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By Sam Eyoboka, AbdulSalam Muhammad & Olayinka Latona

KANO —The Joint Military Taskforce and an Islamic were locked in a gun duel, yesterday, in Hotoro quarters of Kano municipality and in the process, four members of the sect were killed while many of them were arrested.

Hotoro residents were forced to stay indoors for hours, yesterday morning when a gunfight between JTF and suspected gunmen triggered pandemonium in a city that witnessed the worst church attack last week.

Residents who spoke with *Vanguard* on condition of anonymity said they could hear sporadic gunshots and explosions that

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lasted a couple of hours.

"We have practically given up hope for life due to confusion and intensity of sporadic gunshots and explosions that appeared nearer but we give glory to Allah," a resident said.

JTF spokesman, Ikediche Iweha, told *Vanguard* on phone that the operation was successful, adding that "there was no casualty on the side of the security forces."

Iweha, however, failed to clarify the number of arrests made and items recovered, saying: "What should constitute news to you guys is that we raided a hideout used by extremists this morning, four were killed while many were arrested."

Normalcy had since returned to the area as shop owners were seen opening for business.

Southern CAN urges FG to halt menace of terrorism

Meanwhile, peeved by the unrelenting spate of terrorist bombings, killing of innocent Christians and destruction of property in different parts of the country, Christians from the 17 states of the South recently expressed concern and urged the Federal Government to take decisive measures to halt the menace of terrorism that is currently threatening the unity of the country.

The group under the aegis of Southern CAN also used the occasion to alert Nigerians that "it is becoming increasingly difficult to restrain individuals and families who are

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Anthony

Did it not remind those old enough to know of the very first broadcast of the then young Lt. Col. Yakubu Gowon that there was no basis for unity in 1966? When several years back people who saw the...

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bereaved of their loved ones from thinking of revenge. The only answer to this situation is for the government to protect the people and save us from anarchy.”

In a statement by the president and secretary of Southern CAN, Most Rev. Nicholas Okoh and Dr. Joseph Ajujunwa, the umbrella body of Christians drawn from the 17 southern states of the federation, noted with dismay the recent attack carried out at *ThisDay* newspaper office in Abuja; the church inside Bayero University, Kano; Church of Christ in Nigeria (COCIN) in Muna, Maiduguri and the attack on the convoy of the Taraba State Commissioner of Police.

While consoling families of all those murdered and sympathizing with those who sustained injuries, Southern CAN particularly expressed concern about the attack on the church at Bayero University, Kano Campus, “because reports indicate that majority of those killed, including the two professors are Christians from Kogi State in North Central zone of the country.

“This is unacceptable to Christians from the Southern part of the country. That the gunmen walked past several mosques on the campus and singled out the church for this dastardly act has reinforced our belief that there is an agenda by those who carried out these acts to exterminate Christians in the North and Islamise the country.”

The Southern CAN, therefore, called on governors of the 17 southern states, all

political leaders, all grades of traditional rulers, Muslim leaders and all people of goodwill to join hands with the Federal Government to solve this menace that is threatening our national unity.

It said: "No section of our society, whether Christian, Muslim, atheists or adherents of other religions should sit on the fence and watch this evil grow with the erroneous belief that it is far from them, it is a real threat to all. We are being dragged into a situation where we may ask Christian parents of Southern extraction to relocate their children or wards from universities and other tertiary institutions in the North to the Southern part of the country for safety of their lives."

The statement also cautioned the elders and leaders of the North to do more to show concern for the plight of Southern children in their domain, adding that "in the present circumstance, it is difficult to trust that it is well and safe for these children as they are being re-assured by leaders in the North.

"We continue to appeal to both religious and political leaders, traditional rulers and leaders of thought to see that what is happening will do nobody any good. There will be no winner if Nigeria is eventually allowed to be destroyed. Even the perpetrators of these evil acts will be losers," the statement argued.

It stressed the need for all to support the Federal Government and Security Agencies with adequate intelligence report in the interest of the nation's unity.