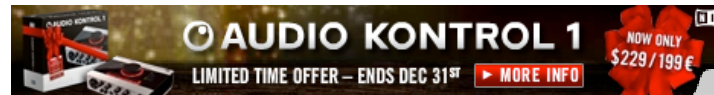


Friday, December 31, 2010

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## OP-ED

Written by Isaac Shobayo and Idowu Samuel, with Agency Report  
Tuesday, 28 December 2010

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THE Deputy Director of Communications and Head of Simulation, National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), Mr Daniel Gambo, has declared that 80 people died in the bomb blasts and the upheaval that followed the explosions that occurred in Jos, Plateau State, on Friday.

Gambo, who stated this in an interview, said 119 victims of the unfortunate incident were currently receiving treatment at various hospitals within the state capital, adding that 70 had been treated and discharged.

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In a related development, Plateau State Commissioner of Police, Mr Abudulrahman Akano, has disclosed that 20 houses were burnt on Sunday in different parts of Jos city.

Mr Akano, who disclosed this to the Nigerian Tribune stated that 18 houses were burnt in Anglo-Jos, two in Angwan Rukuba areas of the state capital, adding that three were badly destroyed in Anglo-Jos.

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He stated that four people were killed in the reprisal attacks on Sunday, adding that two mosques and COCIN Church in Angwan-Rukuba were vandalised and warned all those bent on fomenting trouble to desist from such as they would not be spared.

The police commissioner, who said relative calm had returned to all the troubled parts of the city, enjoined the people of the state to be law abiding.

Meanwhile, the Special Task Force (STF) has arrested three people in possession of dynamite, with the intention to bomb some strategic places in the city.

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Parading the three suspects arrested on Monday, the STF Public Relations Officer, Captain Charles Okocha, said two of the suspects, Yusuf Sabiu and Samaila Garga, were arrested at Dogon-Karfe area of Jos, while trying to ignite a dynamite to bomb residential and business buildings within the vicinity.

Okocha said the third suspect, who is a citizen of Niger was also arrested at Dogon-Karfe while a sickle and a dagger were found in his possession, adding that seven unexpended cartridges, two wraps of Indian hemp, dynamite powder, N850.00 and a Nokia handset were found in the possession of the two other suspects.

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Captain Okocha, who did not allow journalists to speak with the suspects, said the three suspects would be handed over to the police for further investigation and charged members of the public to regard members of the STF as partners in progress, adding that it was wrong for them to believe that they were part of the problem.

Meanwhile, the 14 people that were killed in Sunday's reprisal attacks had been given a mass burial in Jos at the Naraguta Burial Ground.



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Nigerian Tribune learnt that the burial, which was carried out at about 10.00 a.m. was witnessed by a number of sympathisers who thronged the cemetery to pay their last respects to the deceased.

The Chief of Defence Staff, Air Chief Marshal Oluseyi Petinrin, on Monday visited all the areas rocked by Friday's bomb blasts with a promise to get to the root of the incident, adding that the crisis in Jos would no longer be treated with kid gloves.

Petinrin, who spoke in Pidgin English, said the dastardly act was condemnable. "Dis kin tin way happen e dey sadden everybody. Even for Abuja, everybody is unhappy.

"We commiserate with you, because this is your community, some of the people wey die some of them na una relations and so on.

"By the grace of God, we will get to the bottom of this thing, but these people (perpetrators) e get wetin dem wan achieve.

"Wetin dem wan achieve be say we start to fight each other for Nigeria, if we say we go start to attack oda people, you are just attacking innocent people," he said.

Petinrin appealed to the people to remain calm and assured them that the security agents would unearth the perpetrators of the act.

"The way you can help government to quickly get to the bottom of this thing is to be calm, go about your normal business and do not try to retaliate.

"When you retaliate, you will be retaliating against innocent people. You do not know the people who did this thing.

"It is possible they are not even from Jos, so let us get to the bottom of it first and I know you can help," he said.

The CDS said it was possible the perpetrators interacted with some of them and appealed to them to freely volunteer information to the law enforcement agents.

Petinrin then commiserated with the government and people of the state.

Meanwhile, the General Overseer of Evangelical Bible Outreach International, Prophet Isa El-Buba, has said the bombings on Christmas eve are a clear evidence of failed intelligence gathering activities of the Nigerian security system in Nigeria.

