

Explosion rocks Gombe Gov's house

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By Levinus Nwabughio

Gombe — Two soldiers were, yesterday, killed in an explosion that rocked the private residence of Gombe State Governor, Alhaji Ibrahim Hassan Dankwambo at Government Reservation Area (GRA), in Gombe metropolis.

The explosion which was heard several kilometres away from the scene also wounded six other soldiers.

The soldiers were said to be on guard, manning an armoured tank permanently stationed by the gate of the governor's house for security.

Boko Haram, which has waged an increasingly deadly insurgency in northern Nigeria since 2009, killing thousands, has carried out deadly attacks in Gombe in the past.

(<http://www.vanguardngr.com/2014/05/5-nations-contribute-5-battalion-fight-boko-haram/army-war/>) The cause of the explosion was, however, not known at press time.

There were three accounts of the cause of the explosion.

An AFP source said four people were killed when a pick-up truck loaded with grain bags exploded, near the home of Gombe State Governor.



“The van was moving when it exploded and killed the two men inside it and two soldiers inside the armoured vehicle was stationed near the governor's personal house,” the source said on condition of anonymity.

“It is not clear if the governor’s house was the target or if the explosives went off prematurely before they reached their destination.”

It was not immediately clear if the explosion — which was heard across the city — was the handiwork of Boko Haram militants or politically motivated.

The blast happened at about 6:30 pm (1730 GMT) near the private residence of Gombe state governor Ibrahim Dankwambo in the upscale Government Reserve area of the state capital.

Another account, as revealed by the Senior Assistant to the governor on media, Alhaji Mansur Lawal, said that excessive heat, prompted some explosives in the armoured tank to explode.

He said there was no attack whatsoever on the governor’s private residence or anywhere in the town.

“What happened was that there was excessive heat, which caused the explosion. You know that in the tank, there are guns and bullets.

“Two soldiers were killed by the explosion while six others were injured. There was no attack at all.”

According to Lawal, the incident occurred at about 7 pm.

He also stated that the wounded soldiers had been taken to the hospital for medical attention just as the fire that ensued from the explosion had also been put out.

He further said that the governor had appealed for calm in the metropolis.

Third account, from a resident of the town, said the explosion must have emanated from mishandling of some explosives in the armoured tank.

According to him, the place had been cordoned off by security men.

Meanwhile, Vanguard learnt that the explosion initially caused a stir as residents thought it was an attack by insurgents on Gombe, it being a boundary state to Borno where Boko Haram had carried out several deadly attacks.

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