

Home > Features >

We Wish We Had Their Corpses For Proper Burial Parents Of Two Cousins Killed By ISWAP Lament

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FEATURES



ISAAC SHOBAYO reports the impact of the death of two indigenes of Plateau State kidnapped in Borno State by Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) on their community, and how they are coming to terms with their demise.

THE people of Kombun, an agrarian community in Mangu Local Government area of Plateau State have been in a state of mourning since the news flittered in that two of their sons Godfrey Ali Shikagham (26) and Lawrence Dachir (28) were executed like criminals by members of the Islamic State of West Africa Province (ISWAP) in Borno State a few days ago.

In a video that has gone viral on the social media, three members of ISWAP were seen in the video executing the two young men while threatening to kill anyone from Plateau State. The ISWAP members in the video made unfounded claim that Christians have done terrible things to Muslims by killing their women and children and eating their flesh.

Speaking in Hausa and Arabic languages, they said, “We thank God. What Christians have done to us in Africa and Nigeria, when we think about it, it makes us cry. In Plateau State, they killed our women and children and eat their meat. So we are telling the government that we will take our revenge.

“I swear with God, we will not agree. We will take our revenge. That is why we take these fools. I swear, we will not sleep, we will take our revenge for the nonsensical things they are doing to us in Plateau State. Now we will start and take our revenge.”

The release of the video has continued to terrify many people in Plateau State, especially indigenes residing in Borno and neighbouring states, including those plying North-East roads for business.

Since it was discovered that the two boys executed by members of ISWAP were from Kombun in Mangu Local Government Area of Plateau State, residents in the community have been in mourning. Many of them even suspended all activities, especially farming which is their major occupation, to mourn the deceased. When Sunday Tribune visited the community, both the old and young in the community were seen in groups discussing the incident.

Sunday Tribune learnt that the two young boys were carpenters, who specialised in roofing and were said to have been engaged along with other artisans by a contractor to work at a construction site in Maiduguri, Borno State where they were captured by members of ISWAP along with others at the site.

Narrating the circumstances that led to their abduction and how the community got to know about their execution, a community leader, Elder Mathias Musa, said a group of boys who are artisans including the deceased from the community were hired by a contractor to work in Maiduguri.

“Based on what we heard from those who escaped the attack, the ISWAP attacked the construction site and abducted some of the workers while a few others escaped. Some of our boys who escaped, returned home and narrated their ordeal and how the two boys were abducted. We kept on praying for them until we saw the video of their execution. We clearly saw their faces and were able to identify them.

“The two that were killed were cousins. The family and the community are more pained and disturbed right now because we don’t have access to their corpses so as to give them proper burial. Their parents are still dazed; there is nothing we can do about it again.

“We wish we had the corpses. But since we cannot get their bodies, we can only observe the days of mourning and to receive condolences from those who care to come,” Elder Musa said.

The District Head of Kombum, His Highness Da Audu Gambo, who considered the death of the two boys as act of God, condemned gruesome manner they were killed.

“They died in the process of trying to eke out a living. We cannot stop them from going out since we don’t have work for them here. Everybody has his time; we believe their time has come. May their souls rest in peace,” he prayed.

When Sunday Tribune visited the residence of the two boys in Kumbum, their parents were still in a state of shock. They were surrounded by sympathisers. Intermittently, one of the bereaved mothers in anguish was calling on those who carried out the dastardly act to release their corpses so that they could be given proper burial.

“As young as they were, Godfrey and Lawrence were breadwinners of their respective families. I can categorically tell you that since Lawrence in particular finished his apprenticeship about four years ago, he has been the one taking care of his younger ones who are still in school. So the two families will definitely miss them. It is only God that can comfort the family, it is a great loss,” a sympathiser told Sunday Tribune.

However, a cleric, Pastor Abraham Jethro has called on both the federal and state government not to treat ISWAP’s threat of attacking Plateau indigenes especially those living in Borno State, with levity, noting that the source of the threat and its genuineness should be investigated and acted upon appropriately. He advised that both Plateau and Borno should collaborate to protect residents of both states.

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