

Nigeria: Islamic Sect's Clash With Security in Bauchi Leaves Scores Dead

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Islamic fundamentalists' clashed with security operatives in Bauchi State yesterday left about 150 members of the group who also belong to the Taliban dead. Several others were severely injured. The Islamic fundamentalists, known as Boko Haram, first struck the Federal Low-cost Housing Estate in Bauchi and killed military personnel in an exchange of gun fire. The sect, which opposes anything Western, went wild because the state government prevents its members from having their way. Boko Haram detests Western education and some of the members have withdrawn from the Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University, Bauchi. The teachings of the sect are said to be completely contrary to those of other Islamic sects on peaceful coexistence. Hundreds of members of the sect trooped to the Dutsen Tanshi police station on 26 July and chased away officers. They vandalized the station but could not break into the armory. The members had been planning a demonstration in Bauchi for a long time but were not granted a permit because of fears that their doctrine, if preached publicly, will cause a religious crisis.

A distress call to command headquarters brought a reinforcement to confront the attackers, some of whom were felled by police bullets and others injured. Police Public Relations Officer, Mohammed Barau, explained that more policemen were deployed to ensure the security of lives and property.

[Begin Barau recording] Our men succeeded in repelling the dawn attack by the Taliban. They wanted to steal weapons from the police station. The situation is now under control. More members of the organization are being arrested. [end recording]

He assured that measures are now in place to prevent the spread of the riot. A team of soldiers and policemen has gone round villages to fish out the fundamentalists who escaped from their base in Bauchi. Several have been arrested, but some are believed to be hiding in the surrounding hills. Weapons recovered from them include an AK47 rifle, assorted ammunition, military uniforms, explosives, sewing machines, power generator, motorcycles, foodstuffs, and roofing sheets.

Police Affairs Minister, Ibrahim Lame, said in as much as the government is committed to the freedom of religion, it will not condone fundamentalism that breaks down law and order.

A locally made bomb yesterday exploded in the home of a hard line Islamist in Maiduguri, killing one, and leaving others in a state of coma. The explosion in Maiduguri happened five hours after the Borno State police command paraded members of a notorious Islamic sect caught with locally made bombs and other explosives. The State Commander of Operation Flush II, a joint security task force set up by the state government, Colonel Ben Ahanotu, described security in Maiduguri as tense. He said for bombs to explode right in the bedroom of a sect member showed that other sect members possess such lethal weapons all over the city. A page of a book with sketches of

how to make bomb and explosives was recovered from the debris in the room, which suggested the bomb might have blown off at the time of coupling.

The sect members had named rival Islamic scholars who oppose their doctrine as targets, and promised to blow off their mosques and other worshiping places. Governor Ali Modu Sheriff described the incident as unfortunate and condemnable and pledged that the government is on top of the situation, and will continue to protect the lives and properties of all residents.