



Boko Haram kills 6 policemen in Kano attacks

Gunmen shot dead six policemen in two attacks suspected to have been the work of Islamist sect Boko Haram, including one incident near the home of Nigeria's top police chief, police said yesterday.

In the deadliest assault, four policemen were gunned down yesterday by men on motorcycles at a checkpoint a few hundred metres from the home of Muhammad Abubakar, who was appointed Nigeria's police chief only last month.

The attack occurred in the northern city of Kano, the scene of Boko Haram's deadliest ever assault that left 185 people dead last month after a wave of coordinated bomb and gun attacks mainly targeting police buildings.

There have since been several smaller attacks in the city, the second largest in Nigeria.

"Unknown gunmen on four motorcycles

attacked our policemen on foot patrol," Kano State police spokesman Magaji Majia said of yesterday's assault. A morgue official said it had received the bodies of four policemen.

Police said 15 suspects were arrested but did not speculate on the identity of the gunmen.

Witness Mudassir Zayyanu said men on motorcycles had approached the police checkpoint and pulled out AK-47 rifles before opening fire on security men manning the checkpoint.

Abubakar took over as the top police commander in Africa's most populous state after his predecessor was sacked following the escape from police custody of a key Boko Haram suspect.

Two other policemen were killed in a similar assault Wednesday in Lapai in the central state of Niger, which the state police spokesman said was believed to be the work of a gang behind a massive prison break last week.

"The gunmen who rode on a motorcycle shot and killed two policemen watching over a highway and sped away," spokesman Richard Oguiche told *AFP*.

He said the gunmen were believed to be members of a gang that raided a prison and

freed 119 inmates in neighbouring Kogi State last week.

Boko Haram claimed it staged the jail break to free seven of its detained members.

Boko Haram launched an uprising in 2009 put down by a brutal military assault that left some 800 people dead.

After lying dormant for about a year, it has re-emerged with a series of shootings and bomb attacks that rights groups say have killed more than 935 people since mid-2009.