

Suicide Bombing in Christian Neighborhood in Nigeria Kills at Least 20

At least 20 people have been killed by a series of bombings targeting buses in a predominately Christian neighborhood of Nigeria's northern city of Kano. The official death toll is expected to rise as security officials continue to examine the scene of Monday's attack.

Officials suspect the series of explosions were likely initiated by suicide bombers, but investigators are still collecting evidence to confirm that theory. Because the attacks took place in a predominately Christian area of Kano, most officials suspect Christians were the target of the attack.

According to initial reports by the African Free Press, two suicide bombers rammed a car laden with explosives into a bus parked at the New Road station in Sabon Gari, a predominately Christian neighborhood of Kano. A series of explosions followed the initial blast as bystanders fled the scene.

Speaking to the AFP on condition of anonymity, a rescue official said, "I saw three buses on fire. One of them was fully loaded with passengers waiting to leave the station at the time of the blasts."

According to the *Mali and Guardian*, senior security officials say the death toll is likely to rise in the wake of the attack, estimating the death toll to be "massive" and describing 20 as an "understatement." Officials still haven't given a precise death toll.

Boko Haram, an Islamic extremist group, is suspected to be behind the bombings, but the group has yet to take

responsibility. Since 2009, Boko Haram has been engaged in an armed insurgency in Nigeria's northern states, attempting to carve out a separate Islamic state where it can institute its radical brand of Sharia law.

As part of Boko Haram's bloody campaign, the group has targeted the Christian minority living in Nigeria's northern states by perpetrating suicide bombings at churches and killing Christians in their homes. These acts of terror are meant to drive all Christians out of northern Nigeria so Boko Haram may create a purely Islamic society.

"Innocent Christians in northern Nigeria continue to be targeted for some of Boko Haram's most heinous acts of violence," International Christian Concern's Regional Manager for Africa William Stark said. "Whether targeted by suicide bombings at churches, drive-by shootings or attacks on Christian homes, these attacks are meant to terrorize the Christian minority.

"Since 2009, human rights groups following Boko Haram's campaign of terror, including ICC, estimate over 3,000 people have been murdered at the hands of the radical group," he continued. "The world cannot continue to wash its hands of this issue. **Islamic extremist** groups continue to trickle out of North Africa leaving nothing but death, destruction and terror in their wake.

"If left unchecked, West Africa will likely see a proliferation of radical Islamic groups resulting in levels of Christian persecution only seen in places like Mali and Somalia. Without international intervention, Christians in northern Nigeria will continue to go unprotected and have these deadly attacks devastate their communities," he concluded.

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