Scores dead as mutiple explosions rock Borno

By Ndahi Marama

MAIDUGURI— DOZENS of worshippers were killed yesterday, when suicide bombers targeted a mosque and public places in Maiduguri, Borno State.

"All the people in the mosque died; not a single one escaped," said Muhtari Ahmadu, a trader near the scene, while another witness said he had counted at least 42 bodies after the blasts.

The multiple explosions, suspected to have been masterminded by *Boko Haram* suicide bombers, yesterday evening, rocked the mosque and various public gatherings in Mai Borti and Kangaleri villages of Molai area of Maiduguri metropolis, leaving scores of worshippers and innocent people dead.

Molai, located south and 10 kilometres from Maiduguri, had witnessed series of suicide attacks near military formations this year.

Maiduguri-Damboa-Biu road had remained closed to motorists in the past one year despite directive by the Chief of Army Staff, Lt General Tukur Buratai, to reopen it.

The incident, according to sources, also left several others seriously injured as people scampered for safety on the eve of the swearing in of the newly-appointed Deputy Governor, Alhaji Usman Durkwa, who replaced late Umar Zannah.

Zannah died in Adamawa State two months ago, while on an official assignment.

According to some residents, who escaped from the scene and ran into Maiduguri, "male suicide bombers detonated multiple improvised explosive devices, IEDs, in different locations, including a mosque in Molai where over 30 Muslims were observing their *Magrib* prayer around 6.10p.m."

Another source said: "Muslims were just observing their *Magrib* prayers in a mosque at Molai, when we heard a loud sound.

"We started running and motorists were driving recklessly to get out of the area. Confusion took over the entire place.

When the Director Army Public Relations, Colonel Sani Kukasheka, was contacted on phone to confirm the incident, he directed our correspon-dent to his Deputy at 7 Division, Nigerian Army, Colonel Tukur Gusau, whose phone lines were busy at press time.