

Gunmen kill six in Gombe church attack

By [Agency Reporter](#) 06/01/2012 11:17:00

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A security barrier marks the scene of a Christmas Day car bomb explosion at St. Theresa Catholic Church (background) at Madalla, Suleja, just outside Nigeria's capital Abuja. Photo: Reuters

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Gunmen opened fire on a **church** service in Nigeria on Thursday, killing six people and wounding 10, the church's pastor said, the latest in a string of attacks that has raised fears of sectarian conflict in the country.

"The attackers started shooting sporadically. They shot through the window of the **church**, and many people were killed including my wife," Pastor Johnson Jauro told Reuters by telephone from his Deeper Life **church** in **Gombe** State in northern Nigeria.

"Many of my members who attended the **church** service were also injured," he said. The gun attack followed a warning from violent Islamist sect Boko Haram published in local newspapers on Tuesday that Christians had three days to leave majority Muslim northern Nigeria or they would be killed.

Analysts say it looks increasingly likely the group - or factions within it - wants to trigger reprisals from Christians against Muslims to bring on a full religious conflict. Nigeria is evenly split between the two faiths.

The militant group also claimed responsibility for a series of bomb attacks across Nigeria on Christmas Day, including one at a **church** near the capital Abuja that killed at least 37 people and wounded 57.

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