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1 - NIGERIA: Timeline of Boko Haram attacks and related violence

DAKAR, 20 January (IRIN) - Bombings and shootings by the militant Islamic group Boko Haram - also known as Jama'atu Ahlus Sunnah Lid Da'awati Wal Jihad - have increased sharply in recent months, leaving many worried that wide-scale sectarian violence could break out. Some 80 people have been killed in Boko Haram (BH) attacks in recent weeks, while 500 are reported to have been killed over the past year. Tens of thousands of Nigerians have been forced to flee their homes.

As the government struggles to cope, experts are urging leaders to seek a political solution to try to quell BH violence, backed up by sharper intelligence-gathering and professional military support. [<http://www.irinnews.org/report.aspx?reportid=94642>] Below is a chronology of proven or suspected BH attacks - both recent and over the past few years.

18 Jan 2012: A key suspect in the 2011 Christmas Day bombing in Abuja, which killed more than 40 people, escapes police custody.

17 Jan 2012: Two soldiers and four BH gunmen are killed in an attack on a military checkpoint in Maiduguri, Borno State. Soldiers arrest six high-profile BH members in a raid on a sect hideout in the city.

13 Jan 2012: BH kills four and injures two others, including a policeman, in two separate attacks on pubs in Yola (Adawama State) and Gombe city in neighbouring Gombe State.

11 Jan 2012: Four Christians killed by BH gunmen in Potiskum, Yobe State, when gunmen open fire on their car as they stop for fuel. The victims had been fleeing Maiduguri to their home town in eastern Nigeria.

10 Jan 2012: A BH attack on a beer garden kills eight, including five policemen and a teenage girl, in Damaturu, capital of Yobe State.

9 Jan 2012: BH gunmen shoot dead a secret police operative along with his civilian friend as they leave a mosque in Biu, Borno State, 200km south of the state capital, Maiduguri. The president says BH has infiltrated the executive, parliamentary and judicial wings of government.

7 Jan 2012: Three Christian poker players are killed and seven others wounded by BH gunmen in the town of Biu.

6 Jan 2012: Eight worshippers are killed in a shooting attack on a church in Yola. BH gunmen shoot dead 17 Christian mourners in the town of Mubi in the northeastern state of Adamawa. The victims are friends and

relations of one of five people killed in a BH attack on a hotel the previous day.

5 Jan 2012: Six worshippers are killed and 10 others wounded when BH gunmen attack a church in Gombe city.

3 Jan 2012: BH gunmen attack a police station in the town of Birniwa in Jigawa State killing a teenage girl and wounding a police officer.

1 Jan 2012: President Goodluck Jonathan imposes a state of emergency on 15 local government areas hardest-hit by BH attacks, in Borno, Yobe and Plateau states. He orders the closure of Nigerian borders in the north.

30 Dec 2011: Four Muslim worshippers are killed in a BH bomb and shooting attack targeting a military checkpoint in Maiduguri as worshippers leave a mosque after attending Friday prayers.

28 Dec 2011: A bombing and shooting attack by BH on a beer parlour in the town of Mubi, Adamawa State, wounds 15.

25 Dec 2011: A Christmas Day BH bomb attack on Saint Theresa Catholic Church in Madalla town near Abuja kills 42 worshippers. Three secret police (SSS) operatives and a BH bomber are killed in a suicide attack when the bomber rams his bomb-laden car into a military convoy at the gates of SSS headquarters in Damaturu. A policeman is killed in a botched BH bomb attack on a church in the Ray Field area of Jos, capital of Plateau State.

22 Dec 2011: BH bombs in parts of Maiduguri kill 20. Four policemen and a civilian are killed in gun and bomb attacks on a police building in Potiskum, Yobe State. Around 100 are killed following multiple bomb and shooting attacks by BH gunmen and ensuing gun battles with troops in the Pompomari outskirts of Damaturu.

19 Dec 2011: One suspected BH member dies and two others wounded in an accidental explosion while assembling a home-made bomb in a hideout in Damaturu.

