

Seven Christians Killed in Bauchi State, Nigeria

Early morning attacks in Tafawa Balewa, Bauchi state on Sunday, Jan. 22, left at least seven Christians dead and a church building destroyed.

The attack on the Evangelical Church Winning All Church 2, residents of Tafawa Balewa said, was carried out by area **Islamic extremists** alongside members of the **Boko Haram** sect, with the church building and surrounding houses bombed.

Yunnana Yusufu, a pastor with the Church of Christ in Nigeria in Tafawa Balewa, told Compass that the assailants arrived in the early morning hours and began shooting at Christians in the town, about 100 kilometers (62 miles) south of Bauchi City.

"I saw seven dead bodies of some of the Christians killed," Yusufu told Compass by phone. "The situation is terrible, and I am about to go out to other parts of the town, to see the extent of the damage caused by the attackers."

Yusufu said that many other Christians were injured.

"Some of them have been taken to the General Hospital here, while others are being treated at home by medical personnel who are Christians," he said.

All churches have cancelled services.

"The situation we are in calls for attention to the injured and taking appropriate steps to calm frayed nerves over the attack," he said.

Bauchi Police Commissioner Ikechukwu Aduba reportedly confirmed the attack on Tafawa Balewa, saying two soldiers and a policeman, as well as eight civilians were later killed in a

gunfight. He added that six suspects had been arrested.

Police also reported that bombs were thrown at a Catholic church building and an evangelical church building in Bauchi City, causing little damage and no deaths or injuries.

Bukata Zhadi, secretary of the Christian Elders Council in Tafawa Balewa, said attacks on Christian communities in the area have been incessant, with Sunday's attack bringing to 10 the number of **Christians killed** in the past two weeks in Tafawa Balewa.

A fortnight ago, gunmen believed to be Muslim Fulani herdsmen attacked three Christian farmers on their farms in Pyakman village, near Tafawa Balewa, killing the three of them. Corpses recovered from the farms had bullet wounds and machete cuts, Zhadi said.

Boko Haram, the name given to the **Islamic extremist** group officially called Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati Wal-Jihad—"The People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet's Teachings and Jihad"—seeks to impose a strict version of shariah (**Islamic law**) on Nigeria. The name Boko Haram translates loosely as "Western education is forbidden."