

10 Feared Dead As Blast Rocks CBN in Calabar

March 12, 2016



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Bassey Inyang in Calabar

The Acting Inspector General of Police, Zone 6, Calabar, Baba-Adisa Bolanta, has stated that the explosion which , on Friday , rocked, the Calabar branch of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) located along Calabar Road may have been caused by a gas leakage from the central air-conditioning unit of the bank.

Although the number of casualties has not been officially confirmed, eye witnesses had it that no fewer than 10 people were killed, and about 30 others critically injured by the blast which rocked the main building of the bank at about 12 noon.

The AIG who spoke shortly after inspecting the scene of the explosion said he saw some cylinders at the scene, suggesting that the blast may be linked to possible defect in the central air-conditioning system of the bank.

Responding to questions from journalists after he inspected the scene, Bolanta , however , said the real cause of the blast would be ascertained after the completion of investigations on it.

“This is just an initial assessment, and it is not confirmed yet. It is when a final result has been given that we will confirm what really happened,” Bolanta said.

It was not clear whether the explosion was triggered by a detonated bomb or not, but sources who pleaded not to be mentioned said smoke was noticed billowing out from a spot within the CBN building, for about 30 minutes, before a loud explosion followed.

Aside from the dead and the injured, parts of the main building of the CBN were also shattered, while surrounding buildings, in the area which host many banks, were shaken as a result of the impact of the explosion.

Some people in Etim Edem Motor Park and Watt Market located about 300 metres from the CBN branch said they heard the loud explosion and were visibly shaken.

The premises of the CBN and the area between Calabar Road by Mary Slessor Road and Calabar Road by Barracks Road, in the heart of the Calabar, the Cross River State capital , had been cordoned off by the police and other security personnel.

The military, police, the Civil Defence Corps, the fire service, and the medical personnel with their ambulances had been drafted to the scene of the blast.

Some of the injured persons were seen being evacuated to hospitals in the town for treatment.

THISDAY noticed that staff and customers who were in the bank when the blast occurred were visibly traumatised with some of them still shivering more than two hours after the blast occurred.