



German kidnap - Nigeria detains 5 Qaedas

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Kano - Nigerian authorities have detained five men, including a Mauritanian, believed linked to al-Qaeda's north African branch over the January kidnapping of a German, two security sources said on Tuesday.

Four of the suspects were arrested in a raid on a store in the northern city of Kano owned by the Mauritanian last week, while the fifth was held in a separate raid, the sources said.

"Guns and a laptop were recovered in the store and the documents found in the computer, including an Aqim operation manual, showed that the suspects are linked to Aqim and were involved in the kidnap of the German engineer in January," one of the sources said in describing the store raid.

Aqim is the abbreviation for al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, the extremist group's north African arm.

German engineer Edgar Raupach was kidnapped on the outskirts of Kano in January.

AQIM said last week it was holding the German and that it wanted to swap him for a jailed Muslim woman, a private news agency in Mauritania said.

Nigerian authorities have come under intense pressure over the kidnapping as well as violence blamed on Islamist group Boko Haram.

It also faced criticism after a failed bid to rescue an Italian and a British hostage earlier this month. The hostages were killed by their captors before they could be rescued in a joint operation with British security forces, authorities said.
