

Nigeria: 11 Dead in Suicide Bombs at Army Church

At least 11 people were killed and about 30 injured when twin car bombs hit a Protestant church in a major military establishment in northcentral Nigeria, officials said Sunday, a month after a deadly church bombing in the same state.

A bus laden with explosives first rammed into St. Andrew Military Protestant Church in the military barracks in Jaji in Kaduna state at about 12 noon, said the director of army public relations Brig. Gen. Bola Koleoso. Then a Toyota Camry car parked just outside the church exploded 10 minutes later, as people fled the first blast, he said.

Jaji is a symbolic target as it is home to the Armed Forces Command and Staff College, one of the country's most important military colleges, training Nigerian and foreign navy, air force and army officers.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility for Sunday's attack, but a radical Islamist sect known as Boko Haram has previously targeted Nigerian military institutions in the past.

The attack comes two days after a special military taskforce announced that it would be giving a total of \$1.8 million in rewards for information that could lead to the arrest of top Boko Haram members.

The twin blasts also came a month after another church was attacked in the city of Kaduna, about 25 miles (40 kilometers) away from Jaji.

In that attack, a suicide bomber rammed an SUV loaded with explosives into St. Rita's Catholic church holding Mass on Oct. 28 in Kaduna, killing at least seven people and wounding

more than 100 others, authorities said.

The killings sparked instant reprisals in a city with a history of religious violence, leaving at least two more people dead.

Churches have been increasingly targeted by violence in Nigeria. In Kaduna state, there were church attacks on three weekends in a row in June. These attacks and the ensuing reprisals left at least 50 people dead.

Boko Haram claimed responsibility for the June attacks, but nobody has claimed responsibility for the latest attacks—last month and Sunday—which have again rocked the volatile state.

Kaduna state sits on Nigeria's dividing line between its largely Christian south and Muslim north.

Associated Press writer Yinka Ibukun contributed to this report from Lagos, Nigeria.

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