

# Gunmen kill 16 at Deeper Life Church during service

By [Mohammed Bashir, Lokoja and Joseph Abiodun, Maiduguri](#) 07/08/2012 02:01:00



General Overseer of Deeper life Church Pastor Kumuyi

-Pastor among the dead in Kogi night attack -Four killed in Borno -Explosives fired at Sokoto police station

IT was like a scene from a war film. A crowd of worshippers in a church — perhaps praying, their eyes shut — and suddenly the

eerie sounds of guns. Pandemonium. Blood, tears and anguish.

But it was no movie. All was real last night in Okene, Kogi State where unknown gunmen stormed a church and opened fire on worshippers, killing no fewer than 16.

Killed were worshippers of Deeper Life Bible Church opposite the Federal College of Education (FCE). Many were injured.

“We are shocked. It is serious,” a Pastor told The Nation last night.

The gunmen, who were said to be bearing sophisticated weapons, stormed the church during the Bible Study, a Monday programme, at about 7p.m., shooting indiscriminately.

The gunmen reportedly took the worshippers by surprise. They blocked all entrances into the church, preventing people from escaping as they fired indiscriminately at the worshippers.

A source said 15 worshippers died on the spot; one died in the hospital.

“As I am talking to you now, we have just counted 16 bodies. No fewer than nine others have been rushed to the Okene General Hospital Okene,” the source said.

Among the dead was the local government area Pastor, according to a source who spoke in Lagos where news of the incident sent members into a shock.

One of the injured is the Dean of Student Affairs of the FCE.

The attack came two weeks after an account officer with FCE, Okene was abducted from his home and murdered. An attack on the Living Faith Church on Lagos Road in Okene was last month repelled by security operatives who stopped an explosive-laden vehicle parked by road side.

Kogi Police spokesman Simon Ile, who confirmed the incident, said he was yet to get details of the incident.

He declined to speak on the number of casualties. He said the

command was awaiting reports from the divisional police officer in charge of the area.

He said the police would go after the perpetrators of the dastardly act and bring them to justice.

The Commander of Army Headquarters Task Force, Lt Colonel Gabriel Olorunyomi, also confirmed the incident. He said: "Unknown gunmen invaded the Deeper Life Church this night (Monday) during a worship service and opened fire at the worshippers."

He said 15 people died instantly while the 16th person died in the hospital.

The Military Joint Task Force cordoned off the area.

It could not be immediately ascertained how many worshipers were in the church at the time of the attack.

Gunmen believed to be members of Boko Haram struck again in Sokoto State yesterday.

They bombed a police station in Shagari Village about 70 kilometres to Sokoto, the state capital.

Shagari is the home town of Second Republic President Shehu Shagari. The police station that was attacked is a few metres away from his home.

A police source said the attackers came on a motorbike and tossed dynamites at the police outpost while firing at the policemen on duty.

Sokoto, the seat of the Caliphate, was attacked last week.

Boko Haram, the violent Islamist sect, yesterday claimed responsibility for Sunday's killing of six soldiers and two civilians in Damaturu, the Yobe State capital.

The group said it was responsible for other weekend attacks in the Northeast.

Also on Sunday night, four people were killed in their homes by suspected Boko Haram members in Maiduguri, the Borno State capital, as the Joint Task Force (JTF) alerted the public to an impending series of suicide bombings in the city.

In an email statement attributed to a Boko Haram (Wester Education is a sin) spokesman and obtained by The Associated Press yesterday, the group said "One of (their) fighters" caused an explosion Sunday in Damaturu.

Police say six soldiers and two civilians were killed in the blast.

The statement also claimed responsibility for two other attacks in two other northeast cities. It was not immediately clear which attacks it was referring to.

The statement comes after an Internet video featuring the sect's leader was posted on YouTube on Saturday.

Boko Haram is held responsible for more than 660 deaths this year alone according to an AP count.

Apart from Sunday's attack in Damaturu, the Emir of Fika was attacked on Friday in a suicide bid but he escaped. His orderly died

A former Commissioner for the Environment in Borno State Alhaji

Abdulkadir Kaasa, was shot dead in his home in Maiduguri on Sunday.

Two of the victims of Sunday night killings in Maiduguri were residents of Lawan Bukar, where Alhaji Fannami Gubio, the original candidate of the All Nigeria People's Party (ANPP) in the governorship election in 2011 was killed.

Another victim was killed in the Railway Quarters, where the headquarters of the sect was located before the 2009 clampdown. It was there that its leader Mohammed Yusuf was killed by security operatives alongside dozens of his followers.

One other person was killed at Gamboru Ward. The killing caused apprehension among residents of the town.

Though there was no official confirmation at press time, a military source who spoke anonymously told reporters that the military had intensified efforts at getting the culprits.

The JTF yesterday alerted the public to the plan of the sect to undertake massive snatching of vehicles in Maiduguri and environs which they will later use for suicide missions.

The vehicles, according to the task force, would be laden with explosives and used to bomb strategic locations and cause breach of the peace in the town. The statement signed by the task force field operations officer, Col. Victor Ebhaleme reads: "The JTF wishes to alert members of the public of the desperate moves by Boko Haram terrorists to steal/ snatch vehicles for suicide bombings."

He urged those whose vehicles have been stolen to immediately report the theft to the nearest police station or to the JTF. He warned

that anyone who failed to report and his vehicle is used as a courier of bombs would be treated as an accomplice of the sect.

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