

Anxiety over fate of 416 captives as 12 escape from Boko Haram

By : Seye Olumide, Johnson Eyangho, Njadvara Musa, Sodiq Omolaoye

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Boko Haram. PHOTO: AFP

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- 18 killed in fresh Gwoza attack
 - We have prioritised politics over security, Ningi laments
 - Deploy more military to Kaduna, Borno, Yobe, Reps tell Tinubu
 - Troops kill 54 terrorists in two days in Borno

- **Fintiri visits community after attack leaves nine dead in Adamawa**
- **Yoruba Ronu flays Senate over proposed campaign suspension in Northern states**

As the 72-hour deadline issued by [Boko Haram](#) to the Nigerian government over the 416 abducted victims in Borno State elapsed yesterday, mum was the word on either side from both the terrorists and security officials. However, 12 out of the 416 captives in Ngoshe community, Gwoza Local Government Area of Borno have escaped, leaving the fate of the other 404 hanging by a thread.

The insurgents had given the ultimatum on Monday to the state and federal governments to respond to their demand of N5 billion ransom or risk losing the captives forever. They also threatened that any attempt by the government to rescue the victims by force would be met with resistance, and the victims would be taken to different locations.

A source from Pulka revealed that the escaped victims of the Ngoshe kidnapping escaped after the military invaded one of the Boko Haram locations. “One of the victims told us that there were military operations in the areas which forced the insurgents to abandon some of them and escape with the majority of the captives,” he said.

This is as 18 people, including firewood scavengers and farmers who went to their farms for clearance, were killed in a fresh attack yesterday during a Boko Haram ambush at the outskirts of Gwoza local government area in the state. Sources said the insurgents, who were on a rampage, shot at anyone in the bush or those clearing their farmlands ahead of the forthcoming rainy season.

According to a source in Gwoza Council, “so far, 18 dead bodies have been recovered in the nearby surroundings of Gwoza town, as more victims are also feared dead or missing.”

Confirming the latest killings, [Senator Mohammed Ali Ndume](#), said: “I received a distress call this afternoon that 18 of my constituents who went to their farms were ambushed and killed by terrorists this morning. It is quite unfortunate and shocking. May Allah grant Aljannatul Firdaus to their souls, and may their families bear the irreparable loss.”

In a statement by Borno South Youth Alliance, the president, Samaila Kaigama, confirmed that those previously held by the insurgents escaped on Wednesday night. “They are now safe in a nearby town,” he said.

Kaigama said the escapees, 10 females and two males, were identified.

“While we are grateful for this development, we must state clearly that a larger number of victims are still believed to remain in captivity,” he said. The assailants held the abductees after the March 4 attack on the military base and Ngoshe community, where an unspecified number of persons were killed and 416 residents were abducted.

Recall that on April 20, a faction of Boko Haram, Jama’atu Ahlis-Sunna Lidwatu Wal-Jihad under Imam Abu Ubaida, released a video, demanding that the federal and state governments pay them ransom.

TROOPS of Operation Hadin Kai (OPHK) have killed another 24 [ISWAP/Boko Haram fighters](#) in the early hours of Thursday in Borno, thus bringing the total loss suffered by the insurgents in the last two days to 54. The 24 were killed when the OPHK under Sector 2 successfully repelled a determined terrorist attack on the KUKARETA location. Troops killed 30 on April 21, 2026, destroying ISWAP waterways logistics networks along the Lake Chad around Kaniram Island axis in Northern Borno.

OPHK’s Media Information Officer, Lt.-Col. Sani Uba said the attack commenced shortly after midnight and lasted until about 0300 hours but was met with a swift and coordinated response by vigilant troops who executed a deliberate offensive-defensive action, effectively containing the assault and forcing the terrorists into a disorderly withdrawal.

He said exploitation of the battlefield led to the recovery of a significant cache of arms and ammunition, including 18 AK-47 rifles, three General Purpose Machine Guns (GPMG), two PKT automatic anti-aircraft guns, three RPG tubes, two mortar tubes, four hand grenades, 18 AK-47 magazines, and large quantities of belted 7.62mm ammunition for PKT systems.

Uba confirmed that two personnel were wounded in action and have been stabilised, while one reinforcing armoured tank sustained damage with all tyres blown out during the engagement.

MEANWHILE, the lawmaker representing Bauchi Central, Senator Abdul Ahmed Ningi, has blamed Nigeria's persistent insecurity on leadership failure, admitting that no public official, including himself, should be absolved of responsibility.

Speaking on Channels Television, Ningi said politicians, civil servants, security personnel and other stakeholders had treated the worsening security crisis too lightly. He stressed that the time had come for politics to be set aside so the country could confront the urgent challenges of governance and security.

He said Nigeria's leaders had repeatedly allowed personal ambition and selfish interests to override the national good. According to him, the country needs bold and far-reaching ideas to tackle insecurity.

"There is a need to pursue drastic measures to address insecurity. Even if all members of the National Assembly are replaced with another set of lawmakers, I doubt if there will be serious changes," he said.

The senator expressed deep concern that the obsession with politics had worsened the security situation. "Why don't we suspend politics for a period and deal with the security situation?" he asked.

Ningi noted that, under the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) timetable, once party primaries end in May, lawmakers would return to their constituencies ahead of the general election expected in January or February.

