



Nigeria – Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on 29 May 2013

Any information on attacks by the Boko Haram on a Christian Church (Christmas Eve/Day 2012) in a village called Damaturu, (or Bukosko) Yobe State?

No reference was found to an attack on a Christian church in the town of Damaturu, Yobe State, on 25 December 2012. Numerous media reports refer to an attack on a church in a village near the town of Potiskum, Yobe State, on this date.

A BBC News report states:

“Gunmen in the northern Nigerian state of Yobe have shot dead at least six Christians, the army and local officials say. They say a church in Peri village near Potiskum, the economic capital of Yobe, was set on fire in an attack late on Christmas Eve. No group has so far said it carried out the attack.” (BBC News (25 December 2012) *Nigeria gunmen 'kill at least six Christians' in Yobe*)

A Xinhua General News Service report states:

“Many people were feared dead when unknown gunmen suspected to be militants of the Boko Haram sect stormed a church on Monday night in Nigeria's northeastern state of Yobe, local police sources told Xinhua. A senior police officer confirmed the killing to Xinhua, but said he could not disclose the casualty figure as his men were still on the field. A Xinhua reporter said the gunmen also set the church building ablaze after shooting into the congregation in a village near Potiskum, a commercial town in Yobe.” (Xinhua General News Service (25 December 2012) *Many feared dead in Christmas eve attack in Nigeria*)

A Christian Solidarity Worldwide report states:

“According to local sources gunmen suspected to be members of the Islamist extremist militia Boko Haram raided Firi Village, situated around 2 kilometres north of Potiskum Town, during the early hours of Christmas Day. They began by attacking the midnight service at the Church of Christ in Nations (COCIN), where six people were killed, including the church's pastor. As the attack was underway, residents, many of whom had fled into the bush, sent text messages stating their homes were being set alight and that the security services were yet to arrive at the scene. According to reports received by Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW), twenty homes and the COCIN church were subsequently razed to the ground.” (Christian Solidarity Worldwide (26 December 2012) *Twelve die in Christmas Attacks on churches in Northern Nigeria*)

An Agence France Presse report states:

“A group of gunmen came into the village at midnight and went straight to the church,’ said Usman Mansir, a resident of Peri village near Potiskum, the economic capital of Yobe. ‘They opened fire on them, killing the pastor and five worshippers. They then set fire to the church,’ he added, specifying that a branch of the Evangelical Church of West Africa (ECWA) was targeted. A senior police official in Yobe confirmed the details of the attack to AFP, but declined to be named, while Yobe's police chief Sanusi Rufa'i said ‘this is a security issue’ and refused to comment further. The head of the Christian Association of Nigeria in Yobe, Idi Garba, told AFP that many worshippers at ECWA ‘are still missing.’ ‘I have been informed that six bodies have been recovered,’ Garba said, adding that some who lived near the church ‘fled their homes during the attack and it is assumed that they are still hiding in the bush.’ Residents reported that the gunmen also set fire to several of the homes surrounding the church.” (Agence France Presse (25 December 2012) *Nigeria: Nigeria gunmen kill six at midnight church service*)

See also article published by the Abuja-based newspaper Leadership which states:

“Gunmen on Christmas Eve attacked a church in Peri, Yobe State, killing at least five people, including the pastor, and setting the building on fire, residents and police confirmed yesterday. No fewer than 20 houses were also allegedly burnt down in the attack. Peri, near Potiskum, is the economic capital of Yobe State. ‘A group of gunmen came into the village at midnight and went straight to the church. They opened fire on them (the worshippers) and then set fire to the church,’ said Usman Mansir, a resident of the village, according to Aljazeera online. A senior police official in Yobe State also confirmed the incident to the AFP news agency, but declined to be named. Yobe State Commissioner of Police Sanusi Rufa'i said the attack was ‘a security issue’ and refused to comment further. It was not clear who was behind the attack, but fighters belonging to the Boko Haram sect have carried out several attacks in the state and environs, which borders Maiduguri state where the activities of the group is most pronounced.” (Leadership (26 December 2012) *Nigeria: Gunmen Kill Five in Church Attack*)

A document from the World Cities website states:

“The distance from Potiskum to Damaturu is 60 miles (97 kilometers) in a straight line.” (World Cities (undated) *Distance From Potiskum to Damaturu*)

This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research and Information Unit 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.

References:

Agence France Presse (25 December 2012) *Nigeria: Nigeria gunmen kill six at midnight church service*
http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/reliefweb_pdf/node-546491.pdf

(Accessed 29 May 2013)

BBC News (25 December 2012) *Nigeria gunmen 'kill at least six Christians' in Yobe*

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-20842225?print=true>

(Accessed 29 May 2013)

Christian Solidarity Worldwide (26 December 2012) *Twelve die in Christmas Attacks on churches in Northern Nigeria*

<http://dynamic.csw.org.uk/article.asp?t=press&id=1467&search=>

(Accessed 29 May 2013)

Leadership (26 December 2012) *Nigeria: Gunmen Kill Five in Church Attack*

<http://www.lexisnexis.com>

(Accessed 29 May 2013)

This is a subscription database

World Cities (undated) *Distance From Potiskum to Damaturu*

http://www.worldcities.us/distance_from_Potiskum_to_Damaturu/

(Accessed 29 May 2013)

Xinhua General News Service (25 December 2012) *Many feared dead in Christmas eve attack in Nigeria*

<http://www.lexisnexis.com>

(Accessed 29 May 2013)

This is a subscription database

Sources Consulted:

All Africa

BBC News

Electronic Immigration Network

European Country of Origin Information Network

Google

Lexis Nexis

Refugee Documentation Centre Query Database

UNHCR Refworld

World Cities