



•Scene of the Kano gas explosion

9 killed, several school children injured in Kano gas explosion

•NEMA recovers nine bodies at explosion site; Confirms police report of gas explosion •Explosion not caused by bomb — Kano govt •Atiku demands investigation to forestall recurrence •NAF shifts 58th anniversary celebration billed for Kano

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NO fewer than nine persons were killed, yesterday, as gas explosion rocked the Sabon Gari area of Kano, but the police confirmed four.

Although initial report said the explosion took place in a primary school in the area, Kano State government said the explosion, which affected buildings around the area, including a primary school, was from an animal food shop opposite the school, along Aba road.

The National Emergency Management Agency, NEMA, which also corroborated police account that the explosion was caused by a gas explosion, said its personnel recovered nine bodies from the scene of the incident, thus disputing claims by the police.

Confirming the figure in a statement issued hours after the incident that occurred in the morning, NEMA's spokesperson, Manzo Ezekiel, revealed that the Director-General of the agency, Mustapha Ahmed, was at the site of the incident and coordinated rescue operations.

The statement reads: "Nine dead bodies have been recovered so far from the rubbles of a collapsed building beside a primary school, following explosions from gas cylinders at Aba Road, in Sabon Gari area of Kano.

"Director-General, National Emergency Management Agency, Mustapha Habib Ahmed, incident and coordinated the rescue operations. He mobilised excavators being used for the rescue operations and said NEMA team will ensure complete removal of the rubbles to retrieve all trapped persons.

"Furthermore, the DG instructed the NEMA rescue team to remain at the site until conclusion of the rescue and to work together with security agencies and other response organisations present at the location.

"NEMA is currently coordinating the rescue operations involving members of Nigerian Red Cross, military, the Nigerian Police, Nigerian Security and Civil Defense Corps, Kano SEMA."

However, the state police command had confirmed the killing of four persons by the gas explosion. "Mr Samaila Dikko, the state Commissioner of Police, who stated this in a radio and television broadcast, said the gas exploded at a welding point near a primary school on Aba Road in Sabon Gari, Kano." He said rescue workers were making efforts to discover people trapped at the building where the explosion occurred. "Dikko urged residents of the state to remain calm, saying the situation was under control.

Explosion not caused by bomb

—Kano govt

"Also speaking on the incident yesterday, Kano State Commissioner for Garba, confirmed that the blast occurred at an animal feed store opposite the primary school, dismissing insinuations that it was a bomb.

He said an investigation into the explosion had commenced to ascertain its cause, creating further confusion as to the cause of the blast.

He called on people in the state, particularly those living in the area where the incident occurred, to remain calm while the government worked with relevant agencies on the matter.

The commissioner cautioned the public against spreading unsubstantiated news and gave the assurance that the government would keep the public updated on any development on the matter.

Atiku demands investigation to forestall recurrence

Reacting to the explosion yesterday, former Vice President, Alhaji Atiku Abubakar, commiserated with the victims.

In a statement signed by the Director Media and Publicity, Atiku Care Foundation, ACF, Okpani Jacob Onjewe Dickson, the Director General of ACF, Ambassador Aliyu Bin Abbas, said Atiku, who is a presidential aspirant on the platform of Peoples Democratic Party, PDP, was deeply saddened over the

explosion.

"Alhaji Atiku Abubakar was saddened by the development and has tasked relevant agencies to investigate the remote and immediate causes to prevent future occurrence.

"He commiserates with the Government and people of Kano State, families that were affected and wished the injured speedy recovery.

"He has also tasked me to direct the Kano State Chapter of Atiku Care Foundation to furnish my office details of those affected, to see those that might really need assistance," Ambassador Abbas said.

Nigerian Air Force shifts 58th anniversary celebration

Meanwhile, the Nigerian Air Force, NAF, has postponed its 58th anniversary celebration billed to commence in Kano as a result of the explosion.

The ceremony, which was to start tomorrow, May 19 and end on Saturday, May 21, 2022, has now been re-scheduled to begin on Saturday, May 21 and end on Monday, May 23, with President Muhammadu Buhari expected to be the Special guest of honour.

Director of NAF Public Relations and Information, Air Commodore Edward Gabkwet, who disclosed news of the postponement in a statement shortly after the explosion, said: "NAF Day 2022 celebration, earlier scheduled to take place from 19-21 May 2022, at NAF Base, Kano, has now been rescheduled to take place from 21-23 May 2022 at the same venue.

"This was due to unforeseen circumstances. NAF wishes to apologize to all its invited guests for the inconveniences the new shift in date may have caused them."