

## BREAKING NEWS

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## 21 killed in fresh Abuja explosion

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ABUJA—A third deadly explosion in the Federal capital territory, Abuja in two months, yesterday, exploded at a shopping mall, EMAB Plaza, adjacent BANEX Plaza, Aminu Kano Crescent, Wuse II, at 3. 50 pm. It killed no fewer than 21 persons and injured 17 others. The extremist Boko Haram sect claimed responsibility for the two explosions in April and May in Nyanya, a suburb of the capital.

Yesterday's blast occurred at the gate of the shopping mall.

The quick intervention of soldiers saved the city from more blasts as they gunned down a suspect that was carrying another explosives-laden bag on a power bike. It was later defused by the police anti-bomb squad.

Eye witnesses said that the bomb was placed in front of a taxi at a point where taxis drop passengers going into the plaza. Those affected mostly were, therefore, taxi drivers, fruit sellers and passers-by. 17 vehicles were also burnt.

The soldiers who were said to have rushed to the blast site, also arrested two suspects who were being held in a military facility.

George Adigwe, who participated in the evacuation of victims confirmed that 18 dead bodies were moved into the ambulances of the National Emergency Management Agency, NEMA, for



(<http://www.vanguardngr.com/2014/06/21-killed-fresh-abuja-explosion/fire-blast/>)

Scene of the Abuja blast and victims receiving treatment at the Maitama General Hospital, Abuja. Photos: Abayomi Adeshida.

transportation to various morgues in Abuja metropolis.

See more photos here (<http://community.vanguardngr.com/photo/albums/bomb-blast-at-emab-plaza-abuja-ii>)

Security sources at the scene said that it was likely that the dead suspect could have been heading for another target before he was shot by the soldiers.

Security and rescue officers who rushed to the scene of the blast cordoned off all entrances into the blast area.

The injured were taken mainly to Maitama General Hospital, which was the closest to the scene of the blast, as well as, Wuse General Hospital.

The bodies of those killed in the blast were taken to Maitama, Wuse and National Hospitals' morgues.

I saw people burning —Eye witness

An eyewitness of yesterday's bomb explosion which occurred in Abuja spoke to Vanguard. He identified himself as Jason Ikenna Nwamadi and works at Emab Plaza, located at Aminu Kano Crescent, Wuse II, where the blast occurred.

Narrating his experience he said: "At about 4pm yesterday, I was in my office which is located at the first floor when I heard the sound of a huge explosion. The effect of the explosion shook the entire building and everybody began to run helter-skelter.

"I ran with others towards the back of the plaza because the explosion occurred in front of the gate. We jumped the fence at the back of the premises with some women who were also running for their dear lives.

"After I jumped the fence, I ran through another path to get to the front of the plaza where the explosion occurred.

The spot where the bomb exploded was like a taxi park. It is usually a very busy place and the blast occurred at the busiest hour of the day.

"I saw people burning. One of those on fire was Christopher by name. He was burning on top of the bonnet of his Toyota Camry Car. He was eventually burnt beyond recognition. He was the driver to my boss Peter Akande. I don't know where he has been taken to.

Most of those affected were hawkers of banana, groundnut and maize. Women and their children were also among the victims. Drivers of taxi cabs and passengers were also among those killed or injured.

At least 40 people lost their lives in the blast. Human parts littered the scene.

Soldiers kill suspected Abuja bomber, defuse another bomb

A middle aged man suspected to be the arrow-head of yesterday's bomb blast at Emab Plaza, was killed by soldiers who arrived the scene of the blast about 25 minutes after being alerted of the development.

The timely intervention of the security men who were alerted by some traders that saw the bomber, saved another bomb that would have exploded after the first one at Emab Plaza.

The second bomb, according to eye witnesses, was planted at Banez Plaza, and was to be detonated shortly after the first one.

Besides the second bomb, the suspect, according to the sources, had another Improvised Explosive Device ,IED, inside a blue-coloured bag strapped to his back and was about detonating it through a remote controlled device when he was noticed and shot by the soldiers.

Vanguard correspondent, who was at the scene of the blast at the time it happened saw the suspect trying to run to another shopping mall to detonate the IED but was easily noticed by some traders. The traders who realised what he was about doing hit him with stones.

He fell down and stood up after few seconds but quickly brought out a small white device suspected to be remote from his pocket.

When asked by the soldiers to raise up his hands without moving any step, he ignored, a development that made them kill him immediately.

When the bag was searched, it was discovered to contain another bomb but which was immediately defused.

