

suicide bombers kill 14 in Biu

●As insurgents invade Askira Uba council

operators.
This came on a day hundreds of suspected members of Boko Haram sect invaded Askira Uba Local Government Area, shooting residents, burning homes and public buildings, leaving scores of people dead.

The suicide attack, which took place at about 1pm yesterday, also left no fewer than 14 people

injured, mainly hawkers of groundnuts and garden eggs, among others.

A competent source added that two members of Civilian JTF, including a female vigilante who was assisting the military operatives, also lost

their lives in the explosion.

Sources said the suicide bombers, who disguised as commercial drivers, managed to join the long queue for security checks at the entrance of the town.

When they were asked to park for checks by men of the Civilian JTF, they alighted from the tricycle and detonated their explosives simultaneously.

A resident of Mbulamyel ward of Biu, Mallam Ali Usman said: "I saw a military vehicle conveying the dead and the injured to Biu General Hospital at about 1:30pm, but I cannot give you the exact figure of casualty as the vehicle was speeding heading to town."

Confirming the incident, the Senator representing the area, Senator Mohammed A. Ndume, told journalists that people, including the suicide bombers, were killed, while several others sustained injuries.

However, the Caretaker Chairman of Biu Local Government Area, Alhaji Kumar Kadafur, who visited the scene, insisted that no people, including a female member of Civilian JTF, were killed in the explosions.

According to him, the injured are currently receiving treatment at Biu General Hospital.



ishop of Kaduna Diocese, Mrs Comfort Idowu-Fearon (right), with others at the Anglican Diocese camp in Kaduna, yesterday. NAN PHOTO.

tragedy victims to get mass burial

conducting a deoxyribonucleic acid, DNA, test will take up to six months to one year. This the families considered too long to bear."

The husband of one of the victims, Mr. Mathew Otolu, said in an emotional voice that the families could not identify their loved one.

He said: "I could not believe that I cannot identify my beloved wife. Where do I start

from?"

Also speaking, Mr. Ambrose Ayebakuro, aged 33, son of the deceased former House of Assembly member, Ruby Benjamin, confirmed that they had been contacted that his mother and others would be given mass burial.

Ayebakuro said: "She was everything to us. But I take solace in the fact that she was close to God."

Suspected kidnappers, robbers, others arrested in Ebonyi

By Peter Okutu

ABAKALIKI—EBONYI State Police Command has arrested persons suspected to be armed robbers, kidnappers, car snatchers and hoodlums, following a tip-off.

Briefing newsmen at the command headquarters in Abakaliki, police spokesperson, ASP Chris Anyanwu, stated that the suspects were arrested during different security operations involving anti-kidnapping squad, Special Anti-Robbery Squad and campus monitoring unit of the state police command.

According to Anyanwu, the

gang usually assembled at Spera-in-Deo area in Abakaliki, before operations.

He said their preferred area of operation was Democracy Estate, because of its location.

Anyanwu said: "They also chose to hide their victims in Ezza North, being the native place of two gang members."

"While keeping their victim hostage, they collect their ATM cards and withdraw all the money in the victims' accounts."

He said a Nissan Titan SUV with number plate KSF 576 CW; Toyota Camry, an ML 320 Mercedes Benz SUV, SIM cards and N340,000 were recovered from the suspects.

Invading Askira Uba

Meanwhile, the Askira Local Government invaded Askira Uba, leaving scores of people dead.

Askira Uba is south of Biu, about 220 kilometres from Maiduguri and also shares border with Sambisa Forest.

It had witnessed serious terrorists' attacks since last year, which led to displacement of thousands of residents, with some fleeing residents returning back in the troubled town.

Sources said the terrorists were armed with AK-47 rifles, Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs), and petrol bombs, and they invaded the town on Toyota vehicles at about 7:35pm, which wreaked havoc, with no resistance as security operatives had all deserted the area.

The source added that the insurgents were suspected to have come from their camps in Sambisa Forest, following an ongoing military raid on the camps in the last one week.

Efforts to get confirmation from the Police Public Relations Officer, DSP Gideon, proved abortive as his telephone lines were all switched off during press time.

Last Thursday, a suicide bomber hit a market in Biu, killing several people and injuring 15.