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Nigeria: Again, Explosions, Gunmen Hit Jos

BY ACHOR ABIMAJE AND GLORIA USMAN, 18 JULY 2012



Vanguard

A woman wailing over the killings in Dogon Na Hauwa village in Jos.

A rocket explosion and unknown gunmen again hit Jos, Plateau State capital, yesterday morning, leaving no fewer than six persons dead, including a 10-year-old pupil of Jos Nura Islamic School, who was hit by a rocket fired at his school.

The development came just as two rocket launchers were said to have been launched around 7pm in Bukuru Jos south local government of plateau around the Bukuru Market

The spokesman of the special task force on Jos crisis Captain Salisu Mustapha confirmed the incidence and said it happened around the Gyel area of the locality and there was no casualty. He also said that large scale investigation is going on.

An eyewitness who did not want his name in print told LEADERSHIP in Jos that a man drove a Vectra Opel car, stopped close to the school, brought out a rocket-propelled gun, and fired at the school, killing the little boy who was sitting for examination alongside his classmates who narrowly escaped death but were injured in the attack.

The bursar of the Islamic school, Alhaji Usman Danlami, in a telephone conversation with LEADERSHIP, said there was no doubt that the school was the target of the attack, but the damage was minimal as the attacker missed his target and hit a house close to the school. It was the impact of the explosion that collapsed part of the wall which fell on the dead minor, he said.

Confirming the incident in Jos to LEADERSHIP, the spokesman of the Special Task Force on Jos crisis, Captain Salisu Mustapher, said there were attacks on Nura Islamic Private School in the Kerana area of Bukuru in Jos South local government Area of the state.

LEADERSHIP investigations revealed that four persons were killed in a particular attack by unknown gunmen at Sabon Gida Kanap in Bukuru, Jos South LGA.

The attackers stormed a house, killing a widow and her three children. They were reportedly killed at about 2am.

One person was reportedly killed by some youths in skirmishes following the explosion that rocked Jos Nura Islamic Private School and killed the 10-year-old boy.

The victim, Alhaji Boye, was allegedly killed at Jos Building Materials Market, along Bukuru Road.

However, in its report made available to LEADERSHIP, the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) said "only one person died in yesterday's crisis in Jos, particularly in the blast at an Islamic school in the Bukuru district of Jos, Plateau State, according to claims by a resident, which were corroborated by a security operative".

The statement quoted the spokesman of the agency, Yushua A. Shuaib, as saying "the explosion occurred in the morning in the Bukuru area of Jos South," but was silent on casualty figure thus far, though he confirmed that one person died from the explosion.

According to a NEMA report a resident of the area, Gyang Moses, confirmed that a high-calibre weapon was fired at a building from a distance, targeting the Islamic school not far from a government building in the area.

"The explosion was thrown out from a moving vehicle about 500 metres away from Islamic High School, Karen, Bukuru," it said.

There were also confirmed reports of sporadic gunshots in the area as people scampered for safety amidst confusion.

Meanwhile, Plateau State stakeholders have expressed dismay over the unending crisis in Jos and have called on prominent northern leaders to refrain from making inflammatory comments on the military intervention in five villages in Barakin Ladi and Riyom local government areas of the state.

In a 14-point communiqué issued after a meeting held at Government House in Rayfield, the stakeholders noted that recent comments by northern leaders fell short of reality of security challenges in the state, cautioning them to be careful in commenting on a matter they have little knowledge of.

The communiqué signed by chairman of the session, Rear Admiral S. B. Atukum, took exception to the incessant attacks on the people of the state, acknowledging that the state was under siege and that the terror attacks were not only aimed at the Berom but the state at large.

It called for synergy among the federal, states and local governments for effective border policing, observing that most of the nation's borders are porous, making it easy for infiltration into the country by foreign mercenaries.

The communiqué called on the State House of Assembly to enact an enabling law to empower traditional institutions through capacity building to effectively take charge of their domain and monitor activities of strange elements in their domain.

While calling on the federal government, through the NEMA to provide immediate assistance to victims, it called on government to provide employment opportunities, constant education and sanitization program for the youth.

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