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Yobe Attacked as Death Toll in Kaduna Bombings Climbs to 74

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Kaduna bombing

By Chuks Okocha , John Shiklam, Aisha Wakaso, Michael Olugbode and Ibrahim Shuaib

It was time for counting losses Monday, a day after terrorists launched coordinated bomb attacks on three churches in two of the largest cities in Kaduna State—Kaduna and Zaria.

But as residents in Kaduna were coming to terms with the coordinated suicide bomb attacks and reprisals on Sunday, Damaturu, the Yobe State capital, came under gunfire last night by suspected members of Boko Haram. Many people were trapped in their homes following the attacks which began at 5.30 pm.

Damaturu residents told THISDAY that the siege on the town started at 5 pm and was still on as at 8.30 pm. The state Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), Salihu Adamu, could not be reached by press time.

Although nobody was certain as to the source of the attacks, many believed they were launched by Boko Haram, which in May attacked a cattle market in Potiskum, killing about 50 people.

A resident stated: "My brother, I was caught up in this thing and I don't know how long it is going to last as you can hear sporadic gunshots and bomb blasts as we speak. The whole of Damaturu is on fire. Please pray for us."

Chairman, Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), Yobe State, told journalists, "For now, nobody knows what is going on because gunshots and bomb blasts were heard everywhere. I cannot tell you anything my brother; it is terrible."

As suspected terrorists attacked the Yobe State capital, additional soldiers and policemen were deployed in Kano, following the Sunday bomb attacks in Kaduna State. THISDAY observed there was a large security presence, with new roadblocks mounted at strategic and sensitive areas of the commercial city.

Heavy security presence was also noticed at routes leading to Sabon Gari area, Bompai where the state Police Command headquarters is located, St Louis Church, as well as government buildings, banks and other offices.

The state Police Commissioner, Ibrahim Idris, said the command was on high alert in order to maintain normalcy in Kano.

In Kaduna, survivors, including the injured, recalled their ordeal in the bombing and the reprisals that followed the attacks in which the death toll has now climbed to 74.

Despite the 24-hour curfew imposed on Kaduna State immediately after the attacks occurred, which was relaxed Monday with a dusk-to-dawn curfew, security concerns and tension remained high in the state.

Gunshots were heard in Barnawa, Kaduna, in which two people were reportedly killed while there was a bomb scare at the Ahmadu Bello University (ABU), Zaria.

Hundreds of people yesterday besieged hospitals in Kaduna and Zaria in search of their missing relations.

Security was also beefed up in the capital city as a combined team of the army and police patrolled trouble spots in the metropolis.

However, shortly after the Kaduna State Government announced the relaxation of the curfew from 6 pm to 6 am, many residents restricted their movements to their neighbourhood, as the situation remained tense.

The government, in a statement by Governor Patrick Yakowa's media aide, Mr. Reuben Buhari, said the curfew would commence from 6 pm to 6 am today.

There was also massive withdrawal of money at ATM machines while many people trooped to the petrol stations to fuel their cars.

Also, Monday, there was pandemonium at the Kongo Campus of the ABU, Zaria following a bomb scare which forced staff and students to scamper to safety.

It was learnt that an object suspected to be a bomb was found near the Pentecostal chapel at the campus, prompting staff and students to hurriedly evacuate the campus while the police immediately cordoned off the place before inviting the bomb disposal unit.

A source told THISDAY that the object was discovered at almost 9 am causing fear among the students and staff.

According to Dr. Andrew Akume, a senior lecturer in the Department of Commercial Law in the university, students were asked to evacuate the hostels and campus.

The police anti-bomb squad which was brought in, however, discovered that there was no bomb anywhere.

The Kaduna State Police Commissioner, Mallam Mohammed Abubakar Jinjiri, while reacting to the incident in a telephone interview, said it was a hoax.

Meanwhile, the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) has condemned the Sunday bombing of churches in Kaduna and Zaria and described the reprisals that followed as irrational.

In a statement by the party's National Publicity Secretary, Olisa Metuh, the party expressed dismay over the relentless terrorist activities which have resulted in the death of many innocent Nigerians.

The party said that the level of killings and attacks that took place last Sunday were more than enough to cause despondence in Nigerians but assured them that the country would certainly overcome its present security challenges.

According to Metuh, "We survived the civil war, we survived the military dictatorship and we have over the years overcome several challenges which would have brought a weaker country to its knees. Nigeria will remain strong and united until this too passes."

The Northern State Governors' Forum, however, said Boko Haram might not be behind the spate of bombings in the North as widely believed, adding that the attacks might well be part of a coordinated attempt to cripple the economy of the region.

The Northern state governors, through their chairman, Dr. Mu'azu Babangida Aliyu of Niger State, in reaction to the attacks, said: "Given the level of sophistication involved in the activities of the perpetrators of the bombings, it is easy to conclude that some oblique forces are behind the violence in the North and not Boko Haram alone as widely believed."

