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NIGERIA | Boko Haram Attacks Villages, Town in Adamawa State

Suspected Boko Haram gunmen attacked villages and a town in the Madagali and Michika Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Adamawa State in northeast Nigeria on Feb. 26.

Exact casualty figures are unknown, since many people are reported to still be in hiding in the bush. However, unconfirmed reports indicate that at least 28 people may have been killed and several others were injured.

According to local news reports, gunmen in Toyota Hilux vans armed with rocket propelled grenades (RPG's) and improvised explosive devices (IED's) travelled through the Sambisa Forest near the border with neighboring Cameroon and descended on Kirchiga Village before targeting the Shuwari and Shuwa communities of Madagali LGA and attacking Michika Town.

Sect members are reported to have thrown IED's and fired indiscriminately before setting fire to homes, shops and other establishments.

In Shuwa Village, where victims were shot or their throats were slit, Saint Joseph's Minor Seminary, the home of a former commissioner and a maternity health center were set ablaze, the latter after being looted of medical supplies. A primary school was razed to the ground in Shuwari Town, and in Michika Town, the assailants destroyed three banks, a police station, shops and part of the Local Government Council Secretariat. Initial reports indicate several houses of worship were set ablaze, including three Catholic churches. According to the Nigerian media house Channels TV, three Catholic nuns may be among the victims. There are also reports the banks may have been looted prior to being destroyed. Before escaping, the gunmen allegedly stole cars and motorcycles, looted food stores, and destroyed anything they did not carry away.

Also on Feb. 26, unknown gunmen killed two members of the same family in a pre-dawn attack on Diyam- Rim village in the Riyom Local Government Council of Plateau State. Two other family members sustained injuries and are receiving treatment at an undisclosed location.

The attacks in Adamawa came hours after a televised address by President Goodluck Jonathan marking Nigeria's Centenary Celebrations, in which he commiserated with families of students killed in the attack on the Federal Government College, Buni-Yadi in Yobe State on Feb. 25. Describing the killings as "un-Nigerian and un-African", the President assured the nation the government would "continue to do everything possible to eradicate the scourge of terrorism."

According to the UN's humanitarian office, OCHA, between May 2013 and January 2014 nearly

300,000 people were displaced by terrorist violence in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe States, more than half of whom are children.

CSW's Chief Executive Mervyn Thomas said, "The continuing loss of innocent lives in this relentless and unjustifiable violence is iniquitous and painful. Our prayers are with the government and people of Nigeria as they face this brutal and indiscriminate onslaught. Given that Boko Haram is a transnational threat, we hope that increased regional and international cooperation and coordination of counter-insurgency efforts will be a key outcome of the international security conference in Abuja. It is vital that sufficient and well-resourced troops are urgently relocated to troubled areas in order end this appalling cycle of violence and impunity. Justice is also imperative for lasting peace, and the perpetrators of these crimes must be held to account."