17 Dec 2011: A shootout between sect members and policemen following a raid on the hideout of a BH sect leader in the Darmanawa area of Kano State kills seven, including three police officers. Police arrest 14 BH suspects and seize large amount of arms and bombs. Three BH members die in an accidental explosion while assembling home-made bombs in a hideout on the outskirts of Maiduguri.

13 Dec 2011: A bomb attack on a military checkpoint by BH and resulting shooting by soldiers in Maiduguri leaves 10 dead and 30 injured.

7 Dec 2011: An explosion linked to BH kills eight in the Oriyapata district of Kaduna city.

4 Dec 2011: A soldier, a policeman and a civilian are killed in bomb and gun attacks on police buildings and two banks in Azare, Bauchi State. BH open fire at a wedding in Maiduguri, killing the groom and a guest.

27 Nov 2011: A Borno State protocol officer in the office of the governor is shot dead by motorcycle-riding sect members while driving home.

26 Nov 2011: Three policemen and a civilian are wounded in BH bomb and shooting attacks in Geidam, Yobe State. Six churches, a police station, a beer parlour, a shopping complex, a high court, a local council building and 11 cars are burnt in the attacks.

9 Nov 2011: BH members bomb a police station and the office of Nigeria's road safety agency in Maina village, Borno State. No one is hurt.

4 Nov 2011: The motorcade of Borno State governor Kashim Shettima comes under BH bomb attack in Maiduguri on its way from the airport to the governor's residence as he returns from a trip to Abuja. Around 150 are killed in coordinated BH bombing and shooting attacks on police facilities in Damaturu and Potiskum in Yobe State. Two BH suicide-bombers blow themselves up outside the military Joint Task Force headquarters in Maiduguri in a botched suicide attack.

2 Nov 2011: A soldier on duty is shot dead by sect members outside Maiduguri's main market.

November 2011: BH says it will not dialogue with the government until all of its members who have been arrested

are released.

29 Oct 2011: BH gunmen shoot dead Muslim cleric Sheikh Ali Jana'a outside his home in the Bulabulin Ngarnam neighbourhood of Maiduguri. Jana'a is known to have provided information to security forces regarding the sect.

25 Oct 2011: A policeman is shot dead in his house in a targeted attack by BH gunmen in Damaturu.

23 Oct 2011: Sect members open fire on a market in the town of Katari in Kaduna State, killing two.

23 Oct 2011: BH members kill a policeman and a bank security guard in bombing and shooting attacks on a police station and two banks in Saminaka, Kaduna State.

3 October 2011: Three killed in BH attacks on Baga market in Maiduguri, Borno State. The victims included a tea-seller, a drug store owner and a passer-by.

1 October 2011: A butcher and his assistant are killed by BH gunmen at Baga market in Maiduguri in a targeted killing. In a separate incident, three people are killed in a shoot-out following BH bomb and shooting attacks on a military patrol vehicle delivering food to soldiers at a checkpoint in Maiduguri. All three victims are civilians.

17 September 2011: Babakura Fugu, brother-in-law to slain BH leader Mohammed Yusuf, is shot dead outside his house in Maiduguri two days after attending a peace meeting with Nigeria's ex-President Olusegun Obasanjo in the city. BH denies any involvement in the incident.

13 September 2011: Four soldiers shot and wounded in an ambush by BH members in Maiduguri shortly after the arrest of 15 sect members in military raids on BH hideouts in the city.

12 September 2011: Seven men, including four policemen, are killed by BH gunmen in bomb and shooting attacks on a police station and a bank in Misau, Bauchi State. The attackers rob the bank.

4 September 2011: Muslim cleric Malam Dala shot dead by two BH members outside his home in the Zinnari area of Maiduguri.

1 September 2011: A shootout between BH gunmen and soldiers in Song, Adamawa State, kills one sect members while another is injured and captured.

26 August 2011: BH claims responsibility for a suicide bomb blast on the UN compound in Abuja, killing 23 people.

25 August 2011: Gun and bomb attacks by BH on two police stations and two banks in Gombi, Adamawa State, kill at least 16 people, including seven policemen.

