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Nigeria unrest: 'Boko Haram' gunmen kill 44 at mosque

BBC News (13.08.2013) - At least 44 worshippers have been shot dead at a mosque in north-eastern Nigeria, officials in Borno state say.

The killings took place during dawn prayers on Sunday, although news only emerged on Monday, as communications are disrupted by a state of emergency.

The attack occurred in the town of Konduga, 35km (22 miles) from the state capital, Maiduguri.

The gunmen are suspected of being from the Islamist group Boko Haram, which has killed thousands since 2009.

Twelve further civilians were killed at Ngom village, closer to Maiduguri, reports say.

Vigilantes targeted?

A member of a civilian vigilante group told the Associated Press that four of their number was killed when they responded to calls for help in Konduga.

Several such groups have been set up since the emergency was declared in Borno and two neighbouring states in May.

BBC Nigeria correspondent Will Ross says the gunmen may have attacked the mosque in the belief that some of the vigilantes were praying there.

"We believe the attack was not unconnected with the cooperation residents are giving to security operatives in identifying and arresting Boko Haram members in their midst," a senior government official told the AFP news agency.

While the group has frequently attacked churches, it has also occasionally targeted mosques, sometimes those whose preachers disagree with their views.

The attackers wore military uniforms, officials say, which they may have taken during recent attacks on a barracks.

Nigeria's Daily Post reported that a further 26 people were being treated for injuries in hospital in Maiduguri.

After a lull immediately after the emergency was declared, there has been a recent spate of attacks, blamed on Boko Haram.

The military cut mobile phone networks when they imposed the state of emergency, saying they wanted to make it more difficult for the militants to organise attacks.

However, some local officials have said this prevents civilians from getting help.

Boko Haram wants to overthrow the Nigerian government and create an Islamic state in the north.

News of the attacks came as a video emerged of the group's leader, Abubakar Shekau, saying Boko Haram had carried out recent attacks including some that targeted the police and the military.

He said this showed that the army's claims to have inflicted heavy losses on the group were "lies".

Boko Haram likely guilty of Crimes Against Humanity, murdering Christians, ICC Says

The Christian Post (06.08.2013) - Islamic terrorist group Boko Haram is being accused by the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) of possible crimes against humanity, which includes the deaths of thousands of Christians and Muslims in the African nation.

"The information available provide a reasonable basis for believing that in July 2009 Boko Haram launched a widespread and systematic attack that resulted in the deaths of 1,200 civilians, Muslims and Christians in different parts of Nigeria," wrote Fatou Bensouda, Prosecutor of the ICC in the report.

Boko Haram has made it clear that its intent is on driving Christians out and imposing Islamic rule on a country that is divided between geographic and faith lines, with most Christians concentrated in the South and Muslims in the North.

Several human rights organizations have condemned the attacks on churches, congregations and government buildings, but despite President Goodluck Jonathan's attempts to stop the violence, the bloodshed continues. On Monday, 35 people were

killed in separate gun battles between Boko Haram members and Nigerian security forces in the northeast Borno state, Reuters reported.

"The scale and intensity of the attacks have increased over time," the ICC report added, which is based on preliminary information through December 2012.

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) have warned the Islamic group against attacking civilians, but Boko Haram continues carrying out deadly attacks.

The Nigerian government had considered offering the group amnesty as part of efforts to end the violence, but in April Boko Haram responded by saying that it is the government who should be begging it for a pardon.

"The Nigerian state and Christians are our enemies and we will be launching attacks on the Nigerian state and its security apparatus as well as churches until we achieve our goal of establishing an Islamic state in place of the secular state," Boko Haram said in June 2012.

The Christian Association of Nigerian-Americans (CANAN) has tried to bring attention to the issue in the U.S. by calling on Americans to help protect Christians who are regularly attacked and killed in Nigeria. "We want fellow Christians in America to rise up in the face of the innocent Nigerian Christians who are the main target of Boko Haram," wrote Laolu Akande, executive director of CANAN.

"These people are doing whatever they like, they have gone out of control, they are threatening the very peace and security of Nigeria, and that of the region," Akande additionally told The Christian Post in a phone interview.

"They have turned Christians into a group of sitting ducks. This is why we want American Christians to rise up and support our association, because we have decided to be the voice of the voiceless. We want American Christians to help us carry our message to the U.S. Congress and get the government to do what is right, which is to designate Boko Haram as a foreign terrorist organization."

