



Written by [James Heiser](#) on April 10, 2012

Nigerian Terrorists Kill 41 in Easter Attack

With the death toll of the latest jihadist attack in Nigeria now at 41, Christians in that country can draw little consolation from the government's assurances that the attack could have been far worse. Boko Haram — Nigeria's most violent jihadist organization — has already murdered over 1,000 people since the beginning of 2011, and there is little evidence that its terror campaign will end any time soon.

Bombing churches on the holiest days of the Christian calendar has become almost a tradition for Muslim terrorists in Africa's most populous nation. In 2010 and 2011, dozens were killed each Christmas as churches were bombed in the city of Jos and elsewhere by members of Boko Haram — which has ties to al-Qaeda.



The most recent bombing took place in the city of Kaduna. The car bomb detonated a short distance from All Nations Christian Assembly Church and the ECWA Good News Church. The government's security forces are taking credit for stopping the terrorist from actually reaching the churches; it is believed that the bomb went off prematurely because its timer ran down before the terrorist could reach his target. Nevertheless, the damage was horrific. According to [a story from the *Christian Science Monitor*](#):

Nearby hotels and homes had their windows blown out and roofs torn away by the force of the powerful explosion, which engulfed a group of motorcycle taximen.

The explosion damaged the nearby All Nations Christian Assembly Church and the ECWA Good News Church as churchgoers worshipped at an Easter service, the possible target of the bomber. Witnesses said it appeared the explosive-laden car attempted to go into the compound of the churches before it detonated, but was blocked by barriers in the street and was turned away by a security guard as police approached.

"We were in the holy communion service and I was exhorting my people and all of a sudden, we heard a loud noise that shattered all our windows and doors, destroyed our fans and some of our equipment in the church," Pastor Joshua Raji said.

As of this writing, Boko Haram has not yet taken credit for the attack. Still, experts have noted that the bombing was typical of their style of attack; the Christmas bombings of the past two years testify to that fact. The jihadists' attacks on their fellow Nigerians have only grown worse in the past few months following Boko Haram's call after this past Christmas that all Christians immediately vacate northern Nigeria — where the majority of the population is Muslim — so that a strict sharia state can be imposed throughout that region. In fact, it seems increasingly clear that Boko Haram hopes to realize its goals by encouraging a general civil war, while the government is striving to minimize the political effects of



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jihadist attacks. As noted for *The New American* this past January:

Islamic terrorists are seeking to use their call for a massive migration of the Christian and Muslim populations of Nigeria as a cover for religious violence which they have perpetrated. In fact, it is plausible that at least some within the organization may be hoping for Christians to retaliate as a means of radicalizing more Muslims to recruit them into the ranks of Boko Haram. And a widespread religious migration within Nigeria would offer an opportunity for militant Muslims to seek to cut the country in two, and fulfill the terrorists' goal of establishing a *sharia* state. According to *Spiegel*, the goal of one of Boko Haram's founders, Mohammed Yusuf, was the imposition of *sharia* law, and *sharia* has already been imposed in 12 Nigerian states since 1999.

However, while the government attempts to downplay the significance of Boko Haram's attacks, a portion of northern Nigeria's population that is not sympathetic with the jihadists goals still remains silent when it comes to informing on activities of the terrorists because of a fear of ending up on the growing list of victims. As Robyn Dixon wrote in [an April 6 article for the Los Angeles Times](#):

Northern Nigeria is a region under siege. Boko Haram militants mount attacks almost daily and security forces retaliate in a scattershot way, often mowing down civilians. Authorities trumpet their success in killing militants, but often, such as in the recent ambush, neglect to mention their own losses, or those of civilians.

In its bid to topple the Nigerian government and impose sharia law across Africa's most populous country, Boko Haram has killed a shocking 1,000 people since the beginning of 2011. The group, which modeled itself on the Taliban, has been implicated in kidnappings of foreigners, bombings of churches and markets, and burning of schools because of its hard-line opposition to secular education....

The low-level war has unnerved the region and devastated its economy. Northern cities are gripped with fear of faceless Boko Haram informants; most dare not speak the group's name, instead referring obliquely to "the security situation."

For now, the Nigerian government is touting the effectiveness of positioning security forces around churches on various holy days; thus [Voice of America](#) cites Saidu Adamu, Kaduna's information commissioner:

Adamu said authorities stationed 30 to 50 security personnel at Kaduna churches Sunday, and that the measures were "highly effective." He also said citizens play an important role in maintaining security.

"Without peace we can never have any municipal government, so I want to assure that Kaduna state government will continue to do its best, but I also want to call on people to understand that security is a business of all," he said.

Meanwhile, the Obama administration is attempting to downplay the religious dimension of Boko Haram's campaign of terror, and blames the Nigerian government for failing to meet the economic needs of Nigerians. Thus Scott Sterns wrote in [a separate article for Voice of America](#):

The Obama administration says Islamic militants in northern Nigeria are capitalizing on popular discontent with the government, and officials need to tackle economic problems if they are to stop the violence. An Easter Sunday bombing thought to have been carried out by Boko Haram killed at least 36 people.



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U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Johnnie Carson says the threat from Boko Haram grows as Nigeria's standard of living declines....

"Nigerians are hungry for progress and improvement in their lives, but northern Nigerians feel this need most acutely," he said. "Life in Nigeria may be tough for many, but life in the north is grim for almost all." ...

"Public opinion polls and news reports suggest there is a strong sentiment throughout the country — but especially in the north — that government is not on the side of the people and their poverty is a result of government neglect, corruption, and abuse," he said....

Carson says President Jonathan's government needs a new social compact with northern citizens, local non-governmental organizations, civil society, and religious leaders. He says Abuja needs an economic recovery strategy that compl[e]ments its security strategy.

Apparently Carson believes that Nigeria needs community organizers. Meanwhile, Boko Haram will continue to bomb churches and plot the imposition of sharia law, increasing the likelihood of a civil war that will further devastate Nigeria's economy.[]



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