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Gunmen Kill Two Watching Champions League in Yobe

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Armed Boko Haram

Gunmen suspected to be Boko Haram members stormed a packed viewing centre in Yobe State and shot dead two people watching Champions League matches, police said Thursday.

The centre was showing the two quarter-final matches between defending champions Bayern Munich and Manchester United and Atletico Madrid and Barcelona, on Wednesday when it was attacked. "The gunmen came in a car and opened fire outside the viewing centre and sped off," Yobe State police commissioner Sanusi Rufa'i told AFP of the incident in Potiskum, a hotbed of the insurgency.

"One person died on the spot while another died later at the hospital. Several other people were injured, some critically," he added.

Residents said the centre was full at the time, with those who could not get a space inside hanging around the windows to watch the second-leg games, which saw Bayern and Atletico reaching the last four.

Rufā'i did not directly blame Boko Haram for the attack but the hardline group has been known for preaching against football as part of its agenda to impose strict Islamic law in northern Nigeria.

In several video clips, Boko Haram leader, Abubakar Shekau, had described football and music as a Western ploy to distract Muslims from their religion.

In April 2012, gunmen killed two men at a viewing centre in Potiskum, days after Boko Haram warned people in leaflets to stay away from such centres and calling for such places to be closed.

Football is Nigeria's national sport and the country's national team, the Super Eagles, are the reigning African champions.

English Premier League football is wildly popular, with many Nigerians supporting top clubs such as Arsenal, Chelsea, Manchester United and Liverpool, whose matches are shown live on television.

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