

Islamists behead more than 50 people on a football pitch in Mozambique then chop the bodies to pieces after abducting female villagers

From the [Daily Mail](#)

More than 50 people have been beheaded in northern Mozambique by militant Islamists, state media report. The militants turned a football pitch in a village into an “execution ground”, where they decapitated and chopped bodies, other reports said.

Several people were also beheaded in another village, state media reported.

At least 15 boys were among the dead, and some of the victims were teenagers taking part in a male initiation ceremony,

The attack is the latest in a growing wave of jihadist violence in Mozambique by extremists linked to ISIS.

The BBC’s Jose Tembe reports from the capital, Maputo, that the latest attack was probably the worst carried out by the militants. Many people are shocked, and they are calling for a peaceful resolution to the conflict, he adds.

The gunmen chanted “Allahu Akbar” (“God is greatest”, in English), fired shots, and set homes alight when they raided Nanjaba village on Friday night, the state-owned Mozambique News Agency quoted survivors as saying.

‘Police learned of the massacre committed by the insurgents through reports of people who found corpses in the woods,’

said an officer in the Mueda district. 'It was possible to count 20 bodies spread over an area of about 500 metres (yards),' he added. 'These were young people who were at an initiation rite ceremony accompanied by their advisers.'

An aid worker in Mueda, who also declined to be named, confirmed the massacre had taken place, saying some of the boys had come from that area. She said body parts had been sent to their families for burial on Tuesday. 'Funerals were held in an environment of great pain,' said the worker. 'The bodies were already decomposing and couldn't be shown to those present.'

Jihadists have caused havoc in Mozambique's northeastern Cabo Delgado province over the past three years, ravaging villages and towns as part of a campaign to establish an Islamist caliphate.

Little is known about Mozambique's jihadists, who call themselves Al-Shabab – although they have no known links to the group of that name operating in Somalia.

Last year the militants pledged allegiance to ISIS.