Aliyu, in a statement by his spokesman, Danladi Ndayebo, described the targeting of churches as a diversionary tactic used by the perpetrators of the dastardly acts,

knowing that religion is a very sensitive tool that could be easily used to cause disaffection in the region.

“If progress must be made, security agencies must deal decisively with all those arrested in connection with terrorist acts, particularly bombing of churches and schools claimed by Boko Haram, to serve as deterrent to others,” he said.

The governors warned that the continued existence of Nigeria as an indivisible entity depends largely on the quick resolution of the security challenges currently confronting the nation.

The National Leader of the Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN), Asiwaju Bola Tinubu on his part called for a collective response to the spate of bombings to arrest the security challenge.

“Now that it is clear the present government cannot tackle it alone, it should not shy away from inviting peace-loving political and community leaders to brainstorm in search for solutions,” he said in his reaction to the Kaduna bombings.

Describing the bombing of churches as condemnable, he warned that Nigeria was slipping, adding that the country needed all the help it could get.

“Nigeria is sliding and we must act now. Our country is going through a trying period. We should all join hands to say no to religious violence. No one religion can eliminate the other,” he added.

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- PDP,Gov. bombing churches,killing Christians, you call reprisals irrational,Because you want the [abokis] to rule this country Nigeria for ever, the time has come for this country to dived, May GOD help we Christians in this battle against

From: joseph joe

Posted: 3 days ago

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- It's now like a joke,christians will soon start counter-attack.Then that name NIGERIA will stop to exist.

From: abibu isa

Posted: 3 days ago

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- there is sense in what Tinubu said.but i believe is time we christian start acting for ourself.Israel did it and that is why they able to survive in d mist of Arab nations

From: Edos Friday

Posted: 3 days ago

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- I beg to disagree that all these are in the name of 'religion' and also to label them 'religious violence'. The Government, with its nonchalant attitude, is sleeping, and the leaders' attentions are been diverted from a more serious and important issue -Nigeria disintegration- to a least one -political differences. Let us not forget both the 'Satanic Prophecy' and the 'External (you may call it a Western or Developed Nations') Prophecy' to disintegrate Nigeria by the year 2015. These two forces

would not let Nigeria alone until their so called 'organized and orchestrated prophecies' are actualized. The clause here is why are the 'leaders' ignoring this, and what are they doing to disengage the orchestrated plans. Stop blaming any religion for any blast, let us look at things insightfully, deeply and inwardfully. I believe that if the remnants of those blasted bombs are properly tested and laboratorily investigated there would be traits of 'external manufacture' in them. The Government and the leaders (all of them put together) must be serious in protecting the national integrity and unity if Nigeria is to remain 'One'. I personally do not see any Boko Haram (or whatever name you call it - 'Church haram'- 'Mosque haram') perpetrating all those alleged evils, NO! 'Boko Haram'- 'Government Haram'- or 'Whatever Haram' is practically incapable of carrying out all these evilish acts alone. I mean the Government should pay more and serious attention to the Western prediction of Nigeria falling or breaking apart by 2015.

From: Oladimeji Muneer'deen Olaposi

Posted: 3 days ago

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- DR Muazu, why are you playing the ostrich here. Exonerating Boko Haram will not help you. If anybody wants to cause a religious war far bigger than this one its as easy as bombing a mosque on Friday. Why hasn't that happened? Why churches? What of the claims of responsibility by boko haram? The method of executing this evil is through suicide bombing. Which ideology best fits this if not Islamic extremism that boko haram professes. Keep playing the ostrich while your roof burns. Its this way the North found itself in this mess in the first place.

From: Muhammad bawa

Posted: 3 days ago

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- The northern governor forum are wrong this bh have being claiming responsibilities while stand for them I am sorry my fellow northerner our region is being destroyed and some governors are pointing accusing fingers In wrong way ,wake up now or else our so call north will soon be dead while the southerner are developing.

From: Funmi

Posted: 3 days ago

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- Why has buhari not come out once to condemn all this attacks? He is one of the most respected northern leader and I must express my disappointment with the ACN who always criticize the Government instead of joining hands to fight this menace, everything is not suppose to be politicize because lots of lives are at stake. Pointing hands to Lai Mohammed, why have you been silence? Is this your strategy of winning the PDP in 2015? Pls Don't use peoples lives to play politics.

From: joe kushua

Posted: 3 days ago

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- Chairman of Northern Governors Forum has said it all. What else can any one say when those behind it owned up to say 'We did it'. Tell us more as our ears are itching to hear you deceive!

From: Adamu

Posted: 3 days ago

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- Gov. Babangida Aliyu should come forth with the identity of those he knows are behind the spate of bombings in the north if he wants us to discountenance and look beyond Boko Haram in spite of their occasional video broadcast and consistent claim of responsibility for the bombings. If he doesn't, then we can only believe what we are told by Boko Haram. It will be illogical for us to believe otherwise and start imagining some phantom economic saboteurs and such silly suggestions of diversionary tactics and so on. I remember that his state witnessed the first major bombing of a church with heavy innocent human casualty. This was on Christmas day last 2011.