Nearly four dozen reported killed in multiple church bombings by Islamic extremists

Fox News (31.07.2013) - Almost four dozen people were killed in attacks on multiple churches in Kano, Nigeria earlier this week in a wave of bombings the military blamed on Islamic terrorists.

The explosions Monday left 45 dead according to a report from African news service BosNewsLife<http://global.fncstatic.com/static/v/all/img/external-link.png> and seemed to indicate a spreading Islamic insurgency in the country.

Thirsty-nine bodies were recovered from the wreckage of the Christ Salvation Pentecostal Church after the attack, which occurred in the middle of a Monday night worship service. Another six bodies were found in two other area churches .

Witnesses claimed in local reports that there were another four explosions in the same Sabin Gari area, causing widespread general panic as dust and smoke hovered in the air.

The local military said the attack came from suspected members of the Islamist militant group Boko Haram, which translates into "western education is a sin." The group has been waging a war in the region for the past four years, saying it wants an Islamic state.

Boko Haram has said in the past it wants Christians to leave the predominantly Muslim area of northern Nigeria, where Kano lies.

In May, Nigeria launched a major offensive against Boko Haram but it failed to end the terrorist attacks.

In recent weeks, at least three schools in the region were attacked by the militant group and just this past weekend, at least 20 people were left dead during a clash in the village of Dawashe.

Bombs in Nigerian Christian district kill at least 12

WWM (31.07.2013) - Police say 12 people are dead after multiple explosions Monday night that rocked the Christian Sabon Gari area of Kano State in northern Nigeria, despite continuing government efforts to restore peace.

No group has claimed responsibility for the July 29 blasts, but it is widely believed that the outlawed violent Islamic sect Boko Haram may be responsible for the attacks in which the official number of victims is being disputed by some residents.

There is no record of reprisal attacks. Security personnel have condoned off the area.

The federal government has, however, given the Presidential Committee on Dialogue and Peaceful Resolution of Security Challenges in the North an additional two months to bring about peace in the northern parts of the country.

The Chairman of the Committee and Minister for Special Duties, Kabiru Tanimu Turaki, who announced the extension on Tuesday, lamented the Kano blast, noting it was sad some people who do not wish the country well are bent on prolonging the security crisis in the north.

Kano, the commercial nerve centre of Northern Nigeria, has a predominantly Muslim population but the Sabon Gari area is populated mainly by Christians from southern parts of the country.

In March, Boko Haram claimed responsibility for suicide blasts at a bus park in the same district that killed at least 22 people.

The military Joint Task Force spokesperson, Capt. Ikedichi Iweha, confirmed the incident, and said preliminary investigations are underway.

Chief Michael Tobias Idika, president of Ohanaeze Ndigbo, a cultural group for southeast Nigerians living in Kano, issued a statement saying terrorists had attacked the Sabon Gari area at about 9.30 p.m., and had planted Improvised Explosive Devices that exploded almost simultaneously, affecting various houses.

"At 41 New Road, the Christ Salvation Pentecostal Church was also bombed at the peak of evening worship," Idika's statement read. In contrast to the police confirmation of 12 fatalities, "Ohanaeze's account can confirm 39 deaths in New Road and six in Igbo/Enugu Road; and also unspecified numbers of people who got injured."

The group called for better security in northern Nigeria.

The state governor, Rabi'u Musa Kwankwaso who visited the scene of the incident Tuesday morning, condemned the multiple bomb blasts, describing it as devastating and an attack on the whole of Nigeria.

"This attack on Sabon Gari is an attack on Nigeria because Muslims and Christians are involved. Several people of different ethnic extraction have either lost their lives or are critically injured. Whoever did this thing targeted Nigeria", Kwankwaso said.

The Muslim umbrella body in the north, Jama'atu Nasril Islam, on Monday raised an alarm of what it called a grand design to push the entire North, and by extension all of Nigeria, into deeper crisis.

In a statement signed by its secretary General, Dr Khalid Aliyu Abubakar, JNI wondered why the killing of innocent people has continued unabated, especially in the north:

"We strongly condemn the inhuman and ungodly act in its totality as it is reprehensible, and we equally call for calm and restraint. As it has always been our prayers, whatsoever is the intent/motive of the perpetrators of these contemptible acts, they will never succeed, insha'Allah."

