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NIGERIA | Tensions Rise Following Mosque Bombing

The Kano State capital remains tense following a gun and suicide bomb attack on the Central Mosque by the Islamist terror group Boko Haram on Nov. 28 that claimed the lives of over 100 people, including children.

According to local reports, the attack began with a car bomb which exploded as Juma'at prayers (Friday prayers) began and was followed by two explosions inside the mosque. Worshippers, who attempted to flee, were gunned down by sect members stationed outside the building, two of whom were eventually overpowered and lynched when they ran out of ammunition.

Kano Central Mosque is attached to the palace of the Emir of Kano, who made a speech there last week urging northerners to take up arms against Boko Haram expressing doubts at the ability of Nigeria's armed forces to protect civilians and end the insurgency.

CSW received unconfirmed reports that a female would-be suicide bomber dressed in a hijab was apprehended at Murtala Specialist Hospital in Kano at around noon Nov. 30. Her bomb was deactivated, and she was lynched.

In the aftermath of the bombing, Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan sent his condolences to the people and government of Kano and urged the nation "to remain united to confront the common enemy." Pope Francis described the attack as "an extremely serious sin against God," while the Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria described the perpetrators as "agents of darkness who claim to fight in the name of religion." The UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon, the US and UK governments also condemned the attack, expressing their commitment to assist Nigeria in combating the terrorist threat.

The attack on Kano Central Mosque is the latest in a series of bombings by Boko Haram during November. On Nov. 28, vigilantes in the Borno State capital Maiduguri reportedly discovered a device planted in the Gamboru Market area that was successfully defused. A secondary device that exploded nearby caused no casualties since the area had been cordoned off. On Nov. 25, at least 45 people died when two female suicide bombers exploded their devices within minutes of each other at Maiduguri's Monday Market.

On Nov. 12, one student was killed and at least four people were injured when a device carried by a female suicide bomber exploded prematurely at the Federal College of Education in Kontagora, Niger State. A suicide bombing at the Government Technical Science College in Potiskum, Yobe State on Nov. 10 claimed the lives of 58 students and injured 117. On Nov. 3, at least 15 people died in a suicide bomb attack on a Shi'a religious ceremony in

Potiskum. During the evening of Nov. 2, Boko Haram gunmen used explosives to blast their way into a prison in Lokoja, Kogi State, freeing over 100 prisoners.

CSW's Chief Executive Mervyn Thomas said, "CSW condemns the attack on Kano Central Mosque and we extend our deepest condolences to the families of every victim of terrorist violence. Once again Boko Haram has targeted worshippers while they were in prayer, violating their right to freedom of religion or belief and demonstrating its total disregard for every creed and for the sanctity of human life. Nigerians must put aside all religious, political and other divisions as a matter of urgency, and unite in the national interest to overcome a murderous sect that poses an existential threat to their nation."