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# Horror in Sokoto: Al-Qaeda-funded group killed hostages

on MARCH 11, 2012 · in HEADLINES 12:45 am

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By Jide Ajani and Abdallah el-Kurebe, with agency reports

The group, which kidnapped and killed Franco Lamolinara, an Italian, and Christopher Mcmanus, a Briton, until the events of last Thursday, was being funded by the late Osama Bin-Ladin's Al-Qaeda, Sunday Vanguard can reveal.

Both hostages were construction engineers with B. Stabilini Construction Company Nigeria Ltd, engaged in the construction of the Kebbi branch of the Central Bank of Nigeria, CBN. They were abducted in May, last year.

Sources also claimed the group was a breakaway faction of the Jamaatu Ahlil Sunna Lidawati wal Jihad, otherwise known

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as Boko Haram.

And whereas President Goodluck Jonathan has in two separate letters to the families of the deceased expressed his heart-felt condolence, Sunday Vanguard had been made to understand that “a wave of arrests carried out last Tuesday by the Department of State Service, DSS, resulted in the capture of the group’s leader, Abu Mohammed”.

One of the sources revealed: “It was Abu Mohammed, with links to Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), who provided very useful information about the hideout of the kidnappers.

“It was that very useful piece of intelligence that formed the basis for a co-ordinated rescue operation last Thursday.



People stand outside the hideout building of the kidnappers one day after the failed rescue operation of a pair of British and Italian hostages by Nigerian special forces at Mabera Area in Sokoto on March 9, 2012. AFP PHOTO

“The information being provided by the persons already in custody made it clear to us that the situation was a no-win one because the standing instructions that the kidnappers had was to summarily execute the hostages once they noticed any sign of security men”.

The source added: “The kidnap was

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orchestrated for purely financial motives.

The aim was to raise ransom payment, part of which will go in funding their group's attacks".

According to an eye-witness resident in the area where the large, beautiful structure in Maberan Lukuwa, a suburb of Sokoto which housed the hostages was located, who watched the gun duel between the kidnappers and security operatives who carried out the rescue operations, "the kidnappers' attention was drawn by the military helicopter that carried out aerial surveillance on the house."

It was this development, Sunday Vanguard further gathered, that informed the kidnappers of the presence of the security operatives.

The eye witness went on : "When they heard the roaring sound of the helicopter, they came out and started shooting sporadically. "The soldiers had laid ambush with their guns pointed at the house and they had warned all residents here to stay away."

When it became apparent that they would be overwhelmed, the kidnappers were said to have killed the two hostages.

Eight of the kidnappers were reportedly shot dead and eight others captured. When Sunday Vanguard visited the house, yesterday, there was a pool of blood suspected to be that of the expatriates by the toilet in one of the rooms. It gave a strong indication that the victims were killed by the side of the toilet.

On the walls of the house, by a window, were holes from gun shots. The spokesperson for the Sokoto State Police Command, ASP Al-Mustapha Sani, told Sunday Vanguard that the operation was carried out by the armed forces.

### **Suspects in Abuja**

Meanwhile, security sources said, yesterday, that eight suspects arrested in connection with the kidnapping and killing of the expatriates had been flown to Abuja. "Those that were arrested in connection with the incident were brought to the SSS headquarters, Abuja", one of the sources said.

Jonathan commiserates with Britain, Italy

In the meantime, President Jonathan has formally commiserated with the families, people and governments of Britain and Italy over the death of McManus and Lamorina.

In two separate letters of condolence to David Cameron and Mario Monti, the Prime Ministers of Britain and Italy respectively, which were delivered through diplomatic channels, Jonathan said that the hearts of the people and government of Nigeria go out to the members of the immediate families of the victims in their moment of grief, while praying God to grant them the fortitude to bear the loss.

He also assured the leaders of both countries that "the Nigerian Government remains resolutely committed to facing up squarely to the challenge of terrorism on our shores and in the international community."

While describing as “invaluable” the cooperation the Nigerian government had enjoyed from both prime ministers in the fight against terrorism in the country, the president expressed the belief that the special relations and strong ties among the three nations “can only grow deeper and stronger.”

## **Row**

Italy had, on Friday, condemned Britain’s failure to warn it ahead of the failed rescue operation, but London said it had been forced by the situation to act swiftly. “The behaviour of the British government, which did not inform or consult with Italy on the operation that it was planning, really, is inexplicable,” President Giorgio Napolitano told reporters. “There needs to be a political and diplomatic clarification,” he said.

At an EU foreign ministers’ meeting in Copenhagen, later Friday, Foreign Minister Giulio Terzi di Sant’Agata said he made Italy’s feelings clear during talks with British Foreign Secretary William Hague. “I asked for detailed information because we have a right to maximum clarity on this episode,” Italy’s foreign minister said. Cameron said the two hostages had been held by “terrorists” who had made “very clear threats to take their lives”, and the captives had been in “imminent and growing danger”.

Both countries have however agreed to cooperate on the issue. AFP received a video showing McManus and Lamolinara in August. In the footage, both men said their

kidnappers were from Al-Qaeda.

In a second video received by a Mauritanian news agency and seen by AFP in December, gunmen threatened to execute McManus if their demands were not met. President Goodluck Jonathan said the kidnappers were from the Islamist Boko Haram sect.

But the radical sect denied the claim on Friday. "We are not behind the hostage taking ... which led to the military operation yesterday in Sokoto in which the hostages were killed," the group's spokesman Abul Qaqa said in a conference call with reporters. Nigeria's government "had better get its facts straight and find the true identity of the kidnappers," Qaqa added.

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afam6nr

The major problem with Nigerians or Africans and their leaders is naivety, lack of basic intelligence. That's why every European or American has no single regard for anybody Black.

The same reason is why most of the commentators here are missing the point.

Bill Clinton was in Nigeria recently and told the world that Boko Haram is fighting the injustice of poverty inflicted on the North of

Nigeria by the South. All the Western Countries have been echoing the same song. The noticeable factor, obviously the West has not been comfortable with, is the recent power shift to the South of Nigeria out of the hands of their well trusted and easily manipulated North.

The immediate example is the presence of the British and Italian Engineers in a Nigerian Government project in Sokoto State at the expense of the multitude of unemployed but highly qualified Nigerian Engineers from the very Sokoto State.

So, when the Western Firm is awarded the Contract and earns into the Western pocket from the budget of Sokoto State Government, obviously to the West, that does not impoverish the Sokoto State Citizens. That's the very problem with the Africans and their Leaders.

Show me one single contract awarded by any Western Country to any African Company in the history of this planet.

The intelligent Sokoto Citizens saw exactly the people that have continued to impoverish them and applied the only weapon they can think of at their disposal; that is kidnapping for a ransom.

A rescue operation by British Government in Nigeria has no other interpretation other than Invasion of a Sovereign Country.

The message is clear. Nigeria has no Government!

If there is a Government in Nigeria, then that Government is a Western Government.

The question then arises!

Is Jonathan the Queen's Consul or an Obama Ambassador to Nigeria ?

The Next Question is!