Rape of children, women by Boko Haram on the rise -Amnesty

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Global rights group, Amnesty International, says terrorist organisation, Boko Haram, now rapes women and children at an alarming rate.  
  
Amnesty, therefore, called on the government to take urgent action to bring this to an end.  
  
The group said this in a statement on Wednesday titled, ‘Boko Haram brutality against women and girls needs urgent response – new research’.  
  
It read in part “Boko Haram fighters targeted women and girls with rape and other sexual violence, amounting to war crimes, during recent raids in northeast Nigeria, new research by Amnesty International has revealed.  
  
“In February and March 2021, Amnesty International interviewed 22 people in a cluster of villages in northern Borno State that Boko Haram has repeatedly attacked since late 2019. During violent raids, Boko Haram fighters killed people trying to flee and looted livestock, money, and other valuables.”  
  
The Director of Amnesty International Nigeria, Osai Ojigho, said the targeted communities have been abandoned by the forces that are supposed to protect them, and are struggling to gain any recognition or response to the horrors they’ve suffered. The Nigerian authorities must urgently address this issue.  
  
“The International Criminal Court must immediately open a full investigation into the atrocities committed by all sides, and ensure those responsible are held accountable, including for crimes against women and girls,” she said.  
  
Amnesty said after repeated displacement, the affected communities have mostly moved to military-controlled areas, but many have yet to receive any humanitarian assistance.  
  
It said rape and other sexual violence survivors and witnesses described attacks involving sexual violence in at least five villages in the Magumeri local government area of Borno State.  
  
The statement further read, “During raids, usually at night, Boko Haram fighters raped women and girls who were caught at home or trying to flee. One woman was physically assaulted by Boko Haram fighters as she fled from an attack in late 2020.  
  
“She crawled to a home and hid there with her children, and saw fighters return and enter a nearby home. She said ‘In the next house, I started hearing some women were shouting and screaming and crying. I was very afraid. After some minutes, maybe 30 minutes, I saw the men come out of the house. There were five or six of them with their guns. Then afterwards, the women were confused. Their dresses were not normal’”.  
  
Amnesty said it interviewed three other witnesses who similarly described the same attack, including hearing women’s screams and seeing them extremely distressed after Boko Haram left. A traditional healer said she cared for several women following the attack who had been raped.  
  
The same healer had previously treated two other survivors, including one who was under 18 years old, after a Boko Haram attack on another village.  
  
The woman was quoted as saying, “I could see the pain on their faces. [The first survivor] told me what happened. I saw her private parts. They were very swollen. So I understood it was more than one or two people who had raped her. She was suffering.”  
  
Another woman told Amnesty that during the same attack fighters shot people who were running away, then came to her house and sexually assaulted her.  
  
She said, “The men entered my room. I asked what they wanted. They took my jewellery and belongings. Then they fell on me.”  
  
Some witnesses also described Boko Haram abducting women during several attacks, taking them away on motorbikes. The women were returned to their village days later, showing clear signs of trauma.