3 August 2011: The government rejects negotiations with BH.

July 2011: Government says it will open a negotiation panel to initiate negotiations with BH.

27 June 2011: BH's gun and bomb attack on a beer garden in Maiduguri leaves at least 25 dead and dozens injured.

20 June 2011: Seven people including five policemen killed in gun and bomb attacks on a police station and a bank in Kankara, Katsina State.

16 June 2011: BH targets national police headquarters in Abuja, killing two.

7 June 2011: Attacks on a church and two police posts in Maiduguri, blamed on the sect, leave at least 14 dead.

6 June 2011: Muslim cleric Ibrahim Birkuti, critical of BH, shot dead by two motorcycle-riding BH gunmen outside his house in Biu, 200km from Maiduguri.

29 May 2011: Three bombs rip through a beer garden in a military barracks in the northern city of Bauchi, killing 13 and wounding 33. BH claims responsibility.

27 May 2011: A group of around 70 suspected BH gunmen kill eight people including four policemen in simultaneous gun and bomb attacks on a police station, a police barracks and a bank in Damboa, Borno State, near the border with Chad.

29 December 2010: Suspected BH gunmen shoot dead eight people in Maiduguri, including the governorship candidate of the ruling All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP) in Borno State.

24 and 27 December 2010: A series of attacks claimed by BH in the central city of Jos and Maiduguri kill at least 86.

7 September 2010: A group of BH gunmen free over 700 inmates including around 100 sect members from a prison in Bauchi. Four people including a soldier, one policeman and two residents were killed in the raid.

26 July 2009: BH launches a short-lived uprising in parts of the north, which is quelled by a military crackdown that leaves more than 800 dead - mostly sect members, including BH leader Mohammed Yusuf. A mosque in the capital of Borno State (Maiduguri) that served as a sect headquarters is burnt down.

11-12 June 2009: BH leader Mohammed Yusuf threatens reprisals in a video recording to the president following the killing of 17 BH members in a joint military and police operation in Borno State. This was after a disagreement over BH members' alleged refusal to use crash helmets while in a funeral procession to bury members who had died in a car accident.

2005-2008: BH concentrated on recruiting new members and shoring up its resources. As evidence of their growing popularity, Borno State governor Ali Modu Sheriff appoints an influential BH member, Buju Foi, as his commissioner of religious affairs in 2007.

10 October 2004: Gunmen from a BH splinter group attack a convoy of 60 policemen in an ambush near the town of Kala-Balge on the border with Chad. The militants took 12 policemen hostage and police authorities presumed they were killed by the gunmen because all attempts to trace them failed.

23 September 2004: A BH splinter group launches a militia attack on police stations in the towns of Gwoza and Bama in Borno State, killing four policemen and two civilians. They took to the Mandara mountains along the Nigeria-Cameroon border. Soldiers and two gunships were deployed in the mountains and after two days of battle 27 sect members were killed while the rest slipped away. Five BH members who crossed into Cameroon were arrested by Cameroonian gendarmes who had been alerted by Nigerian authorities. The five were deported and handed over to Nigerian authorities.

7 January 2004: Seven members of BH killed and three others arrested by a team of local vigilantes outside the town of Damboa, Borno State, near border with Chad. Bags containing AK-47 rifles were recovered from sect members.

June 2004: Four members of BH were killed by prison guards in a foiled jail break in Yobe State capital Damaturu.

23-31 December 2003: A group of about 200 members of a BH splinter group launched attacks on police stations in the towns of Kanamma and Geidam in Yobe State from their enclave outside Kanamma on the Nigerian border with Niger. The militants killed several policemen and requisitioned police weapons and vehicles. Following the deployment of military troops to contain the insurrection, 18 militants were killed, and a number arrested.

2002: Mohammed Yusuf founded Boko Haram in 2002, establishing a mosque called Markaz as the headquarters of his movement, following his expulsion from two mosques in Maiduguri by Muslim clerics for propagating his radical views.

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