

Nigeria bleeds as politics takes centre stage

By Baba Martins (Abuja), Abdul-lateef Aliyu, Peter Moses (Lagos), Abubakar Auwal (Sokoto) & Abdullahi Izma Yamadi (Katsina)

As political parties in Nigeria prepare for the General Elections with screening of aspirants and primaries, attacks have continued in parts of the country. Many politicians who scaled through these preliminary stages have been celebrating while those who lost are mourning.

Amid all that, on Sunday, one of the seven teachers abducted alongside children of Community High School, Ahoro-Esinele in Oyo State, on Friday, was beheaded in a video released by the abductors. This is just as parents continue to await news on the whereabouts of their children kidnapped from a school in Borno State, also on Friday last week.

This comes as suspected members of the Lakurawa terror group killed seven soldiers in an ambush at Bunji village in Illela Local Government Area of Sokoto State.

The incident, according to local sources, occurred on Saturday evening last week as the troops were returning from a military operation against a Lakurawa hideout when one of their vehicles broke down. The attack is one among the many on military personnel in past weeks where several have paid the supreme price.

And in Katsina State, eleven persons, including a pregnant woman, were killed on Sunday when suspected bandits attacked a market in Bakori Local Government Area of the state. Witnesses told Daily Trust that the attackers invaded Guga Grains Market in broad daylight, shooting indiscriminately and killing several people on the spot.

However, the military has recorded successes in the fight against insurgents. As aside the killing of Abu-Bilal al-Minuki, ISIS second-in-command, on Saturday, in collaboration with the United States forces, the Defence Headquarters (DHQ) said more than 20 ISIS/ISWAP fighters have been killed in multiple US-Nigeria air strikes in Metele, Borno State.

Samaila Uba, director of defence information at the DHQ, in a statement on Monday, said the strikes followed "observed convergence and migration of terrorist elements".

"The ongoing operations follow the neutralisation of ISIS commander Abu-Bilal al-Minuki and are part of sustained efforts to disrupt terrorist networks, remove them from the battlefield and deny the terrorists any safe haven within Nigeria," the statement reads.



Teachers protesting over abduction of students in Oyo State



Community High School, Ahoro-Esinele in Oyo State, from where teachers and students were abducted

Bandits behead abducted Oyo teacher

One of the kidnapped teachers of the Community High School, Michael Oyedokun, has been killed. The attackers had abducted staff, students, and pupils of Community Grammar School, Baptist Nursery and Primary School and L.A. Primary School, all in the area. Daily Trust gathered that over 40 people were abducted in the attack.

Oyedokun was beheaded in a new video allegedly released by the attackers on Sunday. The video obtained by our correspondent on Telegram on Monday showed that the teacher was gruesomely killed after being tied and forced to speak. The video has raised fresh concerns over the safety of the remaining victims.

This latest development has thrown the community into mourning as residents, families of the victims and native continue to call on security agencies and the Oyo State government to intensify rescue operations to secure the release of those still in captivity before being killed.

Confirming the killing of the teacher, Dr Suleimon Olanrewaju, the Special Adviser on Media to Governor Seyi Makinde, in a statement on Monday, said the governor extended his condolences to the victim's family and assured his government would explore both kinetic and non-kinetic approaches to rescue others in the kidnappers' den.

He added that about six suspects related to the kidnapping incident had been arrested.

He equally sympathised with the family members of the tactical team of soldiers, Amotekun Corps and local vigilantes, who lost their lives in the rescue operation.

According to him, the operatives lost their lives when they ran into Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs), planted by the abductors.

He stated that the wounded security personnel were responding positively to treatment and that the government would spare no cost in taking care of them.

He appealed to the victims' relatives, religious bodies and other interested parties to exercise patience, promising that the government will rescue and reunite

have been arrested by another security outfit within the state," he said.

Meanwhile, Governor Makinde has said that his government is willing to listen to the grievances of the abductors if such dialogue would aid the swift and safe return of the victims. He, however, declared that his administration would not surrender to terror.

Tinubu condemns attack, tasks NASS on state police laws

President Bola Ahmed Tinubu has condemned the killing of one of the abducted teachers, assuring that the federal government will collaborate with the state to rescue the victims.

Bayo Onanuga, Special Adviser to the President on Information and Strategy, in a statement further disclosed that rescue operation is underway.

The president also called on the National Assembly to expedite action on the enactment of State Police laws to enable them take charge of underserved areas.

Meanwhile, the Presidency said security operatives are "working around the clock to rescue the victims and apprehend the bandits and their collaborators within the community."

While sympathising with Governor Seyi Makinde, the government, and the people of Oyo State for the incident, President Tinubu assured them that the federal government will collaborate with the state government to rescue the victims.

"I am saddened by the reported killing of one of the teachers kidnapped by the gunmen who invaded the community. I sympathise with Governor Seyi

Makinde and commend the steps he has taken on the matter. I sympathise with the families of the kidnapped victims.

