

Muslim Radicals Kill 10 Christians in Nigeria



Victims of post-election violence at a hospital in Kaduna, Nigeria, in April. Muslim rioters burned homes, churches and police stations after Nigeria's Christian president beat out his closest Muslim opponent. (AP Images/Sunday Alamba)

International

Christian Concern has learned that members of a radical Islamic group, Boko Haram, killed at least ten Christians in Maiduguri, Nigeria over the past two months in what a Christian leader is calling a “silent killing” of Christians.

In an interview with ICC, an anonymous local church leader explained: “Boko Haram is seeking to eliminate Christianity because they want Islamic (Sharia) law. They don’t want to see anything Christian in the northern states [of Nigeria]. That is why churches are being persecuted and Muslims who don’t follow the [hardline teachings of] Boko Haram are also persecuted.”

Boko

Haram is close to achieving its goal of eliminating Christianity from Maiduguri. Most of the Christians have fled the city in fear of further

attacks by the Islamists. Of the churches that remain, some have felt compelled to suspend their services to protect their congregations.

The Nigerian government, who has also been attacked by Boko Haram, deployed security forces to quell the violence, but came under sharp criticism from human rights groups for excessive use of force and the indiscriminate killing of civilians. The government of Nigeria has now established a committee to investigate the members of Boko Haram and look into the reasons for the violence.

The church leader told ICC that the few Christians who remain in the city are praying and fasting for God's intervention. When asked what Christians could do to help, the church leader said: "They can pray for their fellow Christian brothers and sisters in Maiduguri. [We also] ask for assistance in the rebuilding of churches that have been burned down since 2006. The government has not compensated for the loss of Christians, but it has compensated for losses that Muslims suffered [at the hands of radical Islamists]."

ICC's Regional Manager for Africa, Jonathan Racho, said: "We welcome the deployment of the Nigerian security forces to protect innocent civilians from the attacks by Boko Haram. We also

welcome the
establishment of the committee to investigate Boko Haram. We
call upon
the committee to look into the plight of the victims and
ensure that the
perpetrators of the violence are brought to justice.”