

Kurmin Wali Abduction: I Lost 2-Week-Old Baby; My Husband, Five Children Still In Captivity – Escaped Mother

By **Aza Msue** 11 Hours Ago in **Cover Stories, News**



Church services were held yesterday in Kurmin Wali and Kajuru (headquarters of Kajuru local government area), a week after the kidnap of over 100 Christian worshippers in Kurmin Wali on January 18. PHOTOS: GBENGA ABIOLA

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A 35-year-old nursing mother, Lovina Ezekiel, who escaped the bandits' attack on three churches in Kurmin Wali, Kajuru local government area of Kaduna state last Sunday with her infant, has recounted how her two-week-old child died two days after the accident.

Mrs Ezekiel said her husband and five children were among over 150 worshippers being held by bandits in the bush eight days after the raid.

Meanwhile, Kurmin Wali residents held a church service on Sunday, under tight security.

Mrs Ezekiel, who struggled to hold back her tears during the interview, said she escaped narrowly along with her newborn when bandits were moving the church worshippers out of the community.

She stated that while she was praying to God for intervention for the other affected worshippers to return home safely, her newly born child fell ill and died in her hands after the incident while she was returning from the hospital in Doka where they had gone to seek medical attention.

Mrs Ezekiel recalled that bandits had killed her father last year when he was returning home from the farm.

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LEADERSHIP had earlier reported how Idris Madami, a villager, narrated that a nursing mother and her two-week-old baby were among the over 150 worshippers abducted in Kurmin Wali.

However, the woman said she escaped with the infant, but the child later died in the absence of his father and the other five siblings, who were being held captive.

Mrs Ezekiel said it was to her like the world coming to an end “On that day, I managed to escape with my two-week, two-day-old baby, but unfortunately, my husband and five of my children could not escape. I was lucky to have escaped, but my family members were among those they took to the bush. My five-year-old child is among them, too. Sadly, my two-week-old baby died as the baby and I escaped the bandits' attack last Sunday.

“My husband and five children, when they return, they won't see my child again, as he died two days after we escaped. After we escaped, he felt ill, and I took him to Doka General Hospital for medical attention. On my way back from the hospital,

before I reached home, he died in my hands. To me, right now, it's like the world is coming to an end.

“Last year, bandits killed my father. As I am now my husband, my children are in the bush, and my child is no more. I came to church to pray for the release of my people. I am confused right now. No need for me to be alive if my remaining family members do not return home,” she stated.

Also, an assistant secretary, Cherubim and Seraphim Church 2, Kurmin Wali, and Jonathan Bonanaga, who was among the church worshippers today in the community, said that despite the security presence, some residents did not attend the service.

Bonanaga, who narrated his ordeal, said on that day, 92 worshippers were kidnapped from his church alone after the head count.

“We attended church service today. Some people asked us why we are going to church today after last Sunday's incident. I said yes, God is alive. Today, we are in the church because our God has promised us that He is with us in whatever situation”

He stated how few attended today's church service, “So we just gathered ourselves, but only a few people attended the church service today. We know that others are still there inside the bush. So that was how we did it, and we just came to the church. As you are here, you see we are here worshipping God.

“We started our church service today, Sunday at 9 o'clock. Yes, today we started our church at 9 o'clock this morning. So, as you can see, it's just a few that came to the church because of the abduction of our church members last Sunday”

“In this very church, the bandits kidnapped 92 people. The bandits allowed some of the children to return because they could not travel long distances. They let 24 children come back”

“They did not release, but the kidnappers allowed those children to come back on that day.

Bonanaga further said, “Approximately more than 39 women were kidnapped and are in the bush with men. I was afraid this morning, and so was everybody. Most of the abductees were mostly youths. We are afraid, and we discussed with the village head that we will engage hunters. We said we have to protect ourselves first

before our government does something. We engaged local hunters to protect us. So that's how we gather ourselves, and we promised to come to the church today.

“Fortunately, the government has deployed security all over and everywhere in Kurmin Wali. They are security operatives everywhere. My call to the government is that if this thing continues like this, a Christian worshipper cannot go to the church in the days to come. So my call to the government is to take action to ensure this insecurity ends.

Bonanaga expressed fear, “Because we Christians, we people in Kurmin Wali are afraid. We are very afraid now. We thank Kaduna State Governor Uba Sani for visiting us in hard times and for promising to construct a road to this place.

“We also thank Governor Uba Sani for the hospital he promised to site here in Kurmin Wali because we have no hospital in this village. Our major problem and concern is how our people will return safely, and pleading with the government and security agencies to work harder.”

“We have someone who escaped that bandits used to call him. The person is one of those wounded victims receiving treatment in the hospital. The bandits kidnapped 21 people here two weeks ago, and we paid ransom before they released them,” Bonanaga said.