"The federal government is working with the Oyo State government to rescue all the victims. I commend the Inspector-General of Police and the Commissioners of Police in Oyo and Kwara States for their quick intervention and the deployment of a tactical and the Intelligence Response Team (IRT) team to rescue the victims.

"The IGP, following my instructions, is personally leading the tech-driven operation. We expect a breakthrough soon. The bandits and all their local collaborators will be fished out and made to face the full wrath of the law.

"Cases of kidnapping further make imperative the establishment of state police to man some of our underserved areas. The National Assembly should accelerate the enactment of the law creating state police," the president said.

PDP faction condemns killing of teacher, abduction of pupils

The Interim National Working Committee (INWC) of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), led by Kabiru Tanimu Turaki, has also condemned the incident.

In a statement issued by the party's National Publicity Secretary, Ini Ememobong, the PDP described the killing of a mathematics teacher among those abducted from the three schools as further evidence of the worsening insecurity in the country.

In Katsina State, eleven persons, including a pregnant woman, were killed on Sunday when suspected bandits attacked a market in Bakori Local Government Area of the state.

the victims with their families.

"So, please, there may not be quick fixes, but we will continue to endeavour to push ourselves to the limit to resolve this quickly.

"What we know right now is that seven teachers were abducted. And, unfortunately, we got a video this morning that one of the teachers, I understand, the mathematics teacher, was killed by the terrorists," he stated.

He added, "From the information available from the Commissioner of Police, about six individuals have been arrested within the locality.

"Some of them, we believe, are perhaps informants or people running logistics for the terrorists.

"Also, three individuals of interest

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The party said insecurity under the current administration had become "the lived reality of citizens," accusing the government of lacking both the capacity and political will to tackle the crisis.

According to the statement, the latest incident adds to an "endless catalogue of victims and has further fueled a growing ransom economy that continues to impoverish Nigerians".

While sympathising with the families of the deceased and abducted victims, the PDP urged the government to move beyond "performative assurances" and adopt practical, sustained and result-oriented security measures.

Oyo CAN declares prayer, fasting over school abductions

The Oyo State chapter of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) has declared Wednesday, May 20, a day of prayer and fasting for the release of abductees.

In a statement signed by its chairman, Rev. Elisha Ogundiyi, CAN condemned the attack, describing schools as safe spaces that must never become targets for criminals.

"The trauma inflicted on these children, teachers and families is immeasurable," the association said.

CAN commended steps taken by the Oyo State Government and security agencies but urged them to secure the immediate release of the victims, strengthen security in vulnerable communities and prosecute the perpetrators.

The association also called for community-based security measures and improved school safety protocols to prevent future attacks. It urged residents to remain calm and support security agencies with useful information.

CAN directed all churches in the state to observe prayer and fasting on Wednesday, ending at 6 p.m.

In Borno, parents of abducted children await information

Parents of the schoolchildren abducted in Borno State said they have yet to establish contact with the terrorists, five days after the incident.

The children, between the ages of two and 19, were abducted last Friday from Government Day Secondary School and Mussa Central Primary School in Askira-Uba Local Government Area of Borno State.

Mussa is a remote community in Askira-Uba Local Government Area bordering the Sambisa Forest, a known stronghold of Boko Haram insurgents.

Speaking with Daily Trust, some parents and residents said that, five days after the abduction, no group had contacted them or claimed responsibility for the attack.

Muhammad Saleh, a parent, said the family had endured sleepless nights since the abduction of the children.



■ Some of the houses burnt by suspected bandits during an attack at Guga village in Bakori area of Katsina State

"It has been four days since my two children were taken, and I have not slept. My wife barely eats and cries constantly," he said.

Saleh said the continued silence from the abductors had worsened the families' anxiety.

"We are deeply disturbed that nobody has contacted us or explained why the children were abducted. The silence is tormenting us," he added.

A parent who requested anonymity said the attackers stormed the village around 9 am on Friday and headed straight to the school.

"It was after they seized the children that we heard gunshots and realised what was happening. They led the children into the bush without resistance," he said.

Residents said they watched helplessly as the insurgents moved the children away.

Yusuf Gapchia, whose son escaped, said the community had remained traumatised.

"On the day of the abduction, nobody could eat. Some parents and security operatives pursued the insurgents and searched through the night, but they could not find the children," he said.

Residents expressed fears that the abducted children could be recruited by the insurgents if they are not rescued quickly.

Sokoto: 7 soldiers, 1 civilian killed in Lakurawa ambush

And in the North West state of Sokoto, Suspected Lakurawa terrorists have killed seven soldiers in an ambush at Runji village, about 10 kilometres from Illela town in Illela Local Government Area of Sokoto State.

