

Maiduguri: Death toll in Boko Haram attack at funeral up to 65

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An attack this weekend by Boko Haram fighters on a funeral in northeast Nigeria has left 65 people dead, almost triple the initial toll, a local official said Sunday.



Boko Haram members

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Dozens more bodies were discovered following the assault Saturday by gunmen on a village close to the regional capital Maiduguri.

"It is 65 people dead and 10 injured," local government chairman Muhammed Bulama said.

Bulama said more than 20 people died in the initial attack on a funeral gathering. Dozens more were killed as they tried to chase after the jihadists.

The leader of a local anti-Boko Haram militia confirmed the death toll, while giving a slightly different account of the attack.

Bunu Bukar Mustapha told AFP 23 people were killed as they returned from the funeral and "the remaining 42 were killed when they pursued the terrorists".

Bulama said he thought the latest attack was in retaliation for the killing two weeks ago of 11 Boko Haram fighters by local residents when the fighters approached their village. The residents also captured 10 automatic rifles.

Boko Haram fighters have repeatedly attacked the surrounding Nganzai district.

Boko Haram has waged a decade-long insurgency in northeast Nigeria that has killed around 27,000 people and displaced more than two million.

The group has splintered between the Boko Haram faction loyal to historic leader Abubakar Shekau and an affiliate of the Islamic State group.

Shekau's group tends to hit softer targets including civilians, while the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) has since last year ratcheted up its campaign against the military.

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