The pan-northern socio-political organisation Arewa Consultative Forum also pleaded with those behind attacks to disarm in the interest of the country.

Escalating violence prompts state of emergency in three states

CSW (15.05.2013) - Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan declared a state of emergency in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa States yesterday to address the "systematic effort by insurgents and terrorists groups which pose a very serious national threat to national unity and territorial integrity."

The move comes in the wake of escalating attacks in northern and central states over recent weeks by increasingly well-armed and well-organised militants.

Pentecostal pastor shot dead by two suspected Boko Haram members

Minutes after the presidential declaration, the Secretary of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) in Borno State, Reverend Faye Pama Musa, a Pentecostal pastor, was shot dead in his Maiduguri home by two suspected Boko Haram members.

The declaration follows an admission by Borno State governor Kassim Shettima to senators and the military on 7 May that Boko Haram was on the verge of seizing control of the state. This admission was reportedly echoed by Khalifa Ahmed Zanna, the senator representing the Borno Central Zone, who alleged that Boko Haram effectively controls around 24 of Borno's 27 LGAs. The senator was recently detained and questioned after a high profile Boko Haram Commander was arrested in his home.

Clear surge in violence over recent weeks

Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW) has been increasingly concerned by a clear surge in violence over recent weeks in northern and central Nigeria. According to information

received by CSW Nigeria, an attack was carried out on Zankang Village in Kaura local Government Area (LGA) in the southern part of Kaduna State by Fulani gunmen on 13 May. The number of casualties is yet to be determined and reports that some of the gunmen were arrested on 14 May have yet to be confirmed. This was the second successive attack on the village by Fulani tribesmen. According to eyewitness reports, gunmen had attacked the village during the early hours of Sunday 12 May, firing sporadically, but fled when members of the security forces arrived at the scene after hearing the gunshots. Ten people were injured, two of whom are receiving hospital treatment. 42 people are now known to have died during similar attacks in March on five villages in the area that displaced approximately 4,000 people.

Insurgents shouting "Allahu Akbar" (God is great) attack police compound with explosives

A police barracks on the outskirts of Bama Town in Borno State was attacked by suspected members of Boko Haram in the early hours of Sunday 12 May. According to eyewitnesses, the insurgents arrived on motorcycles and in three-wheel vehicles, shouting "Allahu Akbar" (God is great) before attacking the compound with explosives and petrol bombs. They were dispersed by the army without loss of life. The attack came a week after coordinated attacks on Bama Town by an estimated 200 militants claimed 47 lives.

Also on 12 May, over 40 people were killed and several properties were destroyed in Okpachanyi village, Agatu LGA in Benue State in Central Nigeria when suspected Fulani tribesmen attacked the funeral of two police officers who were killed on 7 May in Nasarawa State, also in Central Nigeria. This follows a similar attack on Agatu LGA on 8 May in which Fulani herdsmen destroyed property and killed several people, including women and children.

Suspected Boko Haram gunmen kill Christian leader in Borno State, Nigeria

Pastor had refused to leave, saying God had called him to his people

ASSIST Ministries (15.05.2013) - Gunmen believed to be members of the deadly Islamic extremist Boko Haram group yesterday (Tuesday, May 14, 2013) killed the Rev. Faye Pama Musa, secretary of the Borno state chapter of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN). He was 47.

According to the Nigeria correspondent of Morning Star News, the gunmen reportedly followed the long-time Christian leader from his church building, where he was holding an evening Bible study, to his house in the Government Reservation Area in Maiduguri, and shot him dead there, said the Rev. Titus Dama Pona, chairman of CAN's Borno chapter.

"Rev. Faye Pama was killed last night," Pona said this morning by phone from Maiduguri, the state capital. "I am right now with his family, and they are still consulting on what next to do."

Morning Star News went on to say that the assailants reportedly dragged the pastor from his home and shot him outside, in front of his daughter, who had followed them out pleading for his life. Pama was the father of three children.

Senior pastor of a Pentecostal church, Rhema Assembly, Pama often spoke out against persecution of Christians in Borno state, epicenter of Boko Haram attacks in northeastern Nigeria. He had been involved in ministry leadership for more than 26 years.

"The shooting happened within an hour of President Goodluck Jonathan declaring a state of emergency in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa states, allowing the government to send more troops and take other special measures to try curbing violence by Boko Haram," said the Morning Star Nigeria correspondent.