The incident, according to local sources, occurred on Saturday evening last week as the troops were returning from a military operation against a Lakurawa hideout.

Residents said the soldiers had launched an assault on the terrorists' camp using three

military vehicles, an operation believed to have inflicted heavy casualties on the armed group.

A source familiar with the development said one of the military vehicles developed a mechanical fault while the troops were heading back to their base in Illela, forcing some of the soldiers to stop by the roadside to repair it.

"The terrorists had apparently mobilised and trailed the soldiers to retaliate for the earlier attack on their camp," the source said.

He added that the assailants stormed the area on about 30 motorcycles, with each motorcycle carrying three heavily armed fighters.

"They met the soldiers where the faulty vehicle was being repaired and a fierce gun battle ensued," the source added.

Another source, however, said seven soldiers and one civilian were killed during the ambush.

"The soldiers had abandoned the faulty vehicle and were walking back to their base with the aid of an unnamed civilian who mastered the terrain very well when the Lakurawa ambushed them, killing seven soldiers and their civilian guide," the source said.

A resident of Illela, who requested anonymity for security reasons, said at least six soldiers were initially confirmed dead at the scene, while the body of another soldier was later discovered in a nearby bush, bringing the death toll to seven.

"We saw seven corpses at the scene, and another body was found the following day," he said.

Security sources also confirmed the attack, stating that the bodies of the slain soldiers had been evacuated to Sokoto.

A government official in the area further disclosed that a military officer, said to be a lieutenant in the Nigerian Army, was among those killed in the ambush.

The spokesperson for the Sokoto State Police Command, DSP Ahmad Rufa'i, and the Special Adviser on Security

Matters, Col. Ahmed Usman, declined to comment on the incident.

However, a senior military officer confirmed that six soldiers were killed in the incident.

"Yes, we recorded a regrettable casualty over the weekend around Illela. However, immediate tactical reinforcements have been deployed to the area, while aggressive intelligence-led operations are ongoing to track and neutralise the terrorists responsible."

"In line with military tradition, we cannot disclose the identities of our fallen heroes until their next of kin have been duly notified."

"We, therefore, urge the media to respect the privacy of the affected families and refrain from publishing unverified casualty figures. Instead, attention should be focused on the sacrifices and commitment of our troops," the officer said.

11 killed as bandits attack Katsina market

Eleven persons, including a pregnant woman, were killed on Sunday when suspected bandits attacked a market in Bakori Local Government Area of Katsina State.

Witnesses told Daily Trust that the attackers invaded the Guga grains market in broad daylight, shooting indiscriminately and killing people on the spot.

"One of the victims was a pregnant woman who came to the market to buy foodstuff. The bandits were many and they were shooting everywhere. People ran in different directions to save their lives," a resident said.

Another witness said the assailants operated for several minutes without resistance.

"They did not face any challenge. They killed people, looted shops and rustled animals before leaving," he said.

The bodies of the victims were buried on Monday morning

in Guga village, according to residents. A community member said most of those killed were farmers from nearby villages.

"The people killed were mainly from Gidan Sarkin Noma and Gidan Wawu. They are hardworking farmers who only came to sell their produce," he said.

Residents further disclosed that several houses were set ablaze during the attack, while an unspecified number of livestock, including cattle, sheep and goats, were rustled.

Guga village, located in the northern part of Bakori, has been repeatedly attacked by bandits over the past year, leading to killings, abductions and the displacement of many residents.

"We are tired of burying our people. This is not the first time bandits are attacking us. We need lasting solutions," a youth leader said.

Residents appealed to the authorities to revive dialogue with repentant bandits as part of efforts to strengthen earlier community-led peace agreements.

"We are calling on the government to look into the previous peace arrangements and improve them," a community elder said.

Efforts to get response from security agencies on the latest attack was unsuccessful as the spokesperson of Katsina State Police Command who promised to verify and call back did not respond as of the time of filling this report.

US, Nigeria forces kill over 20 ISIS fighters in fresh air strike

The Defence Headquarters (DHQ) says more than 20 ISIS/ISWAP fighters have been killed in multiple US-Nigeria air strikes in Metele, Borno State.

Samaila Uba, director of defence information at the DHQ, in a statement on Monday, said "the ongoing operations follow the neutralisation of ISIS commander Abu-Bilal al-Minuki and are part of sustained efforts to disrupt terrorist networks, remove them from the battlefield and deny the terrorists any safe haven within Nigeria," the statement reads.

He added, "the Armed Forces of Nigeria will continue to aggressively defend the sovereignty, security and territorial integrity of the nation."

"Terrorists who threaten our citizens, communities and national stability will be located and defeated. There will be no safe haven for all terrorists anywhere in Nigeria."

The United States Africa Command (US-Africom) had stated on its website, that "kinetic strikes against ISIS in Northeastern Nigeria" were carried out on Sunday in coordination with the Nigerian government.