

Bombers Attack Center in Christian Area of Jos, Nigeria

One person was killed and nine others were injured on Tuesday night after suspected **Islamic extremists** attacked a TV viewing center in a Christian area of Jos where a crowd had gathered to watch soccer.

At about 10:15 p.m. at the viewing center, one of many such establishments popular in Nigeria for watching soccer matches, the attackers drove past the site and threw an explosive device at hundreds of Christians watching the match, eyewitnesses told Compass.

Some 10 minutes after the bombing, security agents evacuated the injured to Janvak Hospital just a few meters away. Medical personnel at the hospital were treating four of them under strict supervision of police and other security agents. Plateau state spokesman Pam Ayuba reportedly said one person died in the blast.

Soldiers and police under the Joint Military Task Force charged with keeping peace in embattled Plateau state cordoned off the area around the establishment. Authorities have not ruled out members of the Islamic sect Boko Haram as suspects.

The bombing marks the second time in two weeks that the Christian area has been attacked. Boko Haram, which seeks to impose a strict version of *sharia* (Islamic law) throughout Nigeria, was suspected of detonating a bomb a few meters from the center during Easter celebrations that injured five Christians. Various churches in Tudun Wada, Jos, commonly use the site as a base for evangelistic campaigns aimed at social venues in the area.

Christian and Muslim communities live in close but separate quarters of the Tudun Wada area of Jos, and the attacks have heightened tensions between them. The area comprises eight churches—Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA) Bishara 2, Angwan Yashi, ECWA Good News Church, Assemblies of God Church, Redeemed Peoples Mission, Solid Rock Church, Deeper Life Bible Church, and Christ Way Baptist Church.

Suspected Islamic extremists bombed three TV viewing centers in Christian areas near Jos on Dec. 10, 2011. A few minutes into soccer match televised at Yangwava Television Viewing Center at Ukadum village, a bomb went off, killing 31-year-old Joshua Dabo. During the same game, bombs exploded at two other viewing centers in predominantly Christian areas of Jos, injuring at least 10 others, including four in critical condition and two in a coma.

Plateau state, in central Nigeria, has been especially volatile recently as it lies between the country's predominantly Muslim north and Christian south. Nigeria's population of more than 158.2 million is divided between Christians, who make up 51.3 percent of the population, and Muslims, who account for 45 percent. The percentages may be less, however, as those practicing indigenous religions may be as high as 10 percent of the total population, according to *Operation World*.