"The group has reportedly killed more than 4,000 persons since 2009, and the state of emergency comes after a gun battle between the military and Boko Haram in Baga, Borno state last month that some say took more than 100 civilian lives.

In a 2007 interview, Pama had said that he would not leave Borno state in spite of the danger to his ministry and life from Islamic extremists.

"I am an indigene of Borno state, and God has called me to work among my people," he said. "I believe that the best people who reach a people with the gospel are those who understand the culture of these people."

Pama believed that only by showing love to Muslims could they be won to Christ, "and not through fighting."

An outspoken critic of the marginalization of and discrimination against Christians, Pama began preaching first with a Pentecostal ministry in Maiduguri, the Word of God Mission, in 1996, before he left to start Agape Ministries and planted Rhema Assembly, which has an associate pastor and about 200 members.

He once served as secretary of Borno state's chapter of the Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria.

"President Jonathan had also imposed a state of emergency in 2011 on 15 areas within four states in embattled northern Nigeria, with little success. Boko Haram, which the Borno governor says threatens to take control of the state, seeks to destabilize the federal government in an effort to impose strict sharia (Islamic law) throughout Nigeria," said the Morning Star News correspondent.

"Boko Haram has attacked Christians particularly in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe states, destroying Christian-owned businesses as well as harming churches. Many Christians have fled as displaced persons or become refugees in Cameroon."

Suspected members of the Islamic extremist group also attacked a police barracks on the outskirts of Bama Town, Borno state early on Sunday (May 12), according to Christian Solidarity Worldwide (www.csw.org).

CSW reported that insurgents arrived shouting "Allahu Akbar [God is greater]" before launching explosives and fuel bombs, and the army dispersed them before lives were lost. The previous week, according to CSW, some 200 Islamic militants attacked Bama Town, killing 47 people.

Upsurge of violence in northern and central states

CSW (09.05.2013) - Northern and Central Nigerian states have seen an upsurge of violence in recent weeks. Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW) has also received eyewitness reports stating that the violence that broke out on 3 May in Taraba State, during the burial procession of a high ranking Chief in Northern Nigeria was between local Muslims and Jukun traditionalists rather than Christians and Muslims.

Eye-witnesses to violence that broke out on 3 May in the ancient city of Wukari during the burial procession of Abe Ashumate from the Jukun tribe have described it as a fight between local Fulanis and Jukun traditionalists.

In accordance with Jukun tradition, the bodies of high-ranking chiefs must be carried around the city prior to interment. Mourners attending the burial of Abe Ashumate allege that fighting broke out after members of the predominantly Muslim Fulani tribe blocked the route to the burial ground and stoned funeral goers, stating that the only permissible gathering was for the Jumat prayers.

Police moved in to quell the violence, reportedly arresting over 30 suspected rioters, and the State Government instituted an on-going 24 hour curfew to prevent violence spreading into neighbouring towns. While the police claim 39 people were killed, residents insist the figure is closer to 100, with 30 more injured.

According to eyewitnesses who spoke to CSW Nigeria, some of the victims were beheaded, including a pregnant woman whose legs were also cut off, and the private parts of others had been removed. Around 70 homes and shops were destroyed in the violence along with vehicles and other assets. Local sources estimate the total cost of the damage at over £4 million.

Other states have also witnessed violence. On 4 May, in Ngamdu, a town on the border between Borno and Yobe States, suspected Boko Haram members armed with guns, knives and machetes are reported to have attacked the homes of two Muslim clerics who were critical of the sect, tying them up before slitting their throats. Two other local men were also killed in a similar manner.

In Plateau State a man from the Berom tribe was killed and beheaded by gunmen who invaded Gyel in Jos South Local Government Area (LGA) on 5 May. On the same day, gunmen attacked an EYN (Brethren) Church in Jilang Village in Maiha LGA, Adamawa State at around 11 am, killing ten people and injuring twelve before attacking the market square, where six people were killed and three injured. Meanwhile, armed men shot and killed a security guard at the Government Secondary School (GSS) in Fadan Kaje, southern Kaduna State, fleeing in a car before security men arrived at the scene. Also on 5 May, four Yoruba traders from Bodija Market in Ibadan City, southern Nigeria who had gone to Borno State to purchase millet products were murdered by gunmen who intercepted the commercial bus in which they were travelling and singled them out on account of their ethnicity. News of the deaths raised tensions in Bodija Market, occasioning its temporary closure and the deployment of troops at strategic locations within the market.

