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A major storm is blowing in the top hierarchy of the Nigeria Police, as a commissioner of police has been suspended over the escape of a prime suspect in the last Christmas Day bombing at Madalla, Niger State.

The Commissioner of Police in charge of CID Zone 7 of the police, Mr Zakari Biu, was suspended, on Tuesday, by the police high command over the escape of the suspect, Kabir Sokoto, at Abaji, near Abuja on Monday.

Mr Biu was suspended over what a source described as "suspicious negligence quite unbecoming of an officer of the rank of a police commissioner."

The suspended police officer was very prominent in the security issues that defined the Sani Abacha administration and was retired by the Obasanjo administration in 1999. He was recently recalled and became police commissioner last month. He was due for retirement next month. He hails from Biu town in Borno State.

It was gathered that the police authorities were alarmed to learn that the suspended Biu detailed only four policemen to accompany a high-profile suspect of the status of Kabir Sokoto, who was alleged to have coordinated the bomb blasts that killed over 40 people in Madalla last Christmas Day.

A source said more intriguing was the information that the Investigation Police Officer (IPO) was away in Kaduna, when Biu ordered that the policemen should take the suspect to Abaji to search his house. It was after this that hundreds of youths, chanting "Allahu Akbar," ambushed and overwhelmed the four policemen while the suspect escaped.

Sokoto, who was reportedly arrested alongside a serving Air Force officer, was said to have been tracked down in the nation's capital after several weeks of investigation.

The suspect was said to have travelled from Maiduguri to Abuja, and was on his way to London but was allegedly staying at the Borno State Governor's Lodge, where he was reportedly arrested.

His release, the police source said, would be a great setback to the progress made in curbing the activities of the Islamic sect in the country, which has led to the death of many and has left others permanently maimed.

However, in a statement in Abuja, on Tuesday, the Nigeria Police confirmed that a suspect was arrested in a successful police operation and was rescued from a team of policemen detailed to carry out further investigation in the matter.

According to Force Public Relations Officer, Olusola Amore, the suspect was handed over to a commissioner of police for further investigation and he consequently detailed his men to take the suspect to Abaji in furtherance of investigation.

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members and in the process the suspect escaped.

The force spokesman disclosed that the police authorities viewed this development as a serious negligence on the part of the commissioner of police and had since been queried and suspended from duty.

Also, he added that investigation was currently on and if a criminal case was established against him and his team, they would be prosecuted.

Meanwhile, as part of the Federal Government's resolve to confront Boko Haram terrorism and the security challenges in the country and the West African region, Nigeria has accepted a proposal from the United States to create a new focus on security as a different agenda under the US-Nigeria Bi-National Commission (BNC) initiated just less than two year ago, Empowered Newswire has reported.

And under the new security focus, top military chiefs from the US will join the resumption of the BNC talks between the US and Nigeria, starting next week in Abuja.

This disclosure was made on Tuesday morning by the Nigerian Ambassador to the United States, Professor Adebawale Adefuye, during a meeting with the US business investors and private sector executives under the Corporate Council on Africa (CCA), in Washington, DC, on recent developments in Nigeria, especially the Boko Haram attacks and the fuel subsidy crisis.

He said: "The United States government has proposed that the Niger-Delta and Regional Security component of the commission be split into separate entities and the first meeting on Regional Security should be held immediately on January 23 and 24. We have agreed to this proposal."

When Nigeria and the US signed the BNC agreement on April 6, 2010, four areas of focus were agreed, including governance and transparency; Niger Delta, where security featured partly; energy reforms and agriculture. A fifth dimension now is security.

The Nigerian ambassador added that while Nigeria was open to international assistance on the issue of the Boko Haram sect, because of its international dimension and the global condemnation of terrorism, "we are receiving adequate support and assistance from our international friends without compromising our independence and freedom of action."

Four suspected members of the Boko Haram islamic sect were on Tuesday killed after two soldiers attached to the Joint Task Force (JTF) stationed at a military check – point in Ajilari, in Maiduguri were shot by gunmen suspected to be members of the sect.

The JTF Field Operation Commander, Colonel Victor Ebheleme, confirming the incident, said some gunmen attacked members of the JTF and shot two soldiers, but noted that none of the soldiers died.

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