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NIGERIA | Violence Claims at Least 34 Lives

Boko Haram continued its campaign of terror in northern and central Nigeria on July 7, with attacks in Kaduna, Bauchi and Borno States that claimed at least 34 lives.

A female suicide bomber detonated her device as workers were queuing for a wage verification exercise at the Sabon Gari Local Government Secretariat in Zaria, Kaduna State on July 7. While the official death toll is currently 26 people, local eyewitnesses claim fatalities may be closer to 80. The majority of casualties are reportedly primary school teachers and council workers.

On the same day, a man was killed and his pregnant wife seriously injured in Bauchi State by armed assailants who are suspected to be members of Boko Haram. According to Christian Solidarity Worldwide-Nigeria (CSW-N), the attack occurred at around 7 p.m., as Mr. Lumana John and his wife Grace were travelling on a motorcycle in Goshe in Tafawa Balewa Local Government Area (LGA). Mr. John died at the scene and his injured wife is currently receiving treatment at Jos University Teaching Hospital. The attack on the Johns is thought to have been carried out by Boko Haram following a failed assault on the Tafawa Balewa community, which was launched June 30. The attack caused community members to seize some of the sect's weaponry and destroyed six of its vehicles.

In Borno State, two female suicide bombers detonated their devices in Sabon Gari village market in Damboa LGA, killing three people and injuring five. The village is situated in the Sambisa Forest, 93 miles south of the state capital, Maiduguri. Another female suicide bomber reportedly attacked a military checkpoint in the Sabon Gari area, killing herself and four others, including two members of the civilian Joint Task Force.

Boko Haram allegedly offered to release the Chibok Girls in exchange for 16 detained terrorists.

Alongside the increase in Boko Haram-related terrorism, there has been a spike in attacks by armed Fulani herders on non-Muslim communities in several states in central Nigeria. For example, 13 members of the Berom tribe reportedly died July 7 in an attack on Sho village in Plateau State by armed Fulani herders. On July 5, Fulani herders stormed Dalo Memorial High School, a Christian establishment in Barkin Ladi LGA in Plateau State, killing two students. They also reportedly shot and killed a local farmer. On June 29, Nigerian media sources reported that fighting between Fulanis and Agatu tribesmen in Kogi State resulted in the loss of over 80 lives. On June 26, a state police spokesman reported that at least 96 people were killed in Benue State after several villages were attacked by armed Fulani herdsman. Meanwhile, on June 17, nine people died and 10 were injured in an attack by Fulani gunmen on Katsak village in the

Takad Chiefdom of Jama'a LGA in Kaduna State.

The improved tactics and armory of the herders has prompted speculation of a link with Boko Haram. In June 2014, a training camp for Boko Haram insurgents and Fulani herdsman was discovered by local vigilantes in Rim, Riyom LGA, Plateau State.

Mervyn Thomas, Chief Executive of CSW, said, "We extend our heartfelt condolences to all those who have lost loved ones in these attacks in central and northern Nigeria. This alarming surge of violence must be met with firm intervention in defense of vulnerable communities and the rigorous enforcement of the rule of law, with perpetrators *being pursued, apprehended and prosecuted. We urge the federal government to act swiftly to stem the tide of violence and reclaim earlier strategic gains."