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7-Year-Old Bomber Attacks UNIMAID, Kills Prof, Others

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Twin bomb explosions rocked the University of Maiduguri (UNIMAID), Borno State yesterday.

The attacks left the two suicide bombers, a professor and two others dead while no fewer than 15 people were injured. Prof. Aliyu Usman Mani, the Director of Veterinary Medicine of the university, was one of the casualties. The first explosion took place at 5:45a.m., when a suicide bomber, who was trying to scale the fence at Gate Five of the university, was gunned down

n by a mobile police officer.

However, the second suicide bomber, a seven-yearold, detonated the second explosive at the Senior Staff Quarters Mosque of the University of Maiduguri where Prof. Mani and others were killed. Mani was the second Professor from the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine of the university that was killed by Boko Haram attack since the insurgency begun in 2009.

The Vice Chancellor, University of Maiduguri, Prof. Abubakar Njodi, said three people, including a professor of medicine were killed, while 15 others were injured. Njodi said the female suicide bomber entered through Gate Five of the university and detonated the Improvised Explosive Device (IED) strapped on her body when she was about to be interrogated.

The suicide bomber died instantly. He said out of the 15 injured, two were critically injured. The VC said the on-going examination has been suspended.

The Chief Security officer of the university, Major Yakubu Ibrahim (rtd), explained that a male suicide bomber stormed the mosque at the senior staff quarters of the university, when the Muslim Ummah were performing the Subhi prayers (early morning prayers). Ibrahim said after the faithful finished the prayer, the suicide bomber, who was sitting on a pavement near the mosque, detonated the IED when people were coming out, killing the professor and two others.

He said: “When the suicide bomber detonated the IED strapped on his body, his head was cut off from his body and hit the roof of the mosque. The blast killed one of our professors, Prof. Aliyu Mani and two others who were coming out of the mosque, as those inside the mosque were not seriously affected.”

However, a hospital source who does not want his name in print, told our correspondent that five people were killed, as two additional persons later gave up the ghost at the University of Maiduguri Teaching Hospital Maiduguri.

The Borno State Commissioner of Police (CP), Damian Chukwu, confirmed that 15 persons who sustained various degrees of injuries were rushed to hospital.

“At about 5:45a.m., a mobile police officer who is on duty sighted a suicide bomber who was trying to scale the fence at Gate Five of the university. “Suspicious of his movement, the mobile police officer instantly gunned him down and his bomb exploded and killed him instantly.

“The second suicide bomber, a seven-year-old detonated the second explosive at the senior staff quarters mosque in the university where a professor, and four persons were killed and 15 persons sustained various degrees of injuries and were rushed to the hospital,” said Chukwu.

Brig-Gen. Victor Ezugwu, the General Officer Commanding (GOC) 7 Division of the army, stated that the seven-year-old who perpetrated the act did not know what he was doing, stressing that “this is a boy that when you ask him to put his hand in fire, he cannot do it, talk less of detonating himself with an IED.

“We want to appeal to the Muslim community not to be deterred. Same incident like this had occurred in Damboa where Muslims were jam-packed and a suicide bomber detonated his explosive.

“But I told them that this is the spirit; the Boko Haram terrorists want to scare you away. They want us to be afraid, they want us to live in fear.”

Meanwhile, President Muhammadu Buhari has condemned the terrorist attack. In a statement issued by his Special Adviser on Media and Publicity, Mr. Femi Adesina, in Abuja, the president expressed sympathy and heartfelt condolences to the university community and families of the victims.

According to him, the appalling attack on a revered place of worship and ivory tower shows that the perpetrators have no true understanding of Islam.

He noted that the “despicable acts of terrorism are cowardly, criminal, unjustifiable and punishable before God almighty and the laws of the land.”

The president reassured communities in Borno and others in the North-East of the country that his administration would continue to ensure that terrorism never triumphed over peaceloving Nigerians. Former Vice-President Atiku Abubakar described the attack as a dangerous development. “The attack on UNIMAID is not just about a bomb exploding in a mosque.

Once again, education in the North-East of Nigeria is under attack,” Atiku said. He noted that the attack on the university mosque is particularly worrisome, having come at a time

when the terrorist group was clearly degraded. Senate President Bukola Saraki decried the loss of valuable human lives and destruction of property during the incident.

He expressed concern over the rising trend of isolated Boko Haram attacks on soft targets since the liberation of the Sambisa Forest, which used to be the stronghold of the insurgents by the military.

“This attack calls for urgent security measures for all potential targets across the country so as to prevent the insurgents from taking undue advantage of the emerging peaceful atmosphere across the country,” he said.

The Speaker, House of Representatives, Mr. Yakubu Dogara, described the incident as sad and the height of wickedness.

According to him, the incident showed act of barbarism, callousness and ungodliness. He lamented that in spite of the military feat of dislodging the terrorists from their enclave, the insurgents could still find the audacity to carry out such dastardly act on the university campus.

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