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He said this would leave the National Assembly largely inactive for about 10 months, meaning the legislature would effectively function for only about two and a half years of its four-year tenure. He lamented that governance was too often sacrificed on the altar of politics. “We do not need more than 120 days to conclude elections in this country,” he said.

Asked whether suspending campaigns in parts of the country would conflict with constitutional provisions, Ningi said the constitution could always be amended, insisting that the electoral calendar was not sacrosanct.

The senator disagreed with suggestions that Nigeria was in a conventional state of war, but said the country was trapped in a frightening situation where terrorists now target security personnel, including generals, captains and other operatives.

“We are in a state of anarchy, which requires us to prioritise our resources to fight insecurity. Considering the shortage of security personnel and the loss of those we already have, something urgent must be done,” he said.

The Adamawa State Governor, [Ahmadu Umaru Fintiri](#), yesterday paid a condolence visit to victims of boko haram attack in Mayo Ladde community of Hong Local Government Area that were attacked by a suspected boko haram group on Wednesday night. Speaking during the condolence visit to the affected area on Thursday, Fintiri expressed sadness over the unfortunate incident that left scores dead and others displaced

Addressing the refugees seeking asylum in a neighbouring village, Kuva Gaya, Governor Fintiri described the incident as unfortunate, noting that the state government remains committed and would continue to do everything possible to maintain peace across the state.

Speaking earlier, the chairman of the Hong Local Government Council, Inuwa Usman Wa'aganda, while briefing the Governor, confirmed that nine lives were lost before the intervention of security personnel.

Speaker of the Adamawa State House of Assembly, Bathiya Wesley, and member representing Kuva Gaya Constituency, Adum John Alaba, commiserated with the victims and called on the public to continue supporting the Fintiri-led administration.

IN what has become a lame order, members of the House of Representatives, during Thursday's plenary, urged the Federal Government and all security agencies to immediately deploy additional personnel and resources to Kaduna and Borno states with a view to ending the activities of terrorists in the troubled communities.

The lawmakers gave the charge during the debate on two motions of urgent public importance: one on the rising wave of killings, mass kidnappings and persistent security challenges in Kachia/Kagarko Federal Constituency of Kaduna State, sponsored by Gabriel Zock; and another seeking to stop the incessant killings in Askira-Uba/Hawul Federal Constituency of Borno State, sponsored by Midala Balami.

In his lead debate, Zock expressed grave concern over the alarming increase in killings, mass kidnappings and violent attacks across Kachia and Kagarko Local Government Areas of Kaduna State, which intensified between late 2025 and April 2026.

According to him, within the period, "communities across the constituency have witnessed the killing of between 20 and 30 persons in coordinated attacks, the mass abduction of between 260 and 350 persons between October 2025 and April 2026 alone, and the kidnapping of over 180 residents in January 2026, including the mass abduction of worshippers in nearby communities.

He lamented that entire communities are being displaced, with some villages nearly deserted due to repeated attacks. He added that economic activities have been severely disrupted, worsening food insecurity and poverty in the constituency. He also noted that constraints in intelligence gathering, inadequate security presence and delayed response times have emboldened criminal elements operating within the Gurara Dam axis.

While noting the psychological trauma, humanitarian crisis and breakdown of social order inflicted on affected communities, with women, children and the elderly being the most vulnerable, he warned that if urgent and decisive intervention is not undertaken, the situation may escalate into a full-scale humanitarian and security disaster.

To this end, the House urged the Federal Government and security agencies to immediately deploy additional personnel and resources to the affected areas in Kachia/Kagarko Federal Constituency. In the same vein, the House called for the establishment of more Forward Operating Bases and rapid response units in strategic locations within the constituency to deter and respond swiftly to security threats.

The lawmakers also urged the Kaduna State Government to strengthen collaboration with local vigilante groups, traditional rulers and community leaders for improved intelligence gathering and early warning systems.

While calling on the National Emergency Management Agency to provide relief and rehabilitation support to affected communities, the House mandated the joint committees on National Security and Intelligence, Defence, Police Affairs and Army to assess the security situation and report back within two weeks.

After the debate on both motions, the lawmakers observed a minute of silence in honour of those who lost their lives across the affected communities in Kaduna and Borno states.

MEANWHILE, a Southwest socio-political group, Yoruba Ronu Leadership Forum, has criticised the Senate over a suggestion to suspend campaigns for the 2027 general elections in some states due to insecurity. In a statement, the forum's President, Akin Malaolu, described the proposal as deliberate and aimed at weakening opposition parties in their strongholds, particularly in the North.

The statement read: "Following suggestions within the Senate that political campaigns should be suspended in some states, we are at a loss over the evidence relied upon or whether the Senate as a whole undertook due diligence before arriving at such a grievous position. Such a move could put a rising political party, the African Democratic Congress (ADC), in jeopardy by halting its campaigns, while also preventing other opposition parties from reaching their supporters and creating doubts that may diminish voter interest."

The group added that key indicators for assessing insecurity had not been made public or properly interrogated, including capital budget components, the security blueprint of President Bola Tinubu's administration, and the impact of increased military salaries. "It has also been reported that soldiers are withdrawing from flashpoints due to lack of ammunition," it said.

The forum opposed any blanket suspension of campaigns without adequate measures to protect civilians, noting that citizens, including workers, students and farmers, must continue their daily activities.

"The Senate's call is illogical and exposes limitations in understanding confidence-building measures in decision-making. We urge opposition parties to resist what appears to be a political tactic aimed at restricting campaigns in their areas of strength," the statement added.