Beyond that, Aliyu, as Chairman of northern governors forum, should have realised that he is in a pole position, among the other governors and leaders of the north, in the queue of people in the dock of the court of public opinion for negligence and failure [if not collusion] regarding the free rein that Boko Haram has enjoyed in the weekly bombing of churches and murder of Christian worshippers in the north. In a "nonsense democracy" [apologies to General M. Buhari] where governors pocket hundreds of millions of naira monthly as "security vote", these governors have no reason not to dig deep into the grassroots of their enclaves so as to evolve a cooperative strategy that can check this brutality targeted at Christians particularly in the north. The truth is that many of these governors rigged their way into office and cannot relate to the ordinary folks of their states in a such meaningful way as to work in cooperation with them over a problem like Boko Haram. Such rigging, injustice, conspicuous consumption, unconscionable exclusion tactics, fraud and corruption are the ingredients that have driven many uninformed folks to embrace nebulous illogical causes that now threaten the Nigerian society.

If western education is sin, the north has many western-educated, university professors and earned [not just the purchaseable honoris causa type] Ph.D holders including Governor Aliyu. How many of them has Boko Haram bombed for their "sin"?

Or is western education synonymous with Christianity? Was it education that Jesus Christ came to the world for such that the church is seen by these blood-sucking vandals as outposts of western education?

Governor Aliyu and his fellow "Chief Security Officers" of the northern states should wake up to their responsibility and protect the lives of all persons resident in their states. Generally, our politicians should listen to their conscience [the voice of God

in them], admit their culpability and resign after atoning for their years of do-nothing and thievery.

From: Ig Nwangwu

Posted: 3 days ago

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- Mr Muazu Babangida, If the people bombing are not Boko haram, then certainly they are Muslims which shows in the selection of Churches as targets despite the security these churches mount compared to the muslims' porous prayer grounds that should have been easier targets. If governors who expend enormous funds on security are talking like this, what will the masses say? The attackers have em backed on a gorilla warfare knowing that after every attack, Government will release the police and army to prevent reprisal, but what has happened in Kaduna on Sunday though unfortunate, is a demonstration of frustration over the handling of previous bombings. Anyone could fall victim, let be honest and sincere the fight to islamise the North is a futile effort talk less of Nigeria. I ashame!

From: Adamu

Posted: 3 days ago

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- Prayer!Prayer we need @dis crisis moment of the country as there is no one to trust;not even the Fed house of rep or upper house as they've both failed us by representing their selfish interest as different from what Nigerians expects,lets pray that such sets of people's representatives can assist our weak democracy to prevail as no doubt that insecurity cripples nation's economy**.God help Nigeria.

From: Lanre Darosa

Posted: 3 days ago

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- Our greatest challenge as it stands is the president's incompetence and inability to address this monster. We've driven ourselves into a hole with GEJ as our president. Unless he wakes up to his responsibility as the chief security officer of the nation, I don't see how else we can address this problem. God save Nigeria!

From: Larry Bee

Posted: 3 days ago

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- Mr President who is supposed to be Commander-In-Chief of armed forces should wake up and go mafian and crush the financiers of boko haram, then BH itself will be powerless. Just a minute, what happens to those that have been arrested in the

past? I guess they are still roaming our streets, enjoying. GEJ should wake from slumber! If he doesn't want to act like a goliath, he should act like David who beheaded Goliath.

From: Segun

Posted: 3 days ago

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- The Government seems not doing enough on the issue of Boko Haram. The earlier the better for all of us. What if a senior Government official has been killed would they still be saying we should just keep praying. The Government should face this issue head long, before we come like other countries in crises.

From: keshiro

Posted: 3 days ago

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- The current situation is indeed worrisome. The PDP government should boldly own up to Nigerians as regard this bloody crises which is the brain child of her zoning tussels. And with all due respect and honour to Mr President, you either act now or never! For we nigerians are watching with keen interest all the perilous times of this moment.

From: Ephraim Akunyili

Posted: 3 days ago

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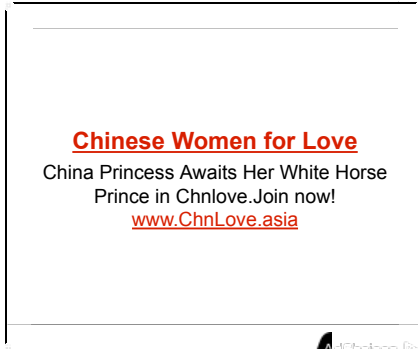
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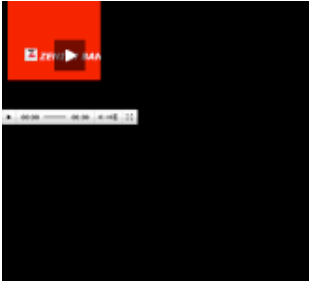
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