



BOKO HARAM CONSCRIPT YOUTHS IN BORNO VILLAGES, KILL 4



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Boko Haram insurgents are forcefully recruiting young men from Borno villages to fight for them, Daily Trust learnt yesterday.

This came in the wake of Wednesday's killing of four youths in Yasku village close to Alagarno, known to be a breeding ground for Boko Haram fighters located south of Jakana in Kaga LGA of Borno State.

It is not yet clear if the four were killed because they refused to join the terrorists or for other reasons, but our correspondent learnt that they were killed around 2pm Wednesday.

"Some time ago, the insurgents took some of our children by force and left. This time, they came and there was no provocation in whatever form. The gunmen simply went to Yasku and shot dead the four harmless people. They also warned the locals not to bury the corpses. As I talk to you, the bodies are still there," a resident said yesterday.

It was gathered that earlier on Sunday, locals in Jakana discovered an improvised explosive device buried near the village and quickly alerted military operatives. The police bomb squad later went to the area to neutralise it.

"It was an explosive that can only be detonated by vehicle running over it, it was meant to kill security operatives on routine patrol because there was a similar one some weeks ago that killed innocent villagers," a security source said.

Residents of Auno, Jakana, Mainok, Benisheik and other villages said in the past three weeks, Boko Haram insurgents have stepped up violent campaigns and forceful recruitment of young men.

"I think they are desperately looking for members and their attitude is affecting the psychology of people," a community leader in Jakana said. He added that many youths have been indoctrinated by the Boko Haram.

"They have a way of changing the thinking and disposition of anyone they catch. On many occasions, our children that were forcefully recruited have turned their backs against us and taken part in attacking our villages," he said. He did not give the actual number of those picked but said the process is continuing. A cleric in Mainok also said many of their children had been taken away.

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"A disturbing trend is the forceful recruitment of men under the age of 40. The insurgents warned children here to seek knowledge from Quran only and not to read any other book. They also warned them not to go to farm...this is happening in all villages around", he said.

"The terrorists are losing ground seriously in terms of manpower, which is why they are picking youths by force. They did a similar thing around Marte, Mallam Fatori and other locations in northern Borno," a security source said. According to him, the campaign will not last long because they are being tracked. "Our only constraint is that some villagers are not forthcoming with information on the whereabouts of the terrorists who normally take cover in the midst of civilians in hamlets", he added.

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