

Table of Contents

- ***Unmarried couple stoned to death in Mali for 'violating Islamic law'***
-

Unmarried couple stoned to death in Mali for 'violating Islamic law'

The man and woman were put in two holes dug by ringleaders before four people attacked them, local official says.

The Guardian (17.05.2017) - <http://bit.ly/2qxJuwB> - An unmarried couple have been stoned to death in public in north-east Mali, in the first such incident since jihadi groups were driven out of the region.

Jihadis seized key northern cities in Mali in March 2012, and though they were driven out by a French-led military intervention in 2013, Islamist groups continue to make their presence felt with frequent attacks on domestic and foreign forces.

"The Islamists dug two holes where they put the man and the woman who lived maritally without being married," said a local official. "They were stoned to death."

The execution happened in Taghlit, close to Aguelhok in the Kidal region, on Tuesday. The same source told AFP that members of the public were invited to take part.

"Four people threw stones at them until they died," they said.

Another local official said the ringleaders had accused the unmarried couple of violating "Islamic law", which requires punishment by stoning.

During their brief control of key towns in the north, jihadist groups imposed a version of Sharia law which forced women to wear veils and set whipping and stoning as punishment for transgressions.

In July 2012, the Al-Qaida-linked Ansar Dine group stoned a couple in public in Aguelhok they had accused of having children outside marriage.

The Malian Association for the Defence of Human Rights described Tuesday's stoning as "cowardly murder".

"This is barbaric. The people who did this should be arrested and put on trial," said Oumar Diakite, an AMDH official.

The opposition Parena party meanwhile noted that 309 people had been killed since the beginning of the year by armed groups, describing "alarm at the deterioration of the security situation" two years after the signature of a peace deal.

That accord was aimed at ending successive uprisings by Tuareg rebels, who signed the deal along with the government and pro-Bamako militias in the hope of bringing stability to the north.

The last Tuareg rebellion in 2012 was hijacked by the Islamists, throwing the country into chaos.

The stoning comes on the eve of an expected visit to Mali by the French president, Emmanuel Macron, who is due to meet French troops stationed there on Thursday or Friday.

A UN mission known by its acronym Minusma has also been stationed in the west African country since 2013 and is considered the world body's most dangerous active peacekeeping deployment.
