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Over 60 killed in twin blasts at Adamawa mosque, market

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By Dapo Akinrefon, Charles Kumolu, Peter Duru & Umar Yusuf

YOLA— No fewer than 60 persons were feared dead, yesterday, as a twin bomb blasts hit a mosque and nearby market in Mubi, Adamawa State.

While eyewitness account said at least 42 persons were killed, with many others critically injured, Adamawa State Police Command confirmed 24.

This came on a day President Muhammadu Buhari rejected the call for state police, saying states of the federation are too cash-strapped to afford it.

A rescue worker, Sani Kakale, said: "In my presence, 42 dead bodies were taken to hospital and 68 injured."





File: A man lies in state hospital bed as he receives treatment for injuries sustained following a bomb blast that left dozens dead and many injured in Maiduguri, on March 8, 2015. Three bombings in northeast Nigeria's largest city of Maiduguri killed 58 people on March 7, 2015 and wounded 139 others, the area police chief said.AFP PHOTO

A source at Mubi General Hospital said they had "so far" received 37 bodies and dozens injured, many of them critical.

Locals said the blast hit the popular Gwonjo Market where second-hand clothes are sold and a mosque about 20 meters away at about 1:30pm.

According to a source, the loud bang of the blast was heard across the town as people ran helter-skelter for their lives.

The blast occurred at a time Muslim faithful were observing the Zuhr (afternoon) prayers and the market was thrown into panic.

Garba Habu, a local resident, said: "A boy of about 18-19 years wearing a suicide vest was said to have entered the mosque along with other worshippers."

Immediately after the prayers, he detonated the bomb.”

Police spokesperson in Adamawa State, Othman Abubakar, a Superintendent of Police, who confirmed the blast, said the first of the blasts occurred at about 1:00 p.m.

He said: “While people were evacuating the victims of the first blast, another explosion occurred. As I am talking to you now, 24 persons are confirmed dead. The scene has been cordoned-off by the Anti-bomb squad and other security personnel.”

Adamawa State Coordinator of the National Emergency Management Agency, NEMA, Alhaji Imam Abali, also confirmed the blast, but could not give any casualty figure.

He said for now, it was very difficult to give the casualty figure, but noted that a lot of people were killed.

Chairman of Mubi North Local Government Council, Mr. Musa Bello Ajayi, who described the blast as horrible, regretted that the figure of victims given by the locals might be much higher.

He promised that his council would issue a statement as soon as the victims were identified and compiled.

It will be recalled that when Boko Haram insurgents overran Mubi, they declared the city as Madinatu Islam, meaning the headquarters of the insurgents.

Buhari on state police

Meanwhile, President Buhari has expressed reservations on the call for the establishment of state police as being advocated by state governors, saying Nigerians must abide by constitutional provision on the matter.



The President also approved the recruitment of 6,000 policemen to address the insecurity problem in the country.

Chairman of Nigerian Governors' Forum, Abdulaziz Yari, had last February, said creation of state police would help in addressing the problem of insecurity in the country, especially the herders/farmers' crisis.

Yari, who is also the Zamfara State governor, had stated this at the end of a two-day summit organised by the Senate Ad hoc Committee on Review of Current Security Infrastructure in Nigeria.

"Today we have reiterated the position of Vice-President Yemi Osinbajo. And the position of the security summit we held in August, that there is a need for state police; we can say it is the only answer," Yari had said.

However, while the President's rejection of state police drew the support of former Lagos State police commissioner, Abubakar Tsav, it received condemnation from Yoruba socio-political group, Afenifere, and spokesman of Coalition for Nigerian Movement, CNM, Akin Osuntokun.

Speaking in an interview with the *Voice of America*, VOA, in Washington, USA, yesterday, President Buhari, who is currently on an official visit to the US, maintained that the creation of state police will not augur well for the finances of the states, adding that some of them are finding it difficult to meet financial obligations to workers and other state needs.

"We must carefully look at the position of the nation's constitution on the issue of state police before we take final decision on the matter; if the constitution allows state police, so be it.

"But don't forget that many times the Federal Government gave out what we referred to as bail-out to state governments for payment of workers' salaries.



How many states can pay salaries promptly? And you want to add more financial burden to the states?

“It is not proper to employ a person, train him on how to handle weapons and then refuse to pay him — you can imagine what would happen in such situation,” he said.

Comment on Nigerian youths

On his purported comment on youths while in London, President Buhari dismissed the report, saying the media only preferred to interpret and report what they liked, instead of concentrating on developmental journalism.

He said: “You know Nigeria’s population is now between 180 and 190 million and 60 per cent of this population is youth, that is 30 years down ward.

“You know in the North, most youths are uneducated or school dropouts. If not because we had good harvests in the last two farming seasons, the situation would have deteriorated.

“These youths, even if they travel out of the North for greener pastures, they hardly make it economically because what they earn as income cannot enable them to meet their basic needs or return home.