We saw bomber before blast —Traders

Meanwhile, some traders at Banez Plaza, who disclosed that they had noticed the strange movement of the suspect before the blast, regretted not reporting him to security agents.

Two traders who identified themselves to Vanguard as Ifeanyi Eze and Ndubuisi Emeka, salesmen in two of the shops, said they saw the bomber with a strange bag going from one shop to the other in the plaza but didn't inform security personnel at the plaza because they never envisaged he could do such a terrible thing.

“Although we alerted some of the private security men but they could not do anything much when they discovered he was highly intoxicated. They did not search the bag he was holding but they asked him some questions.

“When he told them he was a personnel of the Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corp just posted to the area, he was allowed to go even though they did not ask for his identification card,” Ifeanyi said.

He added that the private security men could not do much to the suspected bomber when they found out at the time of search that he had huge sums of money in his pocket.

How I escaped—Survivor

One of the survivors of the Abuja bomb blast says his decision to cross the road to serve a customer saved his life.

Ahmed Musa who sells fruits at the epicentre of the blast told Vanguard that but for his decision to cross the opposite road to sell fruits to a customer, he would have been dead.

Musa said: “I left my shop to serve a regular customer who parked across the road. That decision saved me. The force of the explosion threw me on the ground for a moment’ he said.

He explained that the explosion affected his ear as he could not hear clearly.

“I thank God for saving me. People doing this should leave us alone and allow us to live normal lives. We are struggling to survive” he said.

#### Police to prosecute suspect — Mba

Addressing Journalists at the scene of the blast, Force Police Public Relations Officer, Frank Mba, (ACP) said that the arrested suspects would be prosecuted after a thorough investigation to determine those who sent them.

Mr. Mba said that the Police was putting in place measures to secure the business place and intensify the monitoring of plazas, shopping malls and other business places in Abuja.

Also speaking at the scene of the blast, Minister of the Federal Capital Territory Administration, FCTA, Senator Bala Mohammed, who condemned the act, however, expressed condolences to the families of those who died, sympathy to those injured. He stressed that if not the frantic efforts put in place by security agencies, the bombers would have entered the plaza where a lot of casualties would have been recorded.

Senator Mohammed who, arrived at 5.50 pm, was accompanied by the Minister of State, FCTA, Oloye Olajumoke Akinjide; FCTA Permanent Secretary, John Chukwu, DSS Director, Brigade Commander, among others.

Speaking further, the FCT Minister, who promised to take care of those injured, stressed that the Administration would ensure that security agencies were supported to protect lives and property.

Also speaking with Journalists, the Deputy Commandant- General (Operations), Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps, NSCDC, National Headquarters, Evans Chidi Ewurum, disclosed that those arrested as suspects in connection with the blast were being taken for interrogation, adding that the agency made available six ambulances to help evacuate victims from the scene to the hospitals.

#### Protest against FG at scene of blast; military, police booed

The bomb blast took a different dimension as youths took to streets at the scene of the blast protesting incessant bomb explosion rocking parts of the country, especially, the Federal Capital Territory, FCT.

The youths in their hundreds were chanting war songs in condemnation of FG's inability to check spate of explosions nationwide.

They also booed soldiers and policemen drafted to the scene of the explosion. They asked: “What are you people coming to do here? We don't want to see people here because you have failed to protect us.”

It took the reinforcement of security agents to disperse the angry youths making mockery of them and restore normalcy to the area.

#### FG appeals for calm

A statement issued by the Coordinator of the National Information Centre, Mike Omeri advised FCT residents to remain calm and go about their normal business, assuring that security agencies have fully mobilized to the scene of the incident and are handling the situation.

Omeri further said that every step is being taken by the government to check the activities of insurgents in the country, advising Nigerians to remain vigilant and conscious of movement of unidentified people around their areas. He expressed the sympathy of the federal government to the families of those that lost their lives just as he wished the injured speedy recovery.

#### Sam Nda-Isaiah condemns Abuja blast

The presidential aspirant of the APC, Sam Nda-Isaiah, has condemned in unequivocal terms today's terrorist blast in Abuja.

Nda-Isaiah said this is one terror attack too many and that there is now a compelling need for the present government and security agencies to take more pro-active measures to secure life and property in the nation's capital.

He said one area where security is lapse is the Abuja airport and called for tighter security checks at the Nnamdi Azikiwe International airport and all the other airports and gateways in the country.

The APC presidential aspirant called on all those charged with securing life and property in the country to discharge this onerous task with more dedication to forestall a situation where our people become afraid to go about their daily businesses in many parts of the country.

