



Nigeria: Video Shows Bodies of Foreign Hostages

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Amidst confusion in government circle in Nigeria over the claim by Ansaru, a group of Islamic militants, that it had killed the seven foreign construction workers in its custody, a video posted online appears to show the corpses of some of the slain foreign hostages.

The video, viewed by The Associated Press (AP) Monday, matched still images released earlier by the Islamic extremist group when it claimed the killings. The face of one of the corpses in the video also resembled that of one of the hostages already named by authorities.

European diplomats said Sunday that the hostages had been killed.

Monday, Minister of Interior, Mr. Abba Moro, told the BBC's Hausa language radio service that those nations said that it was "likely" that their citizens had died in the attack.

"We hope they're alive," Moro said. Moro did not respond to requests for comment Monday from the AP.

In the video, a gunman stands in sand, holding a rifle near what appears to be dead bodies. A later shot in the video shows three male corpses, one of whom appears to have been killed by a gunshot wound to the head from a high-powered weapon.

The grisly death of seven foreign hostages has angered Nigerians. A Nigerian Islamist group executed them this past weekend. The group posted a ... ([Resource: Nigerian Kidnappers Upload Video of Hostages](#))

The video has no sound. An accompanying caption for the video in Arabic calls it: "The killing of seven Christian hostages in Nigeria." Another description includes the statement Ansaru released last Saturday claiming that it killed the hostages, signed by a man with the nom de guerre Abu Usamatal Ansary.

Ansaru fighters kidnapped the foreigners on February 16 from a camp for the construction company Setraco at Jama'are, a town 200 kilometres from Bauchi, Bauchi State capital. In the attack, gunmen first assaulted a local prison and burned police trucks, authorities said. Then the attackers blew up a back fence at the construction company's compound and took over, killing a guard in the process, witnesses and police said.

The news of the killing of the hostages came as the nation's security forces remain unable to stop the guerrilla campaign of bombings, shootings and kidnappings across the country's north. The majority of those attacks have been blamed on Boko Haram, an Islamic extremist group that grew out of the remains of a sect that sparked a riot and a security crackdown in Nigeria in 2009 in which about 700 people were killed.

Boko Haram has hit international targets before, including an August 2011 car bombing of the United Nations office in Abuja that killed 25 people and wounded more than 100.

An online video also purportedly claims that Boko Haram is currently holding hostage a family of seven French tourists who were abducted from neighbouring Cameroun in late February. The group is blamed for killing at least 792 people last year alone, according to an AP count.

Ansaru, which analysts believe split from Boko Haram in January 2012, seems to be focusing much more on Western targets. Analysts said it had closer links to al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb and cared more about international issues, as opposed to Boko Haram's largely local grievances. But much remains unknown about Ansaru, which has communicated through short, sometimes muddled online statements.

The hostage killings appear to be the worst in decades targeting foreigners working in Nigeria. Most kidnappings in the country's southern oil delta see foreigners released after companies pay ransoms. The latest kidnappings in Nigeria's north, however, have seen the hostages killed either by their captors or in military raids to free them, suggesting a new level of danger for expatriate workers there.

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