

Boko Haram kills Briton, Italian hostages ...as Nigeria, British forces fail in rescue bid

...DPO, three other policemen killed in Gombe

BY JOHN BULUS
WITH AGENCY RE-
PORTS

BIRNIN-KEBBI — **TWO** hostages, a Briton and an Italian, who were kidnapped in Birnin-Kebbi, Kebbi State and held hostage since last May by Islamic sect, Boko Haram, have been killed in an attempted rescue operation in Sokoto.

In his immediate reaction, President Goodluck Jonathan, who condemned the killing of the two kidnapped foreigners before they could be rescued by a joint security raid, however, said those who were responsible had been arrested.

The effort to free Chris McManus, from the North West of England, and his colleague Franco Lamolinara was launched by British special forces and the Nigerian army.

Sky sources said there were no fatalities on the British and Nigerian forces' side but there were several fatalities among the hostage-takers.

A foreign agency reporter saw an ambulance ferrying away wounded people, but could not get close enough to see who was inside. Se-

curity forces cordoned off the area, blocking journalists from getting within a kilometer (around a half mile) of the site.

Prime Minister David Cameron said the pair appeared to have died at the hands of their captors, either before or during the course of the rescue bid.

Sky sources said it was believed there was a fight and during the assault the UK and Nigerian forces could not get to Mr McManus and Mr Lamolinara in time.

The sources said: "It strongly appears that the hostage-takers shot the hostages."

The rescue bid was launched after the UK received credible information about their whereabouts and that their lives were under increasing threat.

Speaking in Downing Street, Mr Cameron said Mr McManus and Mr Lamolinara were "taken hostage by terrorists" in northern Nigeria May last year.

He said: "Since then, we have been working closely with the Nigerian authorities to try to find Chris and Franco, and to secure their release. The terrorists holding the two hostages made

very clear threats to take their lives, including in a video that was posted on the internet.

"After months of not knowing where they were being held, we received credible information about their location. A window of opportunity arose to secure their release.

"We also had reason to believe that their lives were under imminent and growing danger. Preparations were made to mount an operation to attempt to rescue Chris and Franco.

"Together with the Nigerian government, today I authorised it to go ahead, with UK support. It is with great regret that I have to say that both Chris and Franco have lost their lives.

"We are still awaiting confirmation of the details, but the early indications are clear that both men were murdered by their captors, before they could be rescued."

He added: "Our immediate thoughts must be with Chris and Franco's families, and we offer them our sincerest condolences."

The Italian government also confirmed that the two hostages were dead.

Mr McManus and Mr Lamolinara - contract work-

ers for the construction company B Stabilini, were kidnapped by gunmen who stormed the apartment they shared in Birnin-Kebbi. The two men were in the city building a bank.

...kills DPO, three policemen

Meanwhile, unidentified gunmen, suspected to be adherents of Boko Haram Islamic sect, Wednesday night, attacked yet another police station located in Gombe State, killing four officers including the Divisional Police Officer, DPO, in charge of the station, Superintendent Abubakar Sadiq.

The attack occurred at the popular Ashaka Cement Factory in Bajoga town, Funakaye Local Government of the state.

The Gombe Divisional Police Station in the state capital was attacked penultimate Friday resulting in the killing of some officers and a few civilians in the process.

Eye-witnesses said the gunmen also attacked two commercial banks in the vicinity at about 7.30pm.