#### I cheated death —Okechukwu

An eye witness, Mr. Okechukwu said he cheated death as the blast threw him from his shop before he was picked up by people. Said he: "I am a disabled man trying to make ends meet in this plaza. I am lucky to be alive because I could not climb the fence when others were running and climbing fence. The blast threw me from my seat and when my brother could not see me on my seat, he thought I was dead. But for God I would have been dead.

#### My sisters were blown to pieces —Mather

Another eyewitness, Mather Godwin, a groundnut seller at the scene of the blast said her two sisters, one who was pregnant and another who was breast-feeding, were blown up in the blast, saying that she left the scene of the blast a minute before the blast. Mather, an indigene of Benue State said the blast went off minutes after she asked his sisters to meet her at home as she saw them shattered by the explosion.

"A man came and bought all my groundnuts and I went to my sisters and told them to meet me at home and shortly after I left the place I heard the blast and when I turned back, I saw their mangled bodies scattered. Two of them are Blessing and Angela and my friend's sister was also blown up including all the banana sellers around the place, and their babies, she said.

Sadiq Bode, another eyewitness who narrated his experience said: "It happened at the exit gate of Emab Plaza from a vehicle suspected to be a jeep. I was inside the plaza when it happened. The bomber was stopped by the security man before he ran away. In fact, it happened when one influential person came to buy a phone in the market with team of mobile police men guarding him and when we heard the blast, we ran with them, including the policemen running with their guns, jumping fence. I don't know if it was the big man they were targeting, but when I came back I did not see the people around the place again, all of them got blown up in the blast".

Another eyewitness, a computer and phone repairer, who declined to give his name said: "The bomber came in Sienna

bus and passed through the wrong gate and because there was hold up, a security man who was also blown up in the blast forced him to go back. That was when one man selling cigarette raised alarm that the driver was a suicide bomber and as he was shouting, he was running. The bomber came out of the car without shoe and with earpiece in his two ears he started running before we heard the blast and everybody started running. The most affected in the blast were the hawkers, women selling banana and groundnut”.

#### Bomb attacks calculated to distract, intimidate Jonathan — Maku

The Minister of Information, Mr. Labaran Maku, yesterday, condemned in strong terms, the bomb blast at EMAB plaza. Mr. Maku, who observed that the Abuja bomb blast occurred simultaneously with another bomb explosion in Mubi, Adamawa State, said the insurgents’ attempt to intensify the spate of bombings and killings in parts of the country was calculated to distract and intimidate the President and his government as the 2015 elections draw nearer.

In a statement sign by his press Secretary, Joe Mukta, the Minister, said the Federal Government was deeply saddened by these dastardly acts of murder against innocent Nigerians.

“Every time there is any major positive development in the country, it is quickly greeted with bombs and attacks on defenceless citizens. Every milestone recorded by government is followed by explosions and attacks to discourage the citizens and to turn them against the government,” he observed.

Mr. Maku called for unity among Nigerians in this trying moment in order to isolate and defeat the insurgents who are bent on creating panic and dividing the people with the aim of casting President Jonathan and his government in bad light.

#### 12 bodies, 35 injured victims at Maitama Hospital

THE Minister of FCT, Mallam Bala Mohammed said, yesterday, that the unfortunate bomb blast was under control.

The minister who spoke at the Maitama District Hospital said the security situation in the capital city has been brought under control as new security measures will also be put in place.

He explained that “our neighbour to neighbour security watch in the FCT too is yielding results as we have beefed up security in all neighbourhoods.”

He told reporters that from available information, 12 victims involved in the blast were brought to the hospital and 35 injured persons were receiving treatment.

He promised that his ministry would foot the bills of the injured persons in the hospital.

#### The Telegraph Managing Editor, Bisala killed in blast

The Managing Editor of The Telegraph newspapers, Mr. Suleiman Bisala was one of those killed in the EMAB Plaza blast in Abuja, yesterday.

His colleagues said the late Bisala was at the Plaza to fix his telephone handset when the blast occurred. He had a long

career at the Daily Trust newspapers before joining The Telegraph.

7 corpses at National Hospital Morgue, 7 receiving treatment

A Check by VANGUARD at the National Hospital Abuja, yesterday, revealed that seven dead persons were brought to the hospital morgue, while seven injured are currently receiving treatment.

The Public Relations Officer of the National Hospital, Abuja, Mr Tayo Haastrup, told Vanguard that out of the seven injured, two were in critical condition in the intensive care unit of the hospital.

A source confirmed to Vanguard that “many of the injured were in critical condition and it will take the grace of God for them to survive”.

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