

Nigeria Imposes Curfew to Stem Religious Violence

Two cities in Northern Nigeria remained under curfew Wednesday after rioting and reprisal killings followed deadly church bombings on Sunday.

Kaduna and Damaturu were under lock down 24-hours-a-day, while soldiers patrolled the nearly deserted streets.

The Sunday bombings struck three churches in Kaduna State, killing at least 21, presumably all of them Christians.

Boko Haram claimed the attacks, saying they're fighting for an Islamic state under Sharia law. The extremist group does not recognize the Nigerian government or the constitution. The group is also well-funded and organized. According to Christian Aid Mission, the government is ignoring the threat.

The **church bombings** are a serious threat to the stability of Nigeria due to the current religious divisions. The danger is that this week's retaliatory attacks will continue, spiraling out of control.

Rae Burnett, Africa director for Christian Aid Mission, says the good news is that missionaries of the indigenous Nigerian ministries they help have not been directly targeted by Boko Haram. However, several supporters have been murdered, and random terrorist shootings have come close, too. Burnett goes on to note that these missionaries have not involved themselves at all in politics, only the gospel, and they have kept a low profile until now.

Burnett shares a dispatch she just received from a *ministry leader who has been her friend since 1996.

Terrorists have struck again. This time we had to evacuate our

missionaries from Kandawa fields as Muslim militants discovered the work and threatened them. Right now, we need your prayers as Chris (the overseer of all ministry work in the northern Islamic area) is still trapped in the fields with several missionaries, some with infants.

On Sunday, three churches were bombed in Kaduna and Zaria, killing several people. This led to reprisals and killings all over the place. Yet the government is doing nothing.

More than 65 people are already confirmed dead. A 24-hour curfew has been declared, and we do not know how to reach the converts in the war zone.

Before today, Boko Haram had not done so much damage to us in this part of the country. We are appealing for funds to buy mattresses, blankets, mosquito nets, and food for our converts that are about to move out.

This is urgent. We have dispatched three other staff, but there is no access to the area. Fighting and fighting. Please we need your prayers for Nigeria. I am writing this in the midnight asking for all our friends to pray and help. You can also send support to them. Our staff for the first time are affected in this kind of killing. Help and ask believers to pray and support. We need your support and we need your prayers.

The converts, too, need prayers. We do hope you will pray for Nigeria now.

We need to relocate quickly. I am currently in Abuja (the capital city) and will go to Kebbi state to rescue our staff as soon as possible, but no going in or out of the area for now. We want to be ready immediately when they can escape with their converts.

Thanks for your prayers for Nigeria and others around us.

This indigenous Nigerian ministry has experienced tremendous open doors for the Gospel in Islamic strongholds that have never before been evangelized. However, because of Boko Haram, they have to move their headquarters from an Islamic state where they have been in peace for more than 25 years, to a centralized and neutral place better suited to direct the work.

After so many years, the work is well-known and could be targeted at any time. Please pray for these heroes of the faith as they continue to press forward with the Gospel in this time of extraordinary danger.

**The ministry name is not mentioned for security.*