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Sudanese TV showed pictures of the victims

Sudanese officials say a lone gunman has killed at least 20 people in an attack on a mosque in Omdurman, near the capital Khartoum, during evening prayers.

State television said the gunman was shot dead by police after the attack, which came during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan. It showed pictures of bodies lying in rows outside the mosque in Jaraffa, a village on the outskirts of Omdurman.

More than 40 people were wounded when the gunman opened fire at random with a Kalashnikov assault rifle, the television said, quoting a police statement.

The gunman belonged to the militant Al-Takfir wa al-Hijran (Renunciation and Exile) faction, the statement said. He attacked a mosque belonging to another Muslim sect - Ansar al-Sunna (Supporters of Sunna).



More than 40 people were wounded in the attack

Terrified worshippers

"There was blood all over the place. People were terrified," said one worshipper, quoted by the French news agency AFP.

Some witnesses said there were at least two assailants.

The gunman killed by police was named as Abbas Baqir Abbas, from Al-Dasis - a village in northern Sudan's Al-Jazirah region.

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According to the police, he was killed while resisting arrest.

An angry crowd demanding revenge gathered outside the hospital where the casualties were taken.

An attack on the same mosque in 1996 killed 12 people.

Rival sects

The BBC's Cairo correspondent, Caroline Hawley, says the attack will be an embarrassment to the government, which had claimed to have arrested all the members of Al-Takfir wa al-Hijran blamed for the previous attack.

The sect believes Islamic law (Sharia) imposed in Sudan should be implemented by force, while Ansar al-Sunna, which has been targeted by Islamic militants before, does not.

Ansar al-Sunna has no political affiliations, but has links with the orthodox Sunni Muslim Wahhabi sect - the dominant religious force in Saudi Arabia.

The police statement promised protection for all Sudanese citizens and described the dead as martyrs.

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