

Nigerian Christian Group Concerned About Lack of Security
by Peter Clotey
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The president of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) says his group is not satisfied with the level of security in some parts of the country, where Christian churches have been attacked by armed groups.

"We are not satisfied. It could be better; it should be better," said Pastor Ayo Oritsejafor, who adds that improvements have been made, but more needs to be done.

He says those improvements have come despite growing threats from militant groups such as Boko Haram.

"I must commend the security agencies, because in the real sense they have improved, and they have done more than they used to do," Oritsejafor said.

"Their equipment must be upgraded [because] we are now dealing with people who are using very sophisticated equipment, and they must have better things to detect bombs and the rest of them," said Oritsejafor.

His comments followed an explosion that recently damaged the building of the Church of Christ located in Zango area of northern Bauchi State.

"Our religious leaders and clerics, especially in the north, must help us because [the violence] is an ideological problem," said Oritsejafor.

"They must help us by locating the clerics and imams that these people believe in to begin to talk to them so that those ones will help us convey the message to them that Nigeria cannot be Islamized or Nigeria cannot be Christianized. You can't make Nigeria a nation of one religion."

Boko Haram has claimed responsibility for numerous attacks in Nigeria, including church bombings and the bombing of a United Nations building. The militants also have threatened international media organizations, including VOA's Hausa service.

Boko Haram says its goal is to create an Islamic state in northern Nigeria and does not recognize the Nigerian government or the constitution.

Some Nigerians say religious groups are to blame by failing to unite to confront the belief of members of the Boko Haram sect. Oritsejafor agrees.

"Once in a while we have seen some religious leaders that have come out ... against the [violence] but what they've said is not strong enough and what they have said does not actually go to the root core of what is happening," said Oritsejafor.

"I believe they can say a lot publicly, but they can even do much more privately, because every ideology comes from somebody's teaching."

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