“All these explanations I made, they refused to highlight them in their report and you know the media in Nigeria in most cases only do what they like.

“For instance, the nation’s achievements in the agricultural sector where millions of Nigerians benefitted financially were left unreported by the media.

“Even when the Minister of Information and Culture wanted to reply that abusive letter written by former President Olusegun Obasanjo, I had wanted Lai not to

reply the letter but I said I should allow him to highlight the achievements of our administration.”

President Buhari also used the opportunity to debunk the insinuation that Christians were being killed by herdsmen.

He said clashes between farmers and herdsmen had been in existence for the past years, adding that Nigerian herdsmen were not in the habit of carrying dangerous weapons while moving their animals around the country.

On what he does during his leisure time, President Buhari said he hardly listens to music but rather always obeyed his doctors’ advice on the need to eat and have enough rest.

6,000 policemen to be recruited

Meanwhile, President Buhari has approved the recruitment of 6,000 additional policemen as part of fresh measures to address the nation’s security challenges, including the farmers/herdsmen clashes across the country.

He said: “We will put in place more measures to check insecurity in the country, including increasing the number of policemen and training them.

“I have approved the recruitment of 6,000 policemen by the Police authorities and I directed that those recruited must come from all the 774 local government areas of the federation.

“Even if it means recruiting one person each from the 774, they should do that instead of going to motor parks, railway stations or markets for the recruitment. I gave them (Police authorities) this directive,” he said.

Buhari’s decision a good one —Tsav



Reacting to the President's rejection, a retired Police Commissioner, Alhaji Abubakar Tsav, said: "The President did well by rejecting state police because we are not yet ripe for it as a country. The politicians in this country are too greedy and too powerful. If we provide state police in our constitution, the politicians will use it against their opponents."

Nigerians must look beyond Buhari —*Afenifere*

In its reaction, the pan-Yoruba socio-political organisation, Afenifere, faulted the President's rejection of state police, saying Nigerians must look beyond Buhari to solve its crises.

Afenifere's National Publicity Secretary, Mr. Yinka Odumakin said: "It is within his overall rejection of restructuring. He has never hidden his preference for Nigeria which is tottering to the edge of the precipice. Recruit 10 million policemen and put them under the command of an IGP, what difference does it make? It is clear Nigerians must look beyond this President to resolve the nationhood crisis."

I'm not surprised —*Osuntokun*

Also reacting, the Director of Media and Publicity, Coalition for Nigerian Movement, CNM, Mr. Akin Osuntokun said he was not surprised by the President's disposition.

Osuntokun said: "I'm not surprised. To be fair to him, centralisation and unitarism have always been his ideological position, regardless of the pretension and mockery of commitment to federalism in the manifesto of APC. He would also not want to compromise his partisan and parochial monopoly of the armed forces and security agencies. His refusal also has implications for the degenerating breakdown of security all over the country. Recall that there is growing consensus that the only realistic solution to the countrywide security crisis is the establishment of state/local police."



I now support state police—*Paul Unongo*

Speaking on the issue, elder statesman and former Minister of Steel, Wantaregh Paul Unongo said: “I have been a signatory and I have also been a participant in the writing of most of the constitutions of this country and I was one of those vehemently opposed to the proposal for State Police. Because we used to think that if you had State Police, state governments would transform themselves into regional powers and they would confront the federation that we were just trying to build after the war.

“Now, we have ran the federation like a democratic institution with a clear purpose since 1979 because all constitutions for now take their origin from the 1979 constitution.

“With the practice we have now and the chaotic situation we have in the application of the architecture of the security in our country, leading to these multiple killings, I am so sorry to say that I am a new convert. I now believe and support State Police.

“We should call it community policing because the job is absolutely impossible for the centralized Nigerian Police. They have shown it in their numbers, they have shown it in their predisposition and they have shown it in the huge number of Nigerian citizens that have been killed.

“The primary duty of every single government created by the constitution which we wrote is the protection of lives and property of the citizenry and, so far, too many Nigerian citizens have died because of lack of effective policing.

“Too many of them have lost their freedom through kidnapping, cattle rustling and all those religious, ethnic and the semi Boko Haram known as herdsmen/farmers killings.



“I think anybody that has been through this country would say, even if it is on a temporary basis, we should have state Police or community police to assist in the proper policing of our country, otherwise we are heading towards anarchy.

“So, I have very strong sympathy for community or state police. Now, how can you call a state governor the Chief Security Officer of the state by constitution and you hamstringing him without any police to implement the laws that his House of Assembly has the right to pass?

“I think from all intents and purposes, there was wisdom in the good old days that we had regions and regional police before we went ahead and killed it.

“We should know that we need state or community police and we can write in the constitution, just like they have in the United States, where the president can have the power in critical crisis situation, like a governor threatening the unity of Nigeria, he can evoke existing laws of the federal might as it exists in the United States.

“So I have tremendous sympathy, I support state police, I support community police because experience has now taught us Nigerians that we need that for us to survive.”

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