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Nigeria: Five Killed in Bauchi Church Bomb Attack

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BY SEGUN AWOFADAJI, 24 SEPTEMBER 2012

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A suicide bomber, suspected to be a Boko Haram member, Sunday killed four persons and himself in an attack on St. John's Catholic Cathedral Church, near Abubakar



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Tafawa Balewa Stadium (ATBS), in the Bauchi State capital, Bauchi.

The suicide attack, which also resulted in 48 others sustaining injuries, occurred at about 9am when congregants were leaving the church after the first service of the day.



Photo: Leadership

Sunday's attack came nearly a week after nine persons were killed and seven others received various degrees of injuries from gunshots in the area.

Also, last week, the former Controller-General of Prisons, Alhaji Ibrahim Jarma, who was shot by some unidentified gunmen in Bauchi, died from gunshot injuries.

Sunday's church attack elicited condemnations from the House of Representatives Speaker, Hon. Aminu Tambuwal, and a non-governmental organisation, Human Rights Writers' Association of Nigeria (HURIWA).

The bodies of the dead were deposited at the mortuary, while those injured were moved to the Abubakar Tafawa Balewa Teaching Hospital (ATBTH), Bauchi for treatment.

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A member of the church told THISDAY that the suicide bomber, who came in an Opel Vectra saloon car, carried out the attack when he was sure members of the church were filing out after the church's first service.

He added that the bomber tried to gain entry into the church, but when he was prevented from doing so by the church's security team, he detonated the bomb-laden car at the park outside the church, killing himself and two other persons.

However, the Head of Public Relations of the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), Yushau A. Shuaib, said the death toll rose to five later in the day as a woman and a child, who were initially among the injured, were later

confirmed dead from the injuries sustained from the bomb attack.

Recounting how the incident occurred to THISDAY, the church member said: "We had just come out from the



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church when we heard a loud sound followed by fire and smoke; we had to run for our dear lives."

Another source confided in THISDAY that he counted about 48 people who were injured in the incident when they were brought to ATBTH.

"We were at Trauma Centre of ATBTH and I counted three dead persons, including the suicide bomber, and 48 injured persons who are receiving treatment.

"In fact, some of the injured are being moved to the wards to decongest the crowd at the Trauma Centre," he said.

Shuaib, however, confirmed that 22 persons were injured in the attack and were receiving medical treatment in the hospital in Bauchi.

The scene of the attack was immediately cordoned off by a combined team of security operatives, while there was a heavy presence of heavily armed police and military personnel in the state capital.

Deputy Police Public Relations Officer, Hassan Mohammed Auyo, confirmed the death of two persons and 46 injured.

He said: "When a suicide bomber targeted the church, he was prevented from gaining entry, so instead, he detonated his explosives in the parking lot killing one person and among the injured victims taken to the hospital, a boy between the ages of six to eight died while receiving treatment.

"The bomber came in an Opel Vectra car. Among the injured person, there were two policemen deployed to protect the church."

Tambuwal, in a statement by his media adviser, Malam Imam Imam, described the attack as ignoble, wicked and horrendous.

He urged security agencies to ensure that the perpetrators of the violent act were brought to justice and urged them to ensure that the gains they had recorded in their battle against terror in recent weeks should be built upon in order to protect the people.

While condoling with the victims of the blast, Tambuwal urged Nigerians to be more prayerful and to provide useful information that would lead to the arrest of the perpetrators and their sponsors.

Also reacting to the bomb blast, the Bauchi State Government, through the Chief Press Secretary to the



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Governor, Malam isa Yuguda, Mr Ishola Michael Adeyemi, vehemently condemned the attack saying it was "a terrorist act and unfortunate."

He commiserated with the families of those who lost their lives, and wished the injured persons quick recovery, assuring that security measures will be stepped up to avoid a re-occurrence.

The government spokesman also promised that the state government will do everything possible to assist and bring succour to the victims and their families, even as he urged people in the state to remain law abiding citizens.

HURIWA, also in a statement, called on President Goodluck Jonathan to declare a state of emergency in Borno, Yobe, Bauchi, Adamawa and Kano States for six months to enable the government to combat the rising spate of bomb attacks in the states.

It carpeted the Federal Government for doing nothing to improve border security to prevent illegal arms from flooding into Nigeria from the nation's porous borders.

The National Coordinator of the group, Emmanuel Onwubiko and the National Media Officer, Miss. Zainab Yusuf, urged government to stop the sensational media celebration of the capture of suspected kingpins of Boko Haram and to concentrate efforts on building formidable intelligence to deter the insurgents.

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