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## **NIGERIA | Escalating Violence Prompts State of Emergency**

On May 14, Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan declared a state of emergency in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa States to address the “systematic effort by insurgents and terrorists groups which pose a very serious national threat to national unity and territorial integrity.” The move comes in the wake of escalating attacks in northern and central states over recent weeks by increasingly well-armed and well-organized militants.

Minutes after the presidential declaration, the Secretary of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) in Borno State, Rev. Faye Pama Musa, a Pentecostal pastor, was shot dead in his Maiduguri home by two suspected Boko Haram members.

The declaration follows an admission by Borno State governor Kassim Shettima to senators and the military on May 7 that Boko Haram was on the verge of seizing control of the state. This admission was reportedly echoed by Khalifa Ahmed Zanna, the senator representing the Borno Central Zone, who alleged that Boko Haram effectively controls around 24 of Borno’s 27 LGAs. The senator was recently detained and questioned after a high profile Boko Haram Commander was arrested in his home.

Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW) has been increasingly concerned by a clear surge in violence over recent weeks in northern and central Nigeria. According to information received by CSW Nigeria, an attack was carried out on Zankang Village in the Kaura local Government Area (LGA) in the southern part of Kaduna State by Fulani gunmen on May 13. The number of casualties is yet to be determined, and reports that some of the gunmen were arrested on May 14 have yet to be confirmed. This was the second successive attack on the village by Fulani tribesmen. According to eyewitness reports, gunmen had attacked the village during the early hours of Sunday May 12, firing sporadically, but fled when members of the security forces arrived at the scene after hearing the gunshots. Ten people were injured, two of whom are receiving hospital treatment. Forty-two known people have died during similar attacks in March on five villages in the area that displaced approximately 4,000 people.

A police barracks on the outskirts of Bama Town in Borno State was attacked by suspected members of Boko Haram in the early hours of May 12. According to eyewitnesses, the insurgents arrived on motorcycles and in three-wheel vehicles, shouting "Allahu Akbar" (God is great) before attacking the compound with explosives and petrol bombs. They were dispersed by the army without loss of life. The attack comes a week after coordinated attacks on Bama Town by an estimated 200 militants claiming 47 lives.

Also on May 12, over 40 people were killed and several properties were destroyed in Okpachanyi village, Agatu LGA in Benue State in Central Nigeria when suspected Fulani tribesmen attacked the funeral of two police officers who were killed on May 7 in Nasarawa State, also in Central Nigeria. This follows a similar attack on Agatu LGA on May 8 in which Fulani herdsmen destroyed property and killed several people, including women and children.

CSW's Advocacy Director Andrew Johnston said, "We offer our condolences to the families who lost loved ones in the violence in Northern and Central Nigeria in recent days. Organized violence has been occurring almost on a daily basis, claiming innocent victims of all creeds, and the escalation in attacks by increasingly well-armed militants has heightened insecurity even further. Nigeria is currently facing an unprecedented threat to national unity. It is vital that the international community fully supports Nigeria as the nation contends with the security challenges engendered by international terrorism and a multifaceted, evolving insurgency. The outcome of this struggle has important implications not only for Nigeria, but also for West Africa and the continent as a whole."