



THE NEWS

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Gunmen kill three policemen, steal weapons in northeast



Suspected Islamist gunmen attacked a police station in Nigeria's northeastern Yobe state on Friday, killing three officers and stealing guns and ammunition, the police said.

Radical Islamist sect Boko Haram has killed hundreds in bomb and gun attacks in the northeast since it launched an uprising there in 2009, mostly targeting people who work for the government.

"In the early hours of today, gunmen attacked the police station at Bonny Yadi in Gujba local government area. Three policemen were killed and some arms carted away," said Lazarus Eli, a spokesman for Yobe police.

The gunmen stole 25 AK-47 assault rifles, eight handguns and large quantities of ammunition, a police source told Reuters, asking not to be named.

Gujba is close to Damaturu, a town that Boko Haram has attacked several times this year, while Yobe is next to Borno state, a remote region bordering Niger and Cameroon regarded as the cradle of the Boko Haram insurgency.

Styled on the Afghan Taliban, the sect's purported leader Abubakar Shekau has said he wants to impose sharia, Islamic law, on the country of 160 million people, around half of whom are Christians and the other half Muslim. His movement has become the number one security threat to Africa's top energy producer.

A recent military crackdown appears to have reduced Boko Haram's ability to launch deadly attacks of the kind seen earlier this year, but violence in the northeast is still an almost daily occurrence.

Western governments are concerned about Boko Haram linking up with other militant groups in the region, including al Qaeda's north African wing.

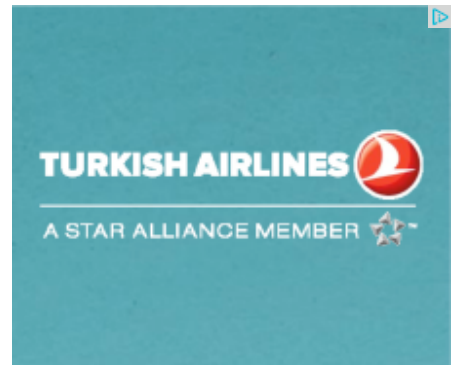
Two Chinese construction workers were shot dead by unknown gunmen in Borno on Wednesday.

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