

Nigeria: Islamic extremists kill 8; Military warns of planned 'massive attacks' in Maiduguri
By Associated Press
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MAIDUGURI, Nigeria — Islamic extremists killed eight people in an attack targeting teachers and Muslim clerics in northeast Nigeria, witnesses and the military said Thursday.

Military spokesman Lt. Col. Sagir Musa also warned that the Boko Haram terrorist network plans more such killings and “massive attacks” aimed at the northeastern city where their extremist movement was born — Maiduguri, capital of Borno state.

“The Joint Task Force wishes to alert citizens ... of the impending plans by Boko Haram terrorists to carry out massive attacks and bombings in Maiduguri metropolis and other parts of Borno State any moment from now and during the Eid al-Fitr.” That celebration on Aug. 8 marks the end of the Ramadan fasting period.

Musa said Tuesday’s attack in Bui town, 185 kilometers (115 miles) south of Maiduguri, killed eight civilians and appeared to be the beginning of the planned campaign.

Witness Bala Anjikui said the militants struck at night and targeted teachers, like him, and Islamic clerics.

Indicating a change of tactics, he said the militants used only knives to kill their victims — apparently to keep the noise of gunshots from attracting soldiers.

Nigeria declared a state of emergency on May 14 to fight an Islamic uprising by militants in the northeast who want to impose Islamic law across a country divided almost equally between the predominantly Muslim north and mainly Christian south.

The insurgency poses the greatest threat in years to security in Africa’s biggest oil producer and most populous nation of more than 160 million.

Earlier Thursday, the military congratulated themselves on the arrest of a Nigerian terrorist leader in neighboring Niger, saying it had foiled a plot to regroup and launch more attacks.

A statement Thursday said intelligence agents from both countries had been on the trail of the leader who was arrested Saturday in a border area. It did not identify the leader or his group.

Northeast Nigeria borders Niger and Chad and troops from all three countries have formed a joint force to try to secure hundreds of kilometers of porous borders.

The statement said the arrested leader had fled the military clampdown since the state of emergency was introduced and was recruiting and training militants in Niger to launch terrorist attacks in Nigeria.

Michelle Faul contributed to this report from Lagos, Nigeria.

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