

National

Boko Haram suspected after Abuja blasts kill 15

AGENCY STAFF
Abuja, Niamey

AT LEAST 15 people were killed and 41 injured in two suicide bomb attacks late on Friday on the outskirts of Nigeria's capital Abuja, officials said.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility, but the suicide bombings bear the hallmark of Boko Haram militants, who have been trying to carve out an Islamic state in northeast Nigeria since 2009, killing thousands and displacing 2.1-million people.

They were the first bomb attacks in the capital since a blast at a bus station killed at least 71 people in April last year. Authorities blamed Boko Haram for that attack.

In Friday's attacks, one of the bombs went off near a police station in the satellite town of Kuje, not far from the capital's airport. The second occurred in a crowded area in the suburb of Nyanya, not far from the site of last year's attack.

"Preliminary investigations revealed the bomb blasts were carried out by two suicide bombers, a male and a female," Abuja police said.

Attacks by Boko Haram have lately been concentrated in Nigeria's north-eastern Borno state, the birthplace of the insurgency, and northern parts of neighbouring Adamawa state.

Since losing most of the territory it took over earlier this year, the group has reverted to hitting soft targets such as markets, bus stations and places of worship as well as hit-and-run attacks on villages, mainly in Borno.

Yesterday, suspected Boko Haram militants killed at least four people in suicide attacks across the border in Niger, security sources said. The dead included three civilians, a soldier and four attackers.

Violence from Boko Haram's northern Nigerian strongholds has spilled over into Niger, Cameroon and Chad. Niger has arrested at least 1,100 suspected Boko Haram militants this year and has placed its Diffa region under a state of emergency.

Diffa had suffered at least 57 attacks since February, United Nations statistics showed on Friday.

At least 150,000 refugees seeking protection from Boko Haram attacks in Nigeria live in Diffa. *Reuters*

Russian operation vital for Middle East – Assad

AGENCY STAFF

SYRIAN President Bashar al-Assad said yesterday that the success of Russia's military intervention in his country's civil war was vital for the whole Middle East.

"The alliance between Russia, Syria, Iraq and Iran must succeed or else the region will be destroyed," he said on Iranian state television.

Russia on Wednesday launched air strikes in Syria in a move Moscow insists is aimed at fighting the Islamic State group. But opponents, including the US, claim Russian bombing raids

are mainly targeting western-backed moderate opponents of Mr Assad.

"The chances of success for this coalition are great and not insignificant," Mr Assad said.

He called on western countries, which have along with Gulf allies carried out air strikes on Islamic State in Syria since September last year, to join forces in order to fight extremism. "If these states join the fight against terrorists in a serious and sincere manner, at least in terms of stopping them getting support, we will achieve results much faster."

Western and Gulf countries insist

Mr Assad must step down after presiding over four years of civil war.

Yesterday, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan warned that Russia's bombing campaign in Syria was a "grave mistake". "The steps Russia is taking and the bombing campaign in Syria are quite unacceptable to Turkey," Mr Erdogan said.

Given Moscow's friendly relations with Turkey, its actions in Syria were "worrying and disturbing". The strikes would "isolate Russia in the region", he predicted.

Russia and Turkey have long been at odds over Syria.

"What's Russia trying to achieve there anyway?" Mr Erdogan asked. "It intervened because this was what the regime in Syria demanded. But there's no obligation to respond every time a regime insists on it."

He blamed "not only Russia" but also Iran, which was defending Mr Assad and "waging state terrorism" in Syria. Russia, which began the air strikes in Syria last week, insists the operation only targets jihadists. But Turkey and several of its western allies have said moderates fighting Mr Assad's regime have also been hit. Mr Erdogan on Saturday urged

Russian President Vladimir Putin to reconsider Moscow's bombing campaign, accusing the Russian military of turning a blind eye to the killing of dozens of civilians.

Turkey has long been lobbying for a "safe zone" free of Islamic State fighters, where some of the 2-million Syrian refugees hosted by Turkey could go. The plan has met with a lukewarm reception from Turkey's partners and its prospects may be further dimmed by Russia's air campaign. But Mr Erdogan vowed to push hard on the idea of a haven. "It has by no means dropped off

our agenda. But there has to be a no-fly zone too. Otherwise, the area could be lethal." Mr Erdogan said Turkey had spent \$7.5bn on Syrian refugees – a burden that, he said, was part of Turkey's "moral duty".

The US and its allies carried out 16 air strikes against Islamic State militants in Syria and Iraq on Saturday, a US military statement said. Three of the six strikes in Syria struck targets near the town of Hasaka. Islamic State fighters, weapons and buildings were hit in 10 strikes near Iraqi cities, including Kirkuk, Falluja and Ramadi, it said. *AFP, Reuters*

PAYING LAST RESPECTS



HONOURED: The body of Israeli Nechamia Lavi, who was killed when he rushed to help victims of a knife attack carried out by a Palestinian man on Saturday, is carried at his funeral yesterday. Israel restricted Palestinian access to the Old City of Jerusalem after a Palestinian man fatally stabbed Mr Lavi and another man, prompting a government minister to raise the prospect of a military operation to counter rising violence. Police shot dead the attacker. *Picture: AFP PHOTO*

MSF denies US air strike on Afghan hospital aimed at Taliban fighters

MIRWAIS HAROONI
and ANDREW MacASKILL
Kabul

MEDICAL assistance organisation Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF) denied that Taliban fighters were firing from its hospital at Afghan and North Atlantic Treaty Organisation forces before a suspected US air strike killed at least 19 people, in a battle to oust the Islamist insurgents from an Afghan city.

