

POSSIBLE EASTER ATTACKS:

IGP orders red alert

- Deploys 1,000 Policemen to Suleja
- JTF combs Kano, Maiduguri, kills 2 sect members
- Gunmen kill 21 in Nasarawa, Borno
- Another bomb factory discovered in Kogi

BY EDU OLANIYI
JOHN BULLS and
MIH IKPEN

SECURITY agencies in Northern Nigeria have stepped up security following alerts by the United States and United Kingdom embassies that the country may witness terrorist attacks this Easter. The Niger Police Command has therefore deployed additional 1,000 policemen from its headquarters in Minna to beef up security at some flash-points in Suleja Local Government Area of the state.

Mrs Deseye Nsirim, the state Commissioner of Police, made this known to newsmen yesterday in Minna shortly after her familiarisation tour of area commands in Suleja, Tarfa and Agwara Local Government Areas of the state.

She assured residents of the state that adequate security would be provided for Christian and Muslim faithfuls throughout the Easter celebrations to avoid any breach of peace.

In Kano, the Joint Military Task Force, JTF, has declared that security forces are on top of situation in the city stressing there would be no cause for alarm during and after the Easter celebrations in the state and its environs.

JTF spokesman, Lt Ikediche Iweha told Saturday Vanguard in an interview yesterday that the security outfit had made tremendous progress in its war against terror in the city, pointing out that strategy had been adopted to sustain the tempo.

"We have made serious in-road in our quest to contain terrorists and their extremist tendencies in Kano; and we have every reason to beat our chests that we are on top of the situation," Iweha said, pointing out that, Kano like any other part of this country needed peace to realize its potential.

According to him, the JTF was doing its "best to ensure we put paid to the menace of extremism for good."

He then asked the residents to remain law abiding in the course of their daily activities as according to him, their support and cooperation were vital to the overall success of the war against the menace.

The Joint Task Force in Maiduguri, Borno state also said it killed two members of militant Islamist sect Boko Haram and arrested a third yesterday during a raid on their hideout where the suspects were plotting attacks on Christians this weekend. Security had been ramped up in Maiduguri, the epicenter of Boko Haram's attacks. On Friday, a helicopter patrolled the city from the sky and authorities searched private vehicles at checkpoints. Reverend Faye Pama said local Christians are celebrating this year's Easter in "a low" mood.

"Of course you know the killings have been on and many lives have been lost. You know even the day before yesterday, there were the killings in the market. So, we are celebrating low-key," he said.

Gunmen opened fire on Christian traders at a busy market in Maiduguri Wednesday, killing 11 people and wounding several others. Just before the attack, gunmen shot dead an electronics technician on a popular city street. Witnesses told the Voice of America, VOA, that nine of the dead were Christians from the Igbo ethnic group.

Also, no fewer than 10 persons have so far been killed at Duduguru village in Jenkwe Development Area of Nasarawa State following an invasion by some people suspected to be Fulani herdsmen. The crises was said to have started on Tuesday when the invaders killed two people. The Police in

Nasarawa yesterday confirmed the death of the 10 persons just as the discovery of the 60 explosives in Gombe has created fear in the state.

Last Thursday, another Boko Haram bomb factory was discovered in Kogi state in the Adayi Local Government Area, the Nigerian army has confirmed. The bomb making factory is the third to be uncovered in the central state in the last two weeks. Items recovered from the hideout include security metal detectors, bullet proof vests, gas cylinder, already made bombs and ammunition.

The Acting Inspector-General of Police, IGP, Alhaji Mohammed Abubakar, had Thursday directed zonal and state commands of the police across the country to provide adequate security to all places of worship during the period. Abubakar, in his Easter message to Christians signed by the Force Public Relations Officer, Olusola Amore, late Thursday in Abuja, ordered police Area Commanders and their Divisional Officers to ensure effective patrols of all vulnerable points in various cities and highways across the country during and after the Easter festivities.



