

Gunmen kill Muslim cleric and his student in Maiduguri

From ABUBAKAR A. BABA,
Maiduguri

TWO unknown gunmen yesterday shot dead a Muslim cleric and one of his students in Maiduguri, the Borno State capital.

Eyewitnesses told our correspondent that the cleric, Shaikh Bashir Mustafa, and the student, Alhaji Dunoma, were in the cleric's house when the two men entered and opened fire on them.

The incident, according to the eyewitnesses, occurred at eleven o'clock in the morning during a ceremony to consummate a marriage within the vicinity.

Our correspondent, who got into the house shortly after the

incident, reports that the wall, against which the cleric and his student leant, had been riddled with bullet holes.

No one has yet claimed responsibility for the murder, but the majority of the people around the area suggested that the assailants belong to the Yusufiyya sect, otherwise known as 'Boko Haram'.

Some reports allege that Shaikh Bashir Mustafa was one of the initial personalities marked by the sect for assassination, while another

report suggests that the cleric was killed due to his open criticism of the preaching tone of the sect.

The state Police Command has refused to comment on the incident, saying that they were still gathering information to establish the truth surrounding the killings.

Governor Ali Modu Sheriff, who was seen in tears, and heads of security agencies in the state have visited the area to apparently obtain firsthand information about the incident.

Our correspondent reports that the latest killings are the second in four days, and about twenty in the series of such killings since July, this year.

Soldiers, mobile policemen, conventional policemen and other security agents have been stationed at strategic locations to stop and search vehicles, including motorcycles within the metropolis and those coming in and going out.

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