

Pope, UN condemn killings in Yobe

POPE Benedict XVI yesterday called for an end to violence in Nigeria, after an outbreak of bomb and gun attacks left more than 100 people dead.

"I am following with apprehension the tragic episodes that have taken place in Nigeria over the last days," the Pontiff said during his

weekly Sunday Angelus prayer. "While I pray for the victims, I invite an end to the violence, which doesn't resolve the problems but increase them, sowing hatred and divisions even amongst the faithful."

The attacks targeted police stations, mosques and churches in northeastern Nigeria, the Red Cross said.

Scores of people, potentially more than 100, were injured in a three-hour rampage in the

Yobe State city of Damaturu, according to Ibrahim Bulama of the Red Cross. More than 100 people died in what he described as "a very bad scene." Bulama initially said 63 people

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Pope, UN

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died, but revised the death toll upward Sunday.

Gunmen first attacked the police headquarters and the anti-terror office before moving to churches and mosques, he said. Most of the casualties were police officers.

In Potiskum, also located in Yobe State, gunmen attacked a book shop near the police station, killing two and injuring five, the Red Cross said.

The Friday attacks came the same day that suicide bombers suspected of belonging to a militant Islamist group targeted a military base in nearby Maiduguri.

Three suicide bombers drove a stolen black SUV toward a Joint Task Force headquarters, but could not get through the gate, military spokesman Lt. Col. Hassan Mohammed said. The blast damaged the roofs and walls of the base.

Mohammed said two other simultaneous explosions took place at other military facilities. An unspecified number of Nigerian soldiers suffered injuries.

Saturday evening, a suicide bomber launched another attack in Maiduguri, Mohammed said. No casualties were reported except for the bomber.

He blamed the militant group *Boko Haram* for the attacks.

Loosely translated, the group's name means "Western education is sinful." It wants to establish a state based on *Sharia*, or Islamic law, in northern Nigeria.

The Red Cross official said *Boko Haram* is suspected in the Damaturu attack as well.

The United Nations (UN) Security Council yesterday condemned "in the strongest terms" the terrorist attacks that occurred in Damaturu and Potiskum, on November 4.

It also expressed deep sympathy and condolences to the victims of the heinous crimes and their families, and to the people and Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

The North America Correspondents of the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) report that this was contained in a statement issued by the Council's President, Mr Jose Moraes.

About 67 people were said to have been killed in a wave of bombings and shootings suspected to have been carried out on Friday night by *Boko Haram* sect.

The statement reaffirmed that terrorism in all its forms and manifestations is criminal and unjustifiable, "regardless of its motivation, wherever, whenever and by whomsoever committed and should not be associated with any religion, nationality, civilization or ethnic group."

It also reaffirmed the need to combat by all means, in accordance with the Charter of the UN, threats to international peace and security caused by

terrorist acts.

The statement reminded states that they must ensure that measures taken to combat terrorism comply with all their obligations under international law, in particular international human rights, refugee and humanitarian law.

It underlined the need to bring perpetrators, organizers, financiers and sponsors of the reprehensible acts of terrorism to justice.

The Council urged all states, in accordance with their obligations under international law and relevant Security Council resolutions, to cooperate actively with the Nigerian authorities in this regard.

Similarly, the UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-Moon has condemned the armed attacks and bombings.

Ban, in a statement by his spokesperson, Martin Nesirky, expressed his sincere sympathy and condolences to the people of Nigeria and to the bereaved families.

He expressed the hope that the perpetrators of these attacks would be brought to justice.

The Secretary-General called once again for an end to all violence in the area, while reiterating his firm conviction that no objective sought could justify this resort to violence.

Sallah:

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"We are, however, calling on the security agents to intensify efforts in ensuring that there was no breach of the peace from whatever quarters." Bala also appealed that justice be done to those awaiting trial in our prisons.

"Some of them had been in prison custody for long, thereby bringing about congestion of the prisons. There is the need to decongest the prisons," he said.

In Kebbi, the Chief Imam, Alhaji Mukhtar Wala, led the prayers attended by Acting Governor Ibrahim Aiyu, the Emir of Gwandu, Alhaji Muhammad Bashir and thousands of other faithful at

Bayero

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this is why peaceful coexistence becomes paramount.

The emir also called on parents to take serious all issues involving child vaccinations against child killer diseases, saying that 'we must support government efforts to improve our health and that of our children. We must also accord proper attention to environmental sanitation and clean environment as most diseases are product of unclean environment.'

Alhaji Ado Bayero advised parents to consider the education of their children as sacrosanct especially girl-child education and commended government over the issues of education and called on them to sustain the tempo.