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## **NIGERIA | Borno Attacks Following Jos Bombings**

Boko Haram gunmen attacked two villages in southern Borno State on May 21, killing over 40 people. The attacks follow a double car-bombing in the commercial heart of the central Nigerian city of Jos in Plateau State that claimed at least 118 lives on May 20.

According to local reports, the attack on Alagarno Village in Askira/Uba Local Government Area (LGA) began at around 11 p.m. May 20 and continued into the early hours of May 21. The gunmen razed the entire village to the ground and stole vehicles as well as attacking residents. Alagarno is located near Chibok Town, where over 200 school girls were abducted in April.

A subsequent attack on Shawa Village in Damboa LGA at around 4 a.m. on May 21 reportedly left around 30 people dead. Boko Haram gunmen also set fire to several homes, as well as to bags of maize and millet stored for sale in markets, and carried away goats and rams.

Funerals for the identified victims of the Jos bombings have begun, as officials express fears of the death toll rising even further as bodies are uncovered under debris and in shattered stores.

According to local reports, the first bomb exploded at Terminus market at around 3 p.m. on May 20, detonating at peak time when, according to a local source, “many women were doing last minute shopping, so many of the victims were women and children. People were also returning home from work using the nearby motor park.”

The second bomb exploded around 20 minutes later in van that had been parked for hours close to the temporary site of Jos University Teaching Hospital (JUTH). Several residents had reported the suspicious vehicle to the police. When they failed to take action, local youths set the vehicle ablaze, forcing an explosion that felled part of JUTH’s fencing, but caused no injuries.

The bombings in Jos follow the May 18 suicide bombing in Sabon Gari, a predominantly Christian suburb of the Kano State capital, which claimed four lives, including a young girl. Observers speculate the bombings may be an attempt by Boko Haram to provoke sectarian violence in order to stretch the Nigerian security services and divert national and international attention from the search for the abducted school girls.

Commenting on the Jos bombings, the Most Rev. Dr. Benjamin Kwashi, Anglican Archbishop of Jos Diocese, said, “This is obviously the work of Boko Haram and was intended to ignite the usual divisions in Jos, but this has clearly failed because as soon as casualties occurred, Muslim Aid, the Red Cross and Christian and Muslim youth came together to assist the victims. Our pain, however, is that people have died, ordinary people going about their daily business. I am deeply saddened by this, and our prayers are with their families. These people came from

somewhere with deliberate plan to sow chaos. Please join us in praying for calm and greater understanding. The time has now come for every part of Jos to reject and expose Boko Haram's activities."

Mervyn Thomas, Chief Executive of Christian Solidarity Worldwide said, "We extend our heartfelt condolences to the families who lost loved ones in the Jos bombings, the attacks in Borno and the suicide bombing in Sabon Gari. The toll of lives lost weighs heavily on the hearts of families and communities across Nigeria and we stand in solidarity with them, urging Nigeria and its international allies to deal decisively with Boko Haram, which constitutes a threat to Nigeria and its neighbors. We echo the Archbishop's prayer. Boko Haram and its remaining supporters and enablers are attempting to create schisms in this pluralistic, diverse nation, and they must not be allowed to prevail."