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Yobe: Boko Haram again blows up 48 students, injures 78

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BY OUR REPORTER ONNOVEMBER 11, 2014

COVER, NATIONAL

•Gov Gaidam heart-broken, shuts down schools

Our Reporter: TIMOTHY OLANREWAJU, Maiduguri

Residents of Potiskum, largest commercial town in Yobe State, were again thrown into mourning yesterday as bomb explosion ripped through an assemblage of students at a public school, killing at least 48 mostly students and few teachers.

The blast came barely a week after a suicide bomber believed to be a Boko Haram member detonated explosive amid procession of Islamic Shi'a group at Shofon Kasuwa area of the town, killing about 82 people.

Eyewitnesses said the students were at the assembly hall of the Government Science Secondary School (GSS) located in the heart of Potiskum at about 8am when the bomb went off.

"The suicide bomber disguised as a student in the assembly and detonated the explosive devices," Mohammed Aliyu told Daily Sun, adding that there was pandemonium as soon as the blast occurred.

"Many parents who had earlier headed to various schools to drop their children had to turn back. Confusion followed the blast," he added.

It was gathered that in the middle of the ensuing confusion, security personnel and some rescue workers immediately commenced evacuation of victims from the scene to the Potiskum General Hospital but were confronted with another shocker. A threat of bomb explosion at the hospital forced many to flee again but

the confusion was brought under control minutes later, a hospital source said.

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The source said 48 people mostly students were brought dead (BD) to the hospital while about 78 people were injured. "Three more dead were recorded before noon," the source added.

Daily Sun learnt that the state Commissioner of Police, Mr Danladi Markus, could not access the scene of the blast yesterday morning as some restive youths in the town were poised for a showdown with the security forces for alleged failure to curtail Boko Haram attack in the area.

Reacting to the blast, Governor Ibrahim Gaidam declared that the extension of state of emergency in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa states by President Goodluck Jonathan failed to stop Boko Haram.

A press statement signed by his spokesman, Abdullahi Bego, said the declaration of state of emergency ought to step up protection of life and property, but the situation in the northeast was far from this. He said the attack was heart-broken to him even as he ordered shut-down of schools around the area:

"In theory, the Emergency Rule Declaration was a signal that more vigorous steps would be taken to protect the lives and property of people in the affected states and deploy the full might of the Federal Government to restore peace and security. Unfortunately, this has not been fully the case. Instead of forcing insurgents and criminals to flee; the insurgents are forcing innocent people to flee and making life miserable for everyone."

For this, the governor said the President owed the people of the area explanation on why the "murderous and callous insurgent and criminal attacks are still on the rise despite the State of Emergency."

He said he deeply regretted that all the "dastardly attacks took place" under a climate of Emergency Rule declared in Yobe, Borno and Adamawa States by President Jonathan," noting that the bombing of the students was "a very sad and heart-breaking news."

He expressed concern that the attack was the fifth time in "a little over one year" when schools in Yobe State were "brutally attacked and students killed."

He recalled the attack on Government Secondary School, Damaturu, Government Secondary School Mamudo; College of Agriculture, Gujba and Federal Government College, Buni-Yadi. He maintained that it was not enough for the Federal Government to condemn the "almost daily rounds of violence" but should act decisively to stop the killing of its citizens which the President swore to protect.

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