

**25 dead in Nigeria after multiple attacks by sect**  
**By: Haruna Umar & Yinka Ibukun, AP**  
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MAIDUGURI, Nigeria (AP) - A radical Islamist sect unleashed multiple attacks in northeastern Nigeria, killing at least 25 people, authorities said Tuesday as fears swelled about the government's inability to corral rising sectarian violence.

The attacks worsened an already tense security situation in Nigeria, a West African nation of more than 160 million people almost evenly divided between Muslims and Christians.

The Boko Haram sect began its attacks Monday evening with blasts targeting police and military targets in the city of Damaturu, authorities said. Gunfire echoed across the city for hours, spilling into Tuesday afternoon. One resident said at least two schools were torched.

The attacks killed at least twenty civilians and five security officers and left nine other people hospitalized, according to Nigerian Red Cross official Andronicus Adeyemo.

"The terrorists are trying to show that they can't be stopped," said Yobe State police chief Patrick Egbuniwe, who said the dead included three policemen and two soldiers.

The Islamist Boko Haram sect, whose name means "Western education is sacrilege" in the Hausa language, is waging an increasingly bloody fight with Nigeria's security agencies and public. More than 580 people have been killed in violence blamed on the sect this year alone, according to an Associated Press count.

The Yobe state government imposed a 24-hour curfew in Damaturu on Tuesday in an effort to limit casualties. Damaturu had already been under a dusk-to-dawn curfew since a state of emergency was declared in December.

The sect, which speaks to journalists by telephone when it chooses, could not be reached for comment Tuesday.

The violence came a day after Boko Haram claimed responsibility for a trio of deadly church bombings Sunday in the northern state of Kaduna, which, along with ensuing reprisal killings, left at least 70 people dead and over 100 wounded, a rescue official Tuesday. He spoke on condition of anonymity as he was not authorized to speak to journalists.

Boko Haram's spiritual home of Maiduguri is about 80 miles (130 kilometers) east of Damaturu, the capital of rural Yobe state.

Nigeria's national security adviser Andrew Azazi told journalists Tuesday that the government is working to create dialogue.

"Things happen but as a nation, as a people, we must address situation not necessarily by killing each other," Azazi said.

But the government's handling of the crisis has drawn much criticism. The Christian Association of Nigeria described its approach as "cavalier" in a statement Tuesday.

"Since these terrorist acts began, nothing the (president) has done has been re-assuring that the end to this spate of bombings and gun attacks is in sight," the group said.

Authorities have blamed Boko Haram for a string of attacks in Nigeria's northeast that persist despite a heightened security presence, including bombings and shootings last November that left more than 100 dead around Damaturu.

The northeastern states of Borno and Yobe and the central states of Niger and Plateau have been under a state of emergency since Dec. 31.

A series of curfews in recent months have highlighted Nigeria's volatile security situation.

A curfew was imposed Sunday in Kaduna state to curtail the reprisals triggered by the church attacks. On Tuesday, however, after the 24-hour curfew was relaxed to just a dusk-to-dawn curfew, angry mobs took the streets once again, burning tires along the way, the Nigerian Red Cross reported. Soldiers responded with gunfire to disperse the mobs. The Kaduna government re-imposed the 24-hour curfew Tuesday.

Meanwhile, in the northeastern city of Bauchi, a man lost his arms and legs after explosives he was carrying went off, Bauchi state police commissioner Mohammed Ladan said. The suspected bomber was hospitalized, and it was not immediately clear what he was targeting, Ladan said.

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