

Suspected Islamic Extremists Kill 29 Students in Nigeria

Suspected Boko Haram members on Saturday attacked a school in Mamudo, Yobe, one of the three states where the Nigerian government imposed a state of emergency in May.

Survivors told media that the attackers arrived with containers full of fuel and set fire to the school. It is believed some of the victims were burned alive, while others were shot as they tried to flee. According to the Associated Press, 29 students and one teacher were killed.

Samaila, a teacher at the school, told Open Doors that he could see scores of parents in shock trying to identify children. An Associated Press journalist also described chaotic scenes at a nearby Potiskum hospital as parents tried to identify their children from among the deceased.

About 30 Christians along with others attend the school. However, Open Doors could not confirm immediately how many Christians have been affected by the attack. Schools across Yobe have been closed.

There were two similar attacks on schools in June. On June 16, at a school in Damaturu, Yobe, suspected Boko Haram attackers opened fire on students. A pastor told Open Doors that the attackers arrived at the school asking for the Christian students by name. However, security agents interfered in the attack, and the insurgents ended up firing random shots, killing 13 students and teachers. Open Doors has not been able to confirm how many Christians were among the victims.

On June 18, suspected Boko Haram members also opened fire on students at a Muslim school in Maiduguri. Nine students and one medical worker were killed.

“The carnage in Nigeria continues,” says Open Doors USA spokesman Jerry Dykstra. “The senseless slaughter of helpless school students is hard to fathom. Pray for the Lord’s comfort and grace to all families affected by the latest attack. Pray that the Lord will enable the church to respond in love in the midst of these circumstances and reach out to all affected.”

Nigeria is ranked No. 13 on the Open Doors 2013 World Watch List of the worst persecutors of Christians.