The Young Christian Workers of St Dominic Catholic Church Yaba mark Good Friday to symbolise the day Jesus Christ was crucified and nailed to the cross by Jews in Lagos yesterday. Pix shows (c) Mr Nnamdi Apani who acted as Jesus as he was made to carry his own Cross by the Jewish Soldiers during the procession Pix Biodun Ogunleye

However, the United States and UK embassies in their travel advisories warned their citizens against travelling to some northern cities to be extra vigilant around places of worship and avoid large crowds.

The Embassy advises all U.S. citizens in Abuja and other large northern Nigerian cities to remain vigilant around churches and other places of worship, locations where large crowds may gather and areas frequented by expatriates and foreign

travellers during the weekend holiday. The embassy continues to monitor closely the ongoing threats posed by Nigerian extremist and criminal groups," it said. The U.K. embassy in particular, listed seven states including Borno, Niger, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Sokoto and Yobe as the areas that its citizens must avoid, noting that "there is a high threat of terrorist attack during religious festivals."

Love one another, CAN, ANPP tell Nigerians

BY SAM EYOBOKA,
EMMANUEL UJAH &
OLAYINKA LATONA

TWO eminent Christian clerics including Prelate of Methodist Church Nigeria, His Eminence, Sunday Ola Makinde and the chairman of Christian Association of Nigeria, CAN, North East zone, Rev. Shuaibu M. Byam have described the aversion of what could have led to one of the bloodiest Easter celebrations in recent times in Gombe State as a sign that God is listening to the prayers of Nigerians. The All Nigeria Peoples Party, ANPP, has also called on Nigerians to rededicate themselves to loving tolerating one another, as the world marks Easter, a Christian celebration to mark the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead just as Pastor Ayo Oritsejafor, President of the Christians Association of Nigeria, CAN, has called on Christians to pray for Nigeria as they celebrate the Easter.

Oritsejafor, in his Easter

message on Friday, reminded Christians that Easter was a time of penance and meditation, adding that it represented the purpose of God for the salvation of mankind.

However, the ANPP, in a statement by its National Chairman in Abuja, Dr. Ogbonnaya Onu, in Abuja, yesterday, also appealed to Nigerians to live as brothers and sisters, while seeing one another as creatures of the same God.

The ANPP expressed confidence that, in spite of the current challenges facing the nation, the nation would rise stronger if Nigerians see themselves as members of one big family.

"Regardless of the numerous challenges facing the nation, we urge all Nigerians to resolve to get it right for the sake of those noble things that have for long held us together as members of one family. We must remain one people, one nation under God working for the happiness of all Nigerians and the peace of the nation".

Pastor Oritsejafor said Easter marked the beginning of our salvation and urged the Christians to show love to friends, neighbours and relations, irrespective of their religious or ethnic background.

"I congratulate Christians for another Easter. My prayer is that as we celebrate and rejoice, it

should also be good time to reflect on the fact that Easter is about sacrifice and restoration because Jesus Christ gave himself to us.

"It is a time for restoration because he rose from the dead. As Christians, we must be prepared to make sacrifices for the growth of the church and Nigeria.

Fish out Mubi 15 killers — CAN

BY UNMAYUSUF
with agency report

CHRISTIANS Association of Nigeria, CAN, Adamawa State chapter has appealed to the state government to as a matter of urgency fish-out those responsible for heinous killings of over 15 of their members in Yola and Mubi in January this year.

The appeal is coming as the Joint Task Force, JTF, in Maiduguri said that two suspected Boko Haram militants were killed yesterday during a raid on their meeting point near the NNPC station, Abbaganaram.

In a statement signed by Lt.-Col. Sagir Musa, the spokesman for the JTF on "Operation Restore Order," ORO, and made available to the News Agency of Nigeria, NAN, in Maiduguri, it said that the militants were marshalling out plans to cause havoc in the city before they were raided.

"Following a tip-off, the JTF troops today attacked Boko Haram meeting point at Abbaganaram near the NNPC station, Maiduguri, where about 10 suspected terrorists were holding a meeting. The gathering was with a view to cause mayhem in the city."