the cause of the explosion.

"The Oyo State Government is aware of reports of an explosion in Ibadan. Residents are urged to remain calm as security agencies are investigating this to determine the source and cause of the incident," the X post read.

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EFCC quizzes AGF over N585m humanitarian ministry scandal

Abiodun Sanusi, Abuja

THE Economic and Financial Crimes Commission has interrogated the Accountant General of the Federation, Oluwatoyin Madein, over an alleged link to a N585.2m fraud involving the suspended Minister of Humanitarian Affairs, Dr Betta Edu.

The AGF was quizzed by EFCC interrogators at the anti-graft agency's headquarters, Jabi, Abuja on Monday.

Details of the interrogation obtained by our correspondent on Tuesday revealed that Madein was grilled for over six

hours, and was released with no condition in the evening.

An impeccable anti-graft source, who confirmed the development to our correspondent, revealed that she was queried over the payment of N585.2m of government funds from the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs into the private bank account of a government official.

The source said, "The Accountant General of the Federation, Oluwatoyin Madein, has been invited and interrogated by the commission. She was grilled for over six hours on Monday over

the payment of N585.2m from the National Social Investment office account to the UBA account of Bridget Oniyelu, the accountant of the Grants for Vulnerable Groups under the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs.

"The AGF was not detained, and she was released with no condition after she made her explanation in writing to the investigators during interrogation. However, she told interrogators that she didn't approve the memo from Minister Edu for the payment into a private account."

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