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AFRICA/NIGERIA - More than 200 victims on Christmas day bomb blast; the day of prayer and fasting on December 31st

Jos (Agenzia Fides) - There are 200 victims, among people who died or are missing, due to the attacks directed at some Christian churches at Christmas in Nigeria. This is what said is read in a statement sent to Agenzia Fides signed by His Exc. Mgr. Ade Job, Archbishop of Ibadan and President of the Episcopal Conference of Nigeria.
"We the Catholic Bishops of Nigeria are deeply saddened by the Christmas day bombings directed at some Christian churches, which include St. Teresa's Catholic Church, Madalla, under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of Minna diocese", the statement said.
"The death toll of people considered either dead or missing from the very unfortunate tragedy, is today feared to be about 200 people. Many of the wounded have now been hospitalized, while the Church edifice and other buildings around are in ruins", the statement continues.
The Nigerian Bishops also launch an appeal to the country's Islamic leadership: "Members of the Boko Haram sect (see Fides 29/12/2011) have claimed responsibility for this shameful crime against God and humanity. We use this opportunity to call on our peace loving Muslims especially their leaders from the political, economic, social and religious spectrums not only to publicly denounce these acts, but for their own good and good of Nigeria to be pro actives; and to do everything positive to end this movement".
"This group has apparently declared war on Nigeria and at times of war, nations are calling on their reserves. It is apparent that, if we depend only on our available active security agents, we shall not make much progress, I therefore, call on Mr. President to recall the retired experts in criminology and employ foreign experts in this field to assist the active security agents to put an immediate end to threat Boko Haram menace" writes Archbishop Job.
"Forgiveness is what the Lord Jesus has taught us that we might forgive this heinous crime against humanity, I call for a day of prayer, that all the faithful in Nigeria will pray and fast on December 31st, 2011. Pray for Nigeria in distress and pray for peace in our nation and pray for good Governance", concludes Mgr. Job. (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 30/12/2011)

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