

Islamic Group Kills Policeman in Renewed Violence in Yobe State

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KANO, Nigeria, Dec 30 (AFP) - Some 200 members of an Islamic group mobbed a police station in northern Nigeria's Yobe State, killing one police officer, residents told AFP Tuesday.

The incident occurred in Kanamma, some 240 kilometres (150 miles) north of the state capital Damaturu, last week, they said. "One police officer was killed while some arms and ammunitions were taken away," a local journalist said. He said the Mahairun sect, which came to the state from nearby Borno State three months ago, attacked another police station in Geidam where arms and ammunition were also taken away. He said the group also took over a primary school which they named "Afghanistan", apparently referring to the outlawed Taliban-led government in Afghanistan.

Yobe State Governor's spokesman Baba Lawan Garuba confirmed the report, but refused to elaborate. "There had been some incident but it was a security matter which I don't want to comment on," he added. Religious outbursts have been on the rise in recent weeks in Africa's most populous country of some 126 million people, almost evenly divided between Christians and Muslims.

Last week, three people were killed and two were seriously wounded when police raided two Islamic schools in the central town of Jos. The raid on the schools followed a tipoff that members of an outlawed religious sect, the Maitatsine, were hiding there to cause trouble. The "group was responsible for bloody religious violence in some parts of northern Nigeria in the 1980s that left hundreds of people dead.