

Nigerian archbishop calls for unity marches following Boko Haram massacres

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(RNS) Nigerian Roman Catholic Archbishop Ignatius Kaigama says his country needs a similar march to the one held in Paris on Sunday (January 11) to pay tribute to victims of Islamist militant attacks.

While 20 people were killed in the Paris rampage (including three terrorists), Boko Haram's ongoing campaign of terror in Nigeria has left hundreds dead. Last week, as many as 2,000 were killed as Boko Haram militants took over the town of Baga in Borno state.

Kaigama said he wants the international community to show determination to stop the advance of militants, who are indiscriminately killing Christians and Muslims and bombing villages, towns, churches and mosques.

"I hope even here a great demonstration of national unity will take place, to say no to the violence and find a solution to the problems plaguing Nigeria," Kaigama told Fides, a Catholic news agency.

On Saturday, three female suicide bombers—one reported 10 years old—blew themselves up in a crowded market in the town of Maiduguri, killing more than 20 people.

A week earlier, militants wiped out the town of Baga, along the western shores of Lake Chad. More than 2,000 people were feared dead and 10,000 displaced, in what has been described as the most deadly attack in the militants' history of mass killings.

Ban Ki-Moon, the U.N secretary general, condemned the attacks saying he was ready to help the Nigerian government in "bringing an end to the violence and alleviate the suffering of civilians."

“This marks a disturbing and bloody escalation of Boko Haram’s ongoing onslaught against the civilian population,” said Daniel Erye, Nigeria researcher for Amnesty International, in a Friday statement.