

Vanguard

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Jonathan's campaign ground bombed

on February 03, 2015 / in [News](#) 7:48 am / [Comments](#)

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ABUJA—A blast, yesterday, ripped through a car park outside Gombe Stadium where President Goodluck Jonathan had addressed a campaign rally barely three minutes after he left. A suspected female bomber and another woman died in the blast while six other persons sustained various degrees of injury, according to the Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO) in the state, DSP Fwaje Atajiri.



(<http://dvsl3w2q45hb8.cloudfront.net/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Jonathan-gombe1.jpg>)

JONATHAN IN GOMBE—Emir of Gombe, Alhaji Abubakar Shehu Abubakar III, welcoming President Goodluck Jonathan during the visit of the Pdp Presidential Campaign Organization to the Emir's Palace in Gombe, yesterday. Behind the President are PDP Chairman, Adamu Mu'azu, and Gombe State Governor, Ibrahim Dankwambo. Photo: State House.

Atajiri, however, told the *News Agency of Nigeria* (NAN) that the blast occurred near a carpenter's shop in Kashere Street at the Water Board area in Gombe city and not at the campaign rally.

Coordinator of the National Information Centre, Mr. Mike Omeri, who confirmed the blast also disclosed that the African Union Peace and Security Council had approved the mobilization and immediate deployment of 7,500 troops to Nigeria to fight Boko Haram.

The blast occurred in Gombe on a day explosion rocked three court premises in Rivers State with one of the affected courts burnt down by fire.

An eyewitness to the blast in Gombe, Mohammed Bolari, who was at the rally, said the explosion happened at 3:10 pm, three minutes after President Jonathan's departure.

According to him, "the President had just passed the parking lot and we were trailing behind his convoy when the explosion happened, just 100 metres from the bus we were driving in."

Jonathan's appearance in the city came just a day after two blasts in the city, including one that targeted a military checkpoint. At least five people were killed.

There was no claim of responsibility for Sunday's attacks but the city has been hit by suspected Boko Haram militants in the past.

Bolari said of the latest blast: "It is difficult to say how many people were affected because of the confused struggle by the huge crowd leaving the venue to escape for fear of another blast."

He added that "the explosion led to unrest in the city, with crowds of angry youths attacking anyone seen with any PDP sign. They were shouting and denouncing the President's visit which they blamed for the attack. We had a difficult time passing through these crowds. At one point a crowd threw stones at our vehicle. Some reporters sustained cuts from smashed window screens."

Also confirming the blast while updating newsmen on the security situation in the country in Abuja, Omeri said: "We got confirmation that there was actually a blast at the Water Board Junction in Gombe town. The incident took place soon after the President and his entourage left the stadium in Gombe. However, casualty figure is yet to be ascertained," he said.

Army gets 7,500 AU troops boost

Omeri also disclosed that the African Union Peace and Security Council had approved the mobilization and immediate deployment of 7,500 troops to Nigeria to fight Boko Haram.

According to him, the recent regional and continental synergy and resolutions to establish a multinational military force by Nigeria's neighbouring countries of Chad, Niger and Cameroon as well as the AU decision on the matter is point of reference.

"The African Union Peace and Security Council, at the recently concluded 24th ordinary session approved the mobilization and deployment of 7,500 troops to Nigeria to fight Boko Haram.

"Consequently, the AU Peace and Security Council is billed to begin to meet in Cameroon on Monday to authorize and finalize the concept of the operation in the fight against "Boko Haram" a decision which has been welcomed by the UN Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki Moon."