**Blindfolded and Forced to Their Knees, Three Men are Beheaded With Blood-Covered Sword By ISIS Executioner For Homosexuality And Blasphemy As Crowd Cheer On Each Blow**

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http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2987901/Photos-claim-IS-beheadings-homosexuals-northern-Iraq.html#ixzz3U0uXHZ3V

Chilling new images have emerged of three men accused of homosexuality and blasphemy being forced to their knees and publicly beheaded by a sword-wielding Islamic State executioner.

Photographs of the barbaric murders show the blindfolded men kneeling in the centre of what appears to be a traffic roundabout with a crowd of people looking on as a masked executioner stands by with a long, rusty blade.

After an elderly man uses a microphone to read to the crowd from his notes, the executioner then steps forward with the blade poised above the men's heads in the unnamed city in northern Iraq.

Accompanying captions said the trio were then beheaded - two for engaging in homosexual acts and the third for alleged blasphemy - but there were no images released of the actual beheading.

The jihadist group, which controls swathes of Iraq and neighbouring Syria, has carried out hundreds of barbaric executions as it has imposed its brutal version of Islamic law, many of which are photographed or videotaped.

The photos were said to have been taken in Nineveh province - the first to fall to a sweeping IS-led offensive last June - but the exact location was not specified.

Many young men have also been thrown from the roofs of buildings throughout ISIS-controlled areas after being accused of engaging in homosexual acts.

The stomach-churning photographs usually show a blindfolded victim being dragged to the top of a building by black-masked militants.

As crowds gather at street level the men are thrown to their death, while jihadis and members of the public use mobile phones to film the gruesome murders.

Iraqi troops and militia are battling to push the jihadists back with support from a US-led coalition and Iran.

But retaking Nineveh and its capital Mosul poses a major challenge for Baghdad's forces, as the militants have had more than nine months to dig in.

Iraqi forces launched a huge operation last week aimed at retaking the city of Tikrit that, if successful, would serve as a stepping stone towards Mosul.