During the early hours of 7 May, Bama Town in Borno State was stormed by around 200 militants disguised in army uniforms, armed with machineguns and rocket-propelled grenades, and travelling in a convoy of buses and trucks, who launched coordinated attacks on the local police station, army barracks, magistrate's court and prison. 22 policemen, 14 prison officials, 13 sect members, three children, two soldiers and one woman are reported to have been killed, and 105 prisoners were freed. On 8 May, Fulani

herdsmen attacked Agatu LGA in Benue State, killing several people including women and children, and around 20 policemen were killed in Assakio Village, Nasarawa State, by a cult known as Ombatse (the time has come).

CSW's Chief Executive Mervyn Thomas said, "The reports of escalating violence coming in from Northern and Central Nigeria are deeply worrying. Tackling this issue effectively will require a comprehensive and unified effort by state governments and we urge them to work together to disrupt the movements of armed groups and prevent further loss of life. It is also worrying that, Boko Haram increasingly appears to be better equipped and coordinated. Since the security implications of this terrorist group extend beyond Nigeria's borders, CSW also calls for greater international co-operation and action to identify and disrupt the organisation's funders, backers and training network."

Nigeria, beset by violence from Islamic extremists, sets up committee on offering amnesty deal

AP (17.04.2013) - Nigeria formed a panel that will create an amnesty program for Islamic extremists to try to quell a bloody guerrilla campaign of bombings and shootings that's killed hundreds of people across its north, the government said Wednesday.

The 26-person panel, created by President Goodluck Jonathan, has a 60-day deadline to come up with an offer for militants belonging to the Islamic extremist network Boko Haram and other groups now fighting against government forces and killing civilians with apparent impunity. A similar program in 2009 worked to halt the majority of attacks by militants in Nigeria's oil-rich southern delta, though those fighting in the north have in the past rejected the idea of overtures from the government.

Problems with the committee, however, immediately became apparent after it was announced. At least one member said he hadn't been consulted before his name was released, and the list of panelists included no member of any armed insurgent group.

The presidential committee, including police and military officials, as well as politicians and human rights activists, would "constructively engage key members of Boko Haram and define a comprehensive and workable framework for resolving the crisis of insecurity in the country," according to a statement issued by presidential spokesman Reuben Abati. The committee also would offer a "comprehensive victims' support program," though the statement offered no further details about it.

The presidency said it hoped disarming Islamic extremists would happen within two months' time, an ambitious goal that likely will be extremely difficult. The command-and-control structure of the main extremist network Boko Haram remains unclear. It also has sparked several splinter groups, including those wanting to increasingly target Western interests and who have connections to other al-Qaida-linked groups.

Boko Haram's leader, Abubakar Shekau, also has repeatedly said he would refuse any amnesty offer. Shekau's past demands included the release of all the sect's imprisoned members and instituting Shariah law across all of Nigeria, a multiethnic nation of more than 160 million people.

The idea of an amnesty, discussed in some corners by analysts, came to a head in March when the Sultan of Sokoto, one of the country's top Muslim leaders, called for it. While the sultan did not speak in specifics, others have suggested offering an amnesty deal in line with one previously given to militants in Nigeria's oil-rich southern delta in 2009.

That deal offered cash payments and job training to fighters in return for them giving up their weapons and halting attacks on foreign oil companies.

The 2009 amnesty deal, however, did not stop all attacks in the delta, nor did it halt the rapidly growing theft of crude oil from pipelines there that has caused serious environmental damage. The militants in the nation's largely Christian south also attacked the commodity that fills the nation's coffers while typically not killing civilians. Those extremists fighting in the nation's Muslim north have shown no hesitation to kill civilians and security forces alike, nor does their fighting affect oil production.

Until Wednesday, the sultan was the highest-ranking official so far to publicly endorse such a plan for Islamic extremists. However, his name was absent from the list of amnesty panel members. Included on the list was Datti Ahmed, a Kano physician who heads a prominent Muslim group, the Supreme Council for Shariah in Nigeria. However, Ahmed last year publicly backed away from the suggestion that he work as a mediator after the idea leaked out and local newspapers began to publish stories about him.

Ahmed also is a controversial figure in the north, as he sparked a boycott of polio vaccines in 2003 in Nigeria after saying the vaccines were "corrupted and tainted by evildoers from America and their Western allies." That led to hundreds of new infections in children in Nigeria's north, where the disease is still active today, as well as a global polio outbreak that reached as far as Indonesia.

