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[Exquisite](#)**Madalla: Church releases list of 88 victims**

- 43 dead, 45 hospitalised
- Mum of only child victim inconsolable

By IKENNA EMEWU, Abuja

Friday December 30, 2011

Five days after the dastardly incident of Boko Haram bombing of the St. Theresa Catholic Church, Madalla, Niger State, the church has finally released a list of 88 victims.

But from the words of the resident priest, Rev. Father Isaac Achi who spoke during a press briefing by the church yesterday, the list is not yet exhaustive as more facts about the dead victims keep emerging everyday.

This figure is however a little less than what was reported in the news that the Minister for Health, Prof. Onyebuchi Chukwu revealed that there are 94 victims of the attack out of which 36 are dead already as at Wednesday. But since the church just compiled a list of its members, it could be right to say there is no discrepancy between its list and that of the minister because the church admitted that other persons than her members died in the attack.

In the list are 27 confirmed dead persons out of which five are yet to be identified. The rest of the victims are scattered in eight hospitals with the National Hospital holding the highest of 27 victims. At the Gwagwalada Specialist Hospital, there are 15 victims receiving treatment. Also, there are three patients at the Suleja General Hospital, one at the Major Hospital, Kwamba, two at the Delight Hospital and four in Suzan Hospital all in Suleja, three in Daughters of Charity Hospital, Kubwa and six in Diamond Crest Hospital, Zuba.

At the briefing, Father Achi clarified that with the nature of things, he could not say the 88 is the final casualty list because while he was working on a figure of 20 dead victims, 23 more emerged just over night and there is high likelihood more would still come. With that, it seems the church had not added the new figure of 23 more dead victims at the time of issuing the statement. And with the new list, the number of church members who died will be 43. At the briefing handled by the Catholic Bishop of Minna, Martins Igwe Uzoukwu, the grief and wailing was revived as the head cleric drew heavily from the Bible in



•Agony of a mum: Woman who lost her only son, Peter Ebiawaguen in the Christmas Day bomb blast at St. Theresa's Catholic Church, Madalla, inconsolable as the sad news was broken to her yesterday.

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**Weekend
Sun**

Jeremiah 31:15. "A voice was heard in Ramah , wailing and loudly lamenting: it was Rachael weeping for her children, refusing to be comforted because they are no more."

"The voice of Bishop Martin Igwe Uzoukwu is heard wailing for his spiritual children in Minna Diocese. He is refusing to be comforted because his spiritual children are no more."

"The voice of Rev. Fr. Isaac Achi is heard loudly wailing and lamenting. He is refusing to be comforted because his spiritual children in Madalla are no more. That seemed to ignite the emotions once again as the women in the congregation sobbed loudly. But that was just the tip of the wailing to come as father of an undergraduate victim, Joseph Igbla took the stage to narrate his ordeal in losing his son who just gained admission into a university.

Dan Igbla, father of late Jospeh, a prominent welder in Madalla whose shop is very close to the church said he had premonition of the incident a day earlier and as a result decided not to go to church. He had also left the same instruction with the family members that none should go to church on Christmas day. He said he never knew the problem will be about the church. "I was just afraid that something bad might happen to me, so I decided to remain at home and possibly avert it. So when I woke up early Sunday morning to discover that my two sons had gone to church, I was so afraid. It was not long from then that I heard the loud bang of the explosion, and a little after, someone ran in to tell me that my sons were affected. One survived, but the other died from terrible bleeding.

He could not even make it to the hospital." Igbla explained that since the church has decided to bury the victims in the church premises he has no objection as according to him, since his son died in the church during the attack, it is just proper and befitting that he is buried there. But immediately the briefing was over, hell seemed let loose as a woman stormed the bombing spot rolling and wailing uncontrollably. She is the mother of an only son who was security personnel of the church. The young man belonged to a group known as the MOD. He was reportedly one of the persons Daily Sun reported earlier on Tuesday that tried in vain to stop the suicide bomber's car in the company of two policemen.

The distraught mother had been placated by the church authorities over the days that his son was somewhere in hospital and recovering. The chairman of the church council who felt disturbed said they had been buying time and planning how to break the news of the death to the woman knowing the deceased young man was her only child. But the church would not know who visited the woman to leak the news of her son's death. It took the efforts of so many other women sympathising with her to take her out of the premises.

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When asked the number of church members that died, Bishop Uzoukwu got frenzied and replied that: "The number is not the issue. The issue is that my members were killed in cold blood and there is no dispute about that. I can't count because they all belonged to me. All I know is that my people were killed. There were just innocent Nigerians and didn't offend anybody to deserve the killing they got. I don't want to get emotional, but let nobody ask me of number of the dead or to start counting because I can't count. But if you want to know the exact number, just go to the hospitals and mortuaries and you will count them."

Bishop Uzoukwu also called on Nigerians to pray for the healing of the land, and urged all Christians to devote one hour everyday to read their Bible, meditate and pray, and also urged Muslims to read their Quran and the Hadith, meditate and pray for the nation.

He challenged the Federal Government to do more in equipping the police and other security agencies to match the sophistry of the crime rate that is ravaging Nigeria today before it gets worse.

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