

# Who planted bomb in Effurun hotel?

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**W**HO planted the piece of equipment that exploded, Sunday, April 22 evening, in Room 504, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor of Excel Hotel, located in Effurun, near Warri in Delta state, killing a guest, simply identified by the police as Mr. George, few minutes after he checked into the holiday home? Was it really a bomb that exploded or another contrivance of sort? Whether it was a bomb or otherwise, why should such a killer device be deposited in such a place and what was the motive of the executioner(s)? Did the late George, said to be a businessman have any unfinished business with any business partner or the device was fixed for somebody, only for him to

become a sacrificial lamb and why were the security personnel of the hotel not able to detect the device and the carrier before the incident?

These and other posers are what the new Commissioner of Police in the state, Hezekiah Dimka is trying to unravel since the explosion shook Effurun and environs, six days ago. Sketchy information as at press time indicated that that one Mr. Adamu came to the hotel at about 5.40 pm to book an accommodation, purportedly for the late George and less than 30 minutes later, the said George arrived but no sooner had he opened the door of the room than the device was triggered off, and he was killed on the spot. Not much is known about the deceased other than that he came from Kano state.

There was a security alarm in the hotel, as nobody could explain how the contrivance passed the eagle-eyed security men at the gate in the first instance. The owner of the hotel, a retired army officer, Major Odeh was in the premises when the incident happened and he was jolted also.

The Divisional Police Officer (DPO) for Ekan Police Station, Chief Superintendent of Police (CSP), Tony Ekong led policemen to the scene soon after the incident and cordoned off the hotel, as soon as he got wind of the blast. But he refused to speak to newsmen who cornered him later on what really happened and what the police found out.

However, the Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP) Olabisi Okuwobi confirmed to *Saturday Vanguard* that one person was killed in the blast. Twenty-four hours after the explosion, Delta state police chief, Dimka, visited the hotel from Asaba and set up a five-man team to dig into the matter and find out why the bomb was planted in the hotel, who did it, for what reason(s), among other particulars.

From April 22 to Tuesday, April 24, when this reporter visited the hotel, the place has been under very tight security, mounted by the

police and operatives of the State Security Services (SSS). This paper learnt that the governor-elect of the state, Dr. Emmanuel Uduaghan also battled in the evening of the incident to assist the security agents in finding out the brain(s) behind the incident. Investigation showed that the blast had nothing to do with the freedom fighters, a k a militants, as key leaders of the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger-Delta (MEND) contacted by *Saturday Vanguard* said they knew nothing about the incident, and even expressed doubt whether what exploded was actually a bomb.

Dr. Uduaghan who is anchoring his new government on peace and security, among other pillars, is known to have very solid contact with the freedom fighters, and we gathered that those he reached out to said they had nothing to do with it.

Nevertheless, bomb disposal experts were brought in to comb the hotel. The owner of the hotel, Major Odeh (rtd.) was not particularly pleased that the press mentioned the name of his hotel in reports already published on the blast.

But Dimka who is hopeful that the police would get to the root of the matter gave the ten-day two-week

mandate to crack the case. He told this reporter on Thursday morning that from available information, the police were working on the suspicion that those who planted the bomb wanted to raze the hotel and cause an atmosphere of insecurity in the state. He, however, said that there could be other reasons and was quick to add that investigations would reveal them. It is not straightforward to tie the blast to political motive, as the Presidential/ National Assembly elections, which were held the previous day, April 21, were not particularly violent in the state except for the incident at Obomkpa in Delta North senatorial district, where a man was shot dead.

It was only in the April 14 gubernatorial/House of Assembly polls that things went haywire in the state but some people could, really, plan to cause commotion in the state by burning down the place. Though he declined to grant interview, the owner said he was lost over why people would want to bomb his hotel saying that he built the hotel to bring development to the area and could not say why people were not happy with his contribution, when the hotel was offering employment to hundreds of persons. The police commissioner revealed that investigations into the explosion had already taken it to police in Lagos, Kano and other places in search of clues to untangle the matter.

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