Ahmed did not immediately respond to a request for comment Wednesday.

Another named panelist, Shehu Sani of the Kaduna-based Civil Rights Congress, told The Associated Press that Nigeria's government never consulted with him before publicly announcing his name. Sani said he would only serve as a member if Islamic extremists told him through an intermediary that they would consider an amnesty deal and would serve on the panel as well.

"In the absence of that, we would simply be doing something hoping it would work," Sani said. "And hope is not a strategy."

The Islamic insurgency in Nigeria grew out of a 2009 riot led by Boko Haram members in Maiduguri that ended in a military and police crackdown that killed some 700 people. The group's leader died in police custody in an apparent execution. From 2010 on, Islamic extremists have engaged in hit-and-run shootings and suicide bombings, attacks that have killed at least 1,548 people, according to an AP count.

Westerners in Nigeria have been targeted as well, including an August 2011 suicide bombing at the United Nations headquarters in Nigeria's capital, Abuja, that killed 25 and wounded more than 100 others. A group of men who said they belong to Boko Haram claimed responsibility for the kidnapping of seven French tourists from northern Cameroon late February — a first for the group. Meanwhile, a Boko Haram splinter group known as Ansaru has claimed the recent kidnappings and killings in northern Nigeria of seven foreigners — a British citizen, a Greek, an Italian, two Lebanese and two people believed to be Syrian — all employees of a Lebanese construction company called Setraco.

Despite the deployment of more soldiers and police to northern Nigeria, the nation's weak central government has been unable to stop the killings. Meanwhile, human rights groups and local citizens blame both Boko Haram and security forces for committing violent atrocities against the local civilian population, fueling rage in the region.

At least 80 die in armed attacks on villages in Kaduna and Plateau states in easter week

CSW (04.04.2013) - At least 19 people were killed, an unknown number injured and an estimated 4000 displaced when armed Fulanis attacked Mafang and Zilang villages in Kaura Local Government Area (LGA) in Southern Kaduna State over the Easter weekend.

According to local reports, on Saturday 30 March well-armed men dressed in black surrounded the villages before launching an assault that continued into Easter Sunday.

Many villagers fled to the nearby hills. Some who returned later to assess the extent of the damage were also murdered. The majority of victims were women and children. The assailants also razed a significant number of homes. Many of those displaced by the destruction are reported to be staying in the local Amisi Primary School, as well as in nearby Fadan Attakar and Mifi villages.

The Reverend Yunusa Nmadu, CEO of Christian Solidarity Worldwide-Nigeria (CSW-N), said, "We request prayers for, and extend our condolences to the families of all those who lost their lives during the tragic events of last week. We also call on the relevant state governments to provide urgent assistance to the injured and displaced. The systematic manner in which these attacks now occur indicates a greater degree of organisation than has previously been the case and requires an urgent reassessment of strategy and a surge in the number of troops assigned to these areas."

Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW) was informed that over a month ago, a local chief allowed Fulanis to settle on land on a hillside near Kirim Village after they were ordered to leave Zangon Kataf LGA, also in Southern Kaduna, following a Fulani attack on Aduwan Village. In recent weeks the local community had begun to ask questions after it became apparent that the Fulanis were storing arms in the area.

The assault on the villages in Kaduna occurred during the same week that a series of attacks on villages in Wase and Riyom LGAs in neighbouring Plateau State claimed the lives of at least 60 people, mostly women and children, and escalated local tensions. Prior to this, attacks in Riyom LGA over a two month period had claimed 16 lives.

CSW's Chief Executive Mervyn Thomas said, "While attacks on remote villages by well-armed Fulanis have occurred sporadically since 2010, the recent escalation of assaults on villagers on the Plateau-Kaduna border, the consistent targeting of women and children and the mass displacement of inhabitants appear to be part of a deliberate attempt to rid these areas of their original inhabitants. It is worrying that armed groups can still move freely, attacking for lengthy periods despite a security presence in each state. Tackling this issue effectively will require a comprehensive and unified effort by the governments of Kaduna, Plateau and even Bauchi States to track down and apprehend the perpetrators."

