

Niger explosion: Death toll rises to 25, several bodies recovered



By Wole Mosadomi, Minna

Minna – Twenty-five persons have been confirmed dead following another mining explosion in Niger State yesterday.

This incident comes barely a week after a tanker carrying fuel exploded along the Dikko-Maje-Minna road.

The latest explosion occurred at a mining site in Sabon Pegi, Mashegu Local Government Area, on Sunday. In addition to the fatalities, several individuals sustained varying degrees of injuries and have been transferred to hospitals in New Bussa for treatment.

Local residents continue to search for more bodies as many people, including women and children, remain missing. It is suspected that several victims may have been buried under the rubble.

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The explosion also destroyed numerous residential buildings and shops in the village, leaving them reduced to debris.

Although the actual cause of the explosion is yet to be determined, credible sources from the area suggested that explosive devices used at the mining site may have been improperly stored in a shop near the site.

Reports indicate that a man identified only as Yushau, who is based in New Bussa, may have stored the explosives in his uncle's house, which he also used as a shop in Sabon Pegi. The explosives reportedly detonated, leading to the devastating incident.

Yushau is currently on the run, and his whereabouts remain unknown as of the time of reporting. The military has cordoned off the area.

A local source named Ahmed recounted, "The explosion occurred when the miners were just resuming work in the morning. For now, the villagers are afraid to go close to the area for fear of what could happen next because we are suspecting that more explosives could detonate at the site."

Ahmed further stated, "Though there have been terrorist activities in the area, this explosion occurred at a mining site. Because the mining company uses explosive devices for mining activities, we suspect the explosion was due to poor handling of these devices."

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Illegal mining activities have reportedly been ongoing in the area for an extended period.

Meanwhile, the Niger Police Command, through its spokesperson, Superintendent of Police Wasiu Abiodun, confirmed that the explosion was caused by dynamites.

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A statement from the command read: “The explosion of dynamites occurred in densely populated residential buildings in Sabon Pegi, Mashegu Local Government Area, on Sunday. The suspected dynamites were stored in a residential house by one Yushau for a purported mining activity.”

The statement continued, “The explosion led to the unfortunate death of one Fatima Sadauki, while six others were injured and taken to General Hospital Kainji, New Bussa, for medical attention. The incident affected about twelve houses in the area.”

The Commissioner of Police, Niger State Command, CP Shawulu Ebenezer Danmamman, has ordered an investigation into the incident. Efforts are ongoing to locate the suspect, Yushau, while normalcy has been restored in the area, and monitoring continues, the statement added.