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Information on a Methodist church burned/destruction of other buildings by Boko Haram in Maiduguri in/around 26 July 2009

A report issued in August 2009 by the *Catholic Information Service for Africa* points out that:

“Two Catholic churches were among 11 that were extensively damaged last week in this northeastern Nigerian town during clashes between security forces and a fundamentalist Muslim sect...The chaos left Maiduguri town in complete disorder, with bodies of the dead strewn on the streets, the priest said. Police stations were targeted for attack. Fr Heladuwa gave the names of the destroyed Catholic churches as St Joseph Gamboru Ngala and St. Michael Railway. The latter church was recently rebuilt and commissioned after similar riots in February 2006. It was completely burnt down. The other nine places of worship were evangelical churches” (Catholic Information Service for Africa (4 August 2009) *Nigeria: Eleven Churches Ruined in 'Boko Haram' Chaos*).

An *International Crisis Group* report issued in December 2010 includes commentary on Boko Haram which states:

“On 25 July 2009, police arrested several leaders on suspicion they were preparing for violence...For the next four days, the group battled police, reinforced by the army, in Bauchi, Borno, Kano and Yobe states. The worst violence was in Maiduguri...CAN showed 29 churches burnt and at least three pastors killed, and police listed 28 of its officers among those killed” (International Crisis Group (20 December 2010) *Northern Nigeria: Background to Conflict*, p.36).

A report issued in October 2012 by *Human Rights Watch* notes:

“Boko Haram has carried out numerous attacks on churches and Christians in northern and central Nigeria during its campaign of violence. During the five days of violence in July 2009, for example, Boko Haram members killed 37 Christian men, including three pastors, and torched or partially destroyed 29 churches in Borno State, according to Christian leaders...” (Human Rights Watch (11 October 2012) *Spiralling violence*, p.44).

Compass Direct in August 2009 notes that:

“With 12 Christians, including three pastors, confirmed killed in rioting ignited by an Islamic sect opposed to Western education, the Christian community in northern Nigeria's Borno state is still counting its losses. The rioting instigated by an Islamic extremist sect known as Boko Haram, which initially attacked police and government bases, left hundreds of people dead and large property losses” (Compass Direct (7 August 2009) *Death Toll Climbs in Attack by Islamic Sect in Nigeria*).

This document also states that:

“Church buildings burned in Borno include five branches of the COCIN denomination, two Catholic churches, two Deeper Life Church buildings, two EYN (Church of the Brethren in Nigeria) buildings, and buildings of the National Evangelical Mission, Celestial Church of Christ, Elijah Apostolic Church, The Lord's Chosen Charismatic Revival Ministries, Assemblies of God Church, Redeemed Christian Church of God, Christ for All Nations, Baptist Church and Anglican Church, all in different parts of the state” (ibid).

In July 2009 *Reuters* states:

“Thousands of Nigerians sheltered in barracks in the northern city of Maiduguri on Tuesday after days of clashes involving Muslim rebels which have killed at least 150 people across four states. Members of a local Islamic group have burned churches, police stations and a prison and set off petrol bombs near residential areas in the unrest. Local police said 103 people, most of them rioters, had been killed in Maiduguri alone” (Reuters (28 July 2009) *Thousands shelter in barracks after Nigeria unrest*).

A document released in July 2009 by *Voice of America* notes:

“Four states in northern Nigeria remain under a massive curfew imposed by police and military forces following three days of deadly clashes with a radical Muslim sect. The struggles are particularly intense in Borno State's capital city of Maiduguri, where the government is trying to seize the home of the sect leader. Churches there and at least one police station have been set on fire” (Voice of America (29 July 2009) *Troops Rush to Quell Violence in Northern Nigeria*).

Christian Solidarity Worldwide in July 2009 notes:

“CSW has received confirmation that a pastor from the Church of Christ in Nigeria has been killed and at least five church buildings have been destroyed in the continuing violence, including the EYN Central, Deeper Life and Evangelical Mission churches in the Wulari Suburb of Maiduguri” (Christian Solidarity Worldwide (27 July 2009) *Nigeria - Islamist militia launches attacks*).

A report issued in August 2009 by *Christian Solidarity Worldwide* includes stating that:

“CSW sources also report that a total of 20 churches were destroyed during the violence” (Christian Solidarity Worldwide (6 August 2009) *Lack of international concern over Boko Haram*).

A report released in August 2009 by the *Associated Press* notes:

“From hospital beds with family members kneeling at their feet, survivors said attackers used guns, knives and machetes the latter to avoid accidentally shooting each other as they swept through military barracks, police stations, homes of law enforcement officials and at least 22 churches” (Associated Press (4 August 2009) *Nigeria survivors describe night of terror by sect*).

This document also points out that:

"The militants were well organized. In Maiduguri, they attacked the homes of at least two senior police officers one in charge of the training school...Another detachment attacked Maiduguri's churches. The Rev. Ishaka Dauda, pastor of one of the churches, said around 100 attackers scaled a 10-foot (3-meter) wall and hid in the church's primary school until the entire group was inside...The Boko Haram members methodically destroyed all six churches in Maiduguri's Wulari district. At Elijah Apostolic Christ Church, the attackers arrived with axes to chop through iron bars and wooden doors, said pastor Olushola Joseph. Once inside, he said, they set the place ablaze. Thomas Peter, a religion scholar who was hacked with a machete as he tried to protect his father's Church of Christ, said he heard the fighters caution each other not to use their guns to prevent them from accidentally shooting each other. They burned down the church and came back two days later and burned down the house of his father" (ibid).

In July 2009 the *Agence France Presse* points out that:

"...several churches had been torched during the violence" (Agence France Presse (28 July 2009) *Nigeria beefs up security as police sweep up bodies*).

In May 2010 the *United States Commission on International Religious Freedom* notes in a report that:

"In July 2009, between 900 and 2,000 people were killed in the northern Nigerian states of Bauchi, Borno, Kano, and Yobe when a Muslim sect calling itself Boko Haram...attacked police after several members of the sect were arrested. The group seeks the implementation of a harsh form of sharia law in Nigeria. In addition to attacking police, numerous churches were burned, and reports indicate at least three Christian pastors were murdered" (United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (May 2010) *Annual Report 2010, Nigeria*, p.83).

In August 2009 an article published by *Reuters* notes:

"Armed with machetes, bows and arrows, shotguns and home-made bombs, Boko Haram attacked symbols of authority in the city of Maiduguri and other towns, including police stations, prisons, government offices and schools during last week's uprising. Five days of gun battles with the security forces killed close to 800 people before Yusuf was captured by the military and later shot dead in police detention. Churches were also burned, but the targets were overwhelmingly state institutions" (Reuters (6 August 2009) *Nigeria: "Analysis - Poverty, anger fuelled Nigerian sect uprising*).

No information on this issue could be found among sources available to the RDC.

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This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Refugee Documentation Centre within time constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

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