

20 Allegedly Dead in Car Bomb Blast Aimed at Churches

A single suicide bomber exploded a car bomb Sunday night, killing as many as 20, according to Christians reporting from the scene of the attack. The attacker, a suspected militant, is believed by many on the ground to be affiliated with Boko Haram, the radical Islamic insurgency and foreign terrorist organization (FTO).

According to *Morning Star News*, the bomber's intended targets included three closely grouped churches in the predominantly Christian Sabon Gari district, or Foreign Quarter, of Kano, a predominantly Muslim city.

The Quarter has suffered similar attacks on Christian targets previous to Sunday's attack, including bombings that killed 25 and 24, respectively, in March and July of last year. Boko Haram was also alleged to be responsible for those attacks.

The Methodist Church of Nigeria, an Assemblies of God church and a Universal Reformed Christian church located on Middle Road are suspected to have been the bomber's intended targets. According to eyewitnesses, the bomber detonated the car bomb early upon fears that a group of Christians, from whom he was asking directions to the three churches, had become suspicious of his intentions.

As result of the blast, "Windows on the two-storey [sic] buildings lining the road were smashed and the burnt-out remains of five cars, plus the attackers' vehicle, were left on the roadside," according to the *Nigerian Tribune*.

The Rev. Murtala Marti, of the Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA) in Kano, told *Morning Star News*, "Twenty Christians were killed in the bomb blast, but police authorities are saying only five died."

According to Police Superintendent Aderenle Shinaba, four civilians, including a 12-year-old girl, and the bomber were confirmed dead following the blast.

Eyewitness Abdul Dafar told Reuters he saw at least four dead bodies after the explosion. When asked about the attack, Dafar said, "I heard a loud blast and there was a lot of smoke. Soldiers came in to cordon off the place and ambulances were rushing people to hospital."

According to *The Sun*, Chigozie Nnorom, a 6-month-old baby, survived Sunday's attack relatively unscathed after being "knocked off his mother's arms by the impact of the explosion." Joy Nnorim, the baby's mother, told *The Sun*, "People were going about their businesses when suddenly, a blast occurred and my baby flew off my arms and I landed in another direction."

Both Joy and Chigozie were hospitalized in the Foreign Quarter.

Monday, Kano police reportedly discovered and successfully disarmed a second car bomb. According to the *Tribune*, a statement released locally read, "Kano police operatives, acting on intelligence, tracked and recovered a Mitsubishi station wagon car ... loaded with assorted gas cylinders, one container of fuel and other electrical components of improvised explosive devices."

"The most recent bombing in Kano's predominantly Christian district greatly concerns us," says William Stark, International Christian Concern's regional manager. "It's been 10 months since a major attack has targeted Kano's minority Christian community. Amidst all Christians must continue to face throughout northeast Nigeria, any indication that Islamist militants and extremists are becoming more and more capable of highly lethal attacks, such as this one, is alarming."

“Already, more than 1,500 innocents, including hundreds of Christians, have been murdered this year alone. Much more must be done to improve the Nigerian state’s capability to protect its citizens, including its Christian minorities, who are highly susceptible to violence and easily targeted for the expression of their faith.”

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