

Churches attacked in Kenya, Nigeria

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c. 2012 Religion News Service NAIROBI, Kenya (RNS/ENInews) Kenyan churches are tightening security after a lone attacker exploded a grenade inside an evangelical church in Nairobi on Sunday (April 29), killing one person and injuring 15.

Meanwhile, a string of bombings in Nigeria during Sunday morning worship services killed at least four people in Maiduguri and 15 in Kano, with many others injured.

The Kenya attacks at the God's House of Miracles International Church occurred days after the U.S. embassy warned of an impending attack by al-Shabab, a militant Islamist group in neighboring Somalia.

"We condemn this attack in the strongest terms possible. This is a cowardly act that tells us that we need to be vigilant," the Rev. David Gathanju, Presbyterian Church of East Africa moderator, told ENI news.

With church centers coming under increased threat since Kenyan troops entered Somalia last October in pursuit of the militants, Gathanju said churches have been reviewing their security, including increased screening of vehicles and people arriving at worship.

"We are in discussions as churches to see how we can support each other. Plus we are getting help from the government. We believe this is a national issue, but while the government is doing something we also need to take care of our security," he said.

Muslims leaders condemned the attack, with Sheikh Mohammed Khalifa, the organizing secretary of the Council of Imams and Preachers of Kenya, saying it was "insane" to attack places of worship.

"This is not a religious war. Christians and Muslims in this country have been living in peace. But these are people who want to interfere with our co-existence. I am happy Christians have been peaceful and we pray for them," said Khalifa.