Prophet El-Buba, in an interview with newsmen in Jos, said what was happening in Jos was a planned attack meant to cause mayhem in the heart of the Middle Belt region and spread to other parts of the country, saying that the same people that had been indicted by various judicial commissions of inquiry into the past Jos crises were behind the current violence.

He wondered why these same forces of destabilisation, who were well known, had not been brought to justice.

"We, Christian leaders, have sounded the alarm to heads of security agencies in Jos about the plan by some Islamic extremists to destroy Jos, the Plateau State capital, and nothing has been done on those reports. Look at what is happening now," Prophet El-Buba lamented.

He warned President Goodluck Jonathan to act fast to bring the crises in Jos under control, adding that any attack on Jos had the potential of engulfing the whole country.

According to him, the North belonged to every northerner and the rest of Nigerians who had the rights to reside wherever they liked, not only for those he called Hausa-Fulani Islamic zealots.

In another development, the United Nations (UN) Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, has condemned the bomb explosions that rocked Jos on Christmas Eve, which reportedly killed scores of people and injured many others.

A UN statement on Sunday said Ki-Moon expressed his support for efforts by the Nigerian authorities to bring those responsible for the blasts in the Jos North Local Government Area to justice.

The UN chief conveyed his condolences to the families of the victims and to the government and people of Nigeria.

The explosions at Anguwan Rukuba, Kabong Satellite market and the flyover at Gada Biyu, which were carried out simultaneously, had renewed tensions in the state.

Further clashes were reported in the Plateau State capital, on Sunday.

Similarly, the African Union (AU) commission chairperson, Dr Jean Ping, has condemned the terrorist attacks in Plateau and Borno states.

A statement issued by the communication and information unit of the AU Peace and Security Council said Ping was shocked and sad at the two incidents that occurred on the same day.

"The chairperson has learnt with shock and sadness, the string of bomb attacks that hit Jos and the attack on churches in Maiduguri, on December 24, which resulted in the killing of 38 civilians while dozens were wounded," the council stated.

Ping condemned "these cowardly terrorist attacks, which could not be justified under any circumstances" and extended his condolences to the families of those who lost their lives and prayed for speedy recovery for the injured.

He reaffirmed the determination of the AU to combat terrorism, saying that the commission would continue to support efforts being made by member states in combating the menace.

Also, the Plateau State House of Representatives caucus has said the indigenes of the state would not give in to terror and what it described as the expansionist agenda being forced on the state by disgruntled elements.

Honourable Bitrus Kase, who spoke on behalf of the caucus, described the outbreak of mayhem in Jos on Christmas Eve and the reprisal attacks on Boxing Day as "a continuation of the expansionist agenda to subdue the indigenes."

Kase, representing Jos East/Jos South federal constituency of Plateau State, said the people of Jos would not concede an inch of their land to those he described as invaders.

The lawmaker, who was among the suspended members who regain their membership two weeks ago, said the perpetrators of the crime would not be allowed to go scot free like in the past.

Kase, before now, had been having a running battle with the House leadership over alleged mishandling of the sectarian crises in Plateau State and had resigned his position as deputy chairman of the House Committee on Climate Change in protest.

The lawmaker said the bombing of Jos was a clear manifestation that those who were pursuing the agenda to force out the indigenes from their land would not relent in their mission.

The perpetrators, he said, made a wrong calculation by using the Christmas period to visit sorrow on people because of material gains, adding that the shedding of blood showed that the sponsors of the mayhem would stop at nothing to pursue their expansionist agenda in Plateau State.

He said no amount of violence visited on the people would make them vacate their land for anybody to take over, stressing that the latest attacks, through bombings, was a ploy to dislodge the indigenes from their land.

He said "what reasons can anybody give for planting bombs in Jos? What can they say is responsible for this violence on the people, who were preparing to celebrate Christmas with their loved ones?

"Will they say it is because of elections? Will they say it is because of disagreement over place of worship?"

Kase said he and others believed that those behind the bombings knew that people would be trooping home to celebrate Christmas and then decided to spoil their joy.

"Like we have been saying, the crisis in Jos is not ethnicity, religion or politics, it is on who owns the land. This is why we have resolved to defend our land with the last drop of our blood. They cannot kill everybody because we are not ready to give away an inch of our land," he said.

He tasked the Federal Government to rise to the occasion by fishing out the sponsors of the crime, adding that bombs were not planted by ghosts.

Kase questioned the rationale for transfer of the Commissioner of Police in Plateau about two weeks ago, even when a Fulani, according to him, was caught in Bassa Local Government Area with explosive devices.

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