

Muslims Behead Somali Convert to Christianity

A kidnapped Christian convert from Islam was found decapitated on Sept. 2 on the outskirts of Hudur City in Bakool region, in southwestern Somalia.

Juma Nuradin Kamil was forced into a car by three suspected Islamic extremists from the Al-Shabaab terrorist group on Aug. 21, area sources said. After members of his community thoroughly combed the area looking for him, at 2 p.m. on Sept. 2 one of them found Kamil's body dumped on a street.

The kidnapping and subsequent manner of murder suggests that Al-Shabaab militants had been monitoring him, Christian leaders said. Muslim extremists from Al-Shabaab, a militant group with ties to al-Qaida, have vowed to rid Somalia of Christianity, and they control the area some 400 kilometers from Mogadishu.

A Christian who saw Kamil's body said it bore the marks of an Al-Shabaab killing, according to a leader in Somalia's underground church who lives in another city.

"It is usual for the Al-Shabaab to decapitate those they suspect to have embraced the Christian faith, or sympathizers of western ideals," the leader said. "Our brother accepted the Christian faith three years ago and was determined in his faith in God. We greatly miss him."

An area resident said he was on his way to his house when he saw a crowd of stunned people gazing at the corpse.

"I could not immediately comprehend what might have gone wrong, only to learn that someone had been decapitated," the resident said. "His head was put on his chest."

A Christian said the area community initially did not bury the body out of fear of Al-Shabaab extremists seeing them associated with a newly discovered convert to Christianity.

"The community feared burying him, and his body lay in the open for two days before unknown people buried him secretly," he said.

Another Christian convert who lives in another city said Kamil had become a Christian three years ago.

"This is very sad news for the community," he said.

A source in Mogadishu with ties to Somalia's underground church confirmed the murder of Kamil.

With estimates of Al-Shabaab's size ranging from 3,000 to 7,000, the insurgents seek to impose a strict version of *Shariah* (Islamic law), but the transitional government in Mogadishu fighting to retain control of the country treats Christians little better than the Al-Shabaab extremists do. While proclaiming himself a moderate, President Sheikh Sharif Sheik Ahmed has embraced a version of *Shariah* that mandates the death penalty for those who leave Islam.

Al-Shabaab was among several splinter groups that emerged after Ethiopian forces removed the Islamic Courts Union, a group of *Shariah* courts, from power in Somalia in 2006. Al-Shabaab has been designated a terrorist organization by several western governments.

In the Lower Shabele region of Somalia earlier this year, two Muslim extremists murdered a member of a secret Christian community, sources said. An area source told Compass two Al-Shabaab militants shot 21-year-old Hassan Adawe Adan in Shalambod town after entering his house on April 18.

In Warbhigly village on the outskirts of Mogadishu, a mother of four was killed for her Christian faith on Jan. 7 by

Islamic extremists from Al-Shabaab, a relative said. The relative, who requested anonymity, said Asha Mberwa, 36, was killed when the Islamic extremists cut her throat in front of villagers who came out of their homes as witnesses.