Fighting raged around the northern provincial capital of Kunduz for a seventh day yesterday as government forces backed by US air power sought to drive out Taliban militants who seized the city almost a week ago.

Decomposing bodies littered the streets and residents said that food was scarce.

MSF has said an air strike, probably carried out by US-led coalition forces, killed 19 staff and patients on Saturday in a hospital it runs in

Kunduz, leaving 37 wounded. The US military said it conducted an air strike "in the vicinity" of the hospital, as it targeted Taliban insurgents who were directly firing on US military personnel.

President Barack Obama said the defence department had ordered a full investigation into the incident as the United Nations human rights chief said the assault on the hospital was "utterly tragic, inexcusable" and could amount to a war crime.

The bombing deals a blow to Afghan President Ashraf Ghani's policy of forging closer ties with the US after his predecessor, Hamid Karzai, fell out with his backers in Washington in part over the number of civilians killed by bombs.

But the Afghan leader will be torn between distancing himself from Washington and the need for American firepower to help his forces drive insurgents out of Kunduz, after the Taliban's biggest vic-

tory in the nearly 14-year-old war. Mr Obama offered condolences to the victims of what he called "the tragic incident".

In Kabul, the Afghan Ministry of Defence said Taliban fighters had attacked the hospital and were using the building "as a human shield". But MSF denied this.

"The gates of the hospital compound were closed all night so no one that is not staff, a patient or a caretaker was inside the hospital when the bombing happened," MSF said yesterday. "In any case, bombing a fully functioning hospital can never be justified."

Witnesses said patients were burnt alive in the crowded hospital after the air strike.

The MSF hospital that was a lifeline for thousands in the city said it was pulling most of its staff out of the area as the hospital was no longer functioning. Some staff had gone to help treat the wounded at other hospitals. *Reuters*

Tiso foundation celebrates 10 years

THE Tiso Foundation ("the Foundation") a public benefit organisation (PBO) established in 2001 and launched in 2005 by the founders of the Tiso Group is celebrating a decade of changing lives. Since its early beginnings the Tiso Foundation has partnered with leading educational institutions to create programmes that innovatively support and enable talented young people to realise their full potential.

In 2001 the founders of the Tiso Foundation had a vision to establish a self-sustaining developmental organisation focused on youth development, education and leadership. This vision was achieved when the founders of Tiso Group bequeathed a substantial portion of their shares to the Foundation.

Since 2005 the Foundation has touched the lives of more than 42 000 young students, through the R100 million invested in educational and skills development programmes. Today the value of the initial endowment is valued to be worth over R660 million.

David Adomakoh one of the founders of the Tiso Foundation explained "from the start we wanted to do something significant that would benefit society and we did not want something that was donor-dependant".

The Chairman of the board and trustee, Professor Chabani Manganyi notes "People without education remain at the fringes of society with little hope of redress, leading to increasing despair which may affect the socio-political stability of our country."

The Foundation's work is comprehensive since it supports deserving students through its basic and advanced tertiary education programmes.

It also addresses the shortage of technical and artisanal skills shortage through its focused Artisanal Development Programme. Underlying these initiatives is a commitment to nurture future leaders.

Today the Tiso Foundation runs programmes focused on tertiary education bursaries and broader skills and leadership development.

The Foundation runs five programmes which include:

- The Archiebald Mafeje Scholarship for Advanced Study which supports doctoral students through a partnership with Wits University and aims to contribute to and increase the number of black doctoral students in the country.

- The Artisan Development Programme is run in partnership with the Artisan Training Institute a leading accredited technical training academy and have partnered with leading South African companies including Aveng, Bell Equipment and Kagiso Tiso Holdings to train over 500 unemployed youth and assist them in industry apprenticeship placements.

- The Tertiary Bursary Programme supports deserving black students from underprivileged communities to pursue higher education at universities across the country. Each year we take on between 20-30 new students.

- The Global Leaders Programme in partnership with the Canon Collins Educational and Legal

Assistance Trust and Cambridge University, we are supporting 10 black students to complete their masters degree at the University of Cambridge in the UK as part of our drive to give South African students access to a world-class education.

- The Annual Thought Leadership Symposium in partnership with The Gordon Institute of Business Science exposes students, leaders from government, business and civil society to leading insights and perspectives on key socio-economic and political issues facing SA and the continent.

Nkululeko Sowazi, one of the Foundation's founders, says "We decided to focus on tertiary education and leadership development of youth who are gifted and can make a difference in their families, communities and SA. We have touched the lives of thousands of youth but their contribution to society is what we look forward to."

■ For more about the Tiso Foundation please visit: <http://tisofoundation.co.za/>

Proudly brought to you by the Tiso Foundation in association with **BUSINESSDAY** Brand Voice.

In the right hands, insurance insights empower results

While you use your specialised knowledge to successfully run your business, we use our data-driven insights to understand the insurance risks associated with it. Partner with Aon, a leading global insurance and employee benefit solutions provider, and let's empower results together.

Call 0860 453 672 or visit www.aon.co.za today for Business Insurance, Employee Benefit Solutions, and Household and Motor Insurance.

Aon South Africa (Pty) Ltd is an Authorised Financial Services Provider (FSP #20555).



Risk. Reinsurance. Human Resources.

SANDTON CITY IS OPEN DURING ECOMOBILITY 1-31 OCTOBER
SHOP IN OCTOBER WIN R50 000 WORTH OF GIFT CARDS
ROOFTOP PARK & RIDE R10 FLAT RATE



SANDTON CITY

[SANDTONCITY.COM](http://sandtoncity.com)