Sixteen die in weekend attacks on mourners in Plateau and Kaduna States

CSW - Six people died and many others were injured when unknown gunmen attacked Aduwan Gida Village in the Zangon Kataf Local Government Area (LGA) of Southern Kaduna during the evening of 23 February.

The attack occurred at around 10pm, as villagers gathered to mourn the death of an elderly member of the community. Armed assailants are reported to have fired indiscriminately for around ten minutes, and fatalities are said to include a nursing mother and her six-month-old baby. The injured are being treated in hospitals in Kaduna and Plateau States.

The Reverend Yunusa Nmadu, CEO of Christian Solidarity Worldwide-Nigeria (CSW-N), said, "It is unfortunate that after the announcement of a ceasefire by elements of Boko Haram, we are still experiencing attacks resembling their style of operations. We ask for continuing prayers for Nigeria, and urge churches to be vigilant with regard to security, particularly as the Easter period approaches."

The attack on Aduwan Gida constitutes the second night attack on predominantly Christian villages in as many days, and follows a period of relative calm.

In neighbouring Plateau State, ten members of the same family were hacked to death and two sustained gunshot wounds when unknown assailants stormed Kogwom Village in Vom district in Jos South LGA during the early hours of 22 February. According to local reports, the family had lost a grandmother a few days earlier and family members were gathered at the family compound for her funeral. The injured are currently receiving treatment at an undisclosed location.

In both cases, locals expressed anger at what they perceive as ineffectiveness on the part of security forces stationed in their respective areas.

CSW's Advocacy Director Andrew Johnston said, "We are saddened by these attacks on communities that were already in mourning, and send our heartfelt condolences to the relations and friends of those who died over the weekend in Plateau and Kaduna States. Given the long-standing nature of the threats against both areas, the security services should by now have formulated an effective means of defending villages and apprehending assailants. We urge those responsible for security in these areas to formulate effective arrangements to secure the lives and properties of innocent citizens and to forestall the very real possibility of people taking the law into their own hands."

43 Nigerian Christians killed in attacks

Baptish Press (04.01.2013) - Boko Haram militants are blamed for increased religious persecution in Nigeria, including the murder of 43 Christians and the wounding of many others in several year-end incidents, religious freedom watchdog groups have reported.

In two separate Christmas Eve attacks, 12 Christians including a pastor were killed and numerous others wounded at churches in Borno and Yobe states in Nigeria, according to reports from Christian Solidarity Worldwide, International Christian Concern and Morning Star News.

In the week following Christmas, 10 Christians were killed and five injured in various attacks on villages in Nigeria's Plateau state, Adeniyi Ojutiku, a U.S. associate of the Young Wing Christian Association of Nigeria, told Baptist Press.

Olasupo Ayokunle, president and chief executive officer of the Nigerian Baptist Convention, said the targeted slaughter of Christians at their homes is unprecedented.

"We have never faced this type of selective destruction before," he said in a Baptist World Alliance press release. "Continue to pray for the church in Nigeria."

The NBC has spent more than \$100,000 on relief efforts for those affected by the violence, the BWA reported.

Many have blamed the violence on the Boko Haram, a militant group that has vowed to eradicate Christianity from Nigeria and impose a strict version of Islamic law.

Boko Haram is also suspected in a Dec. 1 raid on the village of Chibok in northeastern Nigeria, when militants entered private homes and slit the throats of 10 Christians, including a pastor, and in separate attacks setting fire to three churches, a police station and an immigration and customs office, according to the reports.

On Nov. 25, an attack including two suicide bombs at St. Andrew's Military Protestant Church in Jaji killed 11 people and wounded 30 others, Morning Star News reported.

Ojutiku, a member of Providence Baptist Church in Raleigh, N.C., is co-founder of the nonprofit Lift Up Now Foundation, a religious, social, economic and political justice outreach to Nigeria. Lift Up Now, with a Nigerian membership that Ojutiku numbers at 2,500, is among several entities encouraging the U.S. Congress to declare Boko Haram a "designated foreign terrorist organization," aimed at weakening the group's ability to attract money and military weapons.

Already, the U.S. State Department has listed three top Boko Haram leaders as "specially designated global terrorists," which Ojutiku said has had "immediate and sweeping" effects on Nigeria's political leadership.

Lift Up Now compiled in 2001 and continues to update a catalog of Boko Haram attacks. In the past decade, Boko Haram has killed approximately 4,000 people and dismembered or and seriously injured thousands more, according to Lift Up Now's count.
