

Pastor, Wife Killed in Northern Nigeria

✖ Suspected Islamic extremists last week abducted and killed a Church of Christ in Nigeria pastor and his wife in Boto village, Bauchi state in northern Nigeria.

The Rev. Ishaku Kadah, 48, and his 45-year-old wife Selina were buried on April 17 after unidentified assailants reportedly whisked them from their church headquarters home on April 13 and killed them. Their burned bodies were found hours later.

Photo: The couple's murder follows attacks on Christian villages in Jos, Nigeria, in January and March.

On Jan. 22, suspected Islamic extremists had set fire to their church building days after Christians displaced by violence in Plateau state had taken refuge on the church premises.

"This is yet another case of unprovoked killing of Christians, which we condemn, and demand that the law enforcement agents must fish out the perpetrators of this act," Bishop Musa Fula, state chairman of the Christian Association of Nigeria in Bauchi state, told Compass.

Police have reportedly arrested two suspects and have launched a man-hunt for several other accomplices. Authorities are not releasing the names of the suspects.

Boto is located in the predominantly Christian Tafawa Balewa Local Government Area of Bauchi state, which has a history of Muslim attacks on Christians.

"Police claim they are working on it and we want to believe them," Fula added. "We need assurance that our people are safe. We will soon meet later on the matter to decide our next line of action on these kind of attacks."

The murdered couple's son, Simeon Kadah, said an eyewitness who had come to the church premises to collect some rented chairs saw men dragging the pastor and his wife out of their house. Kadah said the men asked the eyewitness if he was a Muslim, and when he told them that he was, they told him to leave the area and tell no one what he had seen.

The Rev. Ladi Thompson of the Macedonian Initiative, an organization fighting anti-Christian persecution, decried the killing of the pastor and his wife, saying it is an indication of the great dangers Christians are exposed to in the predominantly Muslim north.

"This kind of mindless killing follows the same pattern that we have been campaigning against, which many state governments in northern Nigeria are not paying due attention to," Thompson said. "The government cannot afford to continue to pay lip service to protecting Christians when some people in the name of religion can take the laws into their hands. Unless we get to the root of cases like this, there will be no end to it."

Following attacks on Christians near Jos in Plateau state in January and March, sporadic killings of Christians reportedly continue. Previously hundreds of Christian villagers were struck with machetes and burned to death on March 7 in Dogo Nahawa, Zot and Rastat, three villages in Jos South and Barkin Ladi Local Government Areas. Â Â

On March 17, Muslim Fulani herdsmen assaulted two Christian villages in Plateau state, killing 13 persons, including a pregnant woman and children. In attacks presumably over disputed property but with a level of violence characteristic of jihadist method and motive, men in military camouflage and others in customary clothing also burned 20 houses in Byei and Baten villages, in the Riyom Local Government Area of the state, about 45 kilometers (29 miles) from Jos.

On Jan. 17, two pastors and 46 other Christians were killed in

an outbreak of violence in Jos triggered when Muslim youths attacked a Catholic church. Police estimated over 300 lives were lost in subsequent clashes, in which 10 church buildings were burned.