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NIGERIA Another church in Suleja targeted by bomb attack

Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW) has learned of a second bomb attack on a church in Suleja, Niger State, close to the Nigerian Federal Capital Abuja earlier this week.

According to an eyewitness, a bomb was thrown into the premises of an Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA) Church in the Madalla suburb of Suleja while members of the congregation were taking part in a weekly prayer service at around 9pm on Monday July 11. The bomb fell short of the church building, damaging the outer walls and causing no injury.

The first bomb attack on a church in Suleja occurred on Sunday, July 10, when three people were killed and three injured in an explosion at the All Christian-Fellowship Mission during a church committee meeting. On the same day, dozens were injured in Kaduna State when a bomb exploded in a trash can at a popular night spot on Maiduguri Road.

The bombings are being attributed to the militant Islamist group Boko Haram. In June the group had issued an online statement warning that it's "commandos" had completed their "training in Somalia", and would consequently be "stepping up attacks in the coming weeks in all northern states", and especially in "such as Plateau, Kaduna, Taraba, Benue ... [and] especially in Kaduna."

Meanwhile in Maiduguri, where Boko Haram have carried out over 20 deadly attacks since the beginning of the year, the state university has closed indefinitely, and hundreds of people are reported to be fleeing the city following a weekend of violence that left at least 30 people dead, some allegedly at the hands of the security services.

CSW's Advocacy Director Andrew Johnston said, "While we are relieved at the narrow escape of church members in the ECWA church in Suleja on Monday, the bombing of two churches in succession may be indicative of a worrying new trend by Boko Haram. We once again urge the state and federal authorities in Nigeria to ensure that adequate protection is afforded to places of worship, and that security is deployed during church services. The security arrangements in Maiduguri and Kaduna States in particular must be addressed as a matter of urgency."