

Oyo abduction: Outrage spreads after teacher's beheading, Tinubu vows rescue

May 19, 2026 12:14 am



Governor Seyi Makinde of Oyo State. Photo: Oyo State House

Stephen Angbulu, Wale Akinselure, Ademola Adegbite, Bola Bamigbola, Deborah Musa, Dare Akogun and Ayoola Babalola

Kindly share this story:



Condemnations have continued to trail Friday's bandits' attack on three schools in Oriire Local Government Area of Oyo State, where about 30 students and teachers were kidnapped, while two persons were killed.

The attack, which occurred on May 16, saw armed bandits storm the community and abduct staff, students, and pupils from three schools, Community Grammar School, Baptist Nursery and Primary School, and L.A. Primary School.

Reactions to the incident particularly grew from condemnations to outrage as a viral video on Monday showed one of the teachers held hostage being beheaded by the abductors.

The victim was later identified as Michael Oyedokun, a mathematics teacher.

Amid the rage expressed by Nigerians over the incident were calls for governments at the state and federal levels to embark on swift measures to secure the release of the abducted teachers and students.

Giving more details on the incident, Governor Seyi Makinde on Monday confirmed that seven students were abducted from Community Secondary School, while 18 children and seven teachers were kidnapped from First Baptist Primary and Nursery School, adding that one person was killed during the attack.

Giving an update on the abduction, Makinde declared that the state government, while making moves to secure the victims' release, said the state was also willing to listen to the grievances of the abductors if such dialogue would aid the swift and safe return of the victims.

Makinde said, "Now we can confirm conclusively that at the Community Secondary School, about seven students were abducted, while at the First Baptist Primary and Nursery School, 18 children were abducted, and about seven teachers were also involved. Unfortunately, like I reported yesterday, one of them was killed.

"So, whatever it is they demand, we are ready to listen to them and address the ones that we can address as a state government. But the children and their teachers must be released.

"If you see something strange, say something, and expect us to do something. We will not give in to terror. We will do everything possible to ensure that our children and their teachers return safely."

The governor disclosed that the Commissioner of Police and other security agencies had been positioned to coordinate information management and rescue operations, while insisting that certain operational details could not yet be made public due to the sensitive nature of the mission.

Tinubu vows rescue

Reacting to the incident, President Bola Tinubu described the act as barbaric.

In a statement signed Monday by his Special Adviser on Information and Strategy, Bayo Onanuga, the President said he was saddened by the reported death of one of the hostages and extended sympathy to Makinde, the state government, and the families of the victims.

The President said the Inspector General of Police, acting on his personal directive, is leading a technology-driven rescue operation involving a tactical unit and the Intelligence Response Team.

He expressed confidence that with the Federal Government working with the Oyo State Government, a breakthrough was imminent.

“The bandits and all their local collaborators will be fished out and made to face the full wrath of the law,” he said.

Tinubu also commended the Inspector General and the Commissioners of Police in Oyo and Kwara States for their swift deployment of personnel to the affected area.

The President said the kidnapping incident underscored the urgency of state police to address gaps in underserved areas.

“The National Assembly should accelerate the enactment of the law creating state police,” he said.

As part of measures to address the incident, the Assistant Inspector General of Police in charge of Zone XI, Osogbo, Fred Emuobo, has relocated the headquarters of the command to Ogbomoso to coordinate the rescue operation of the abducted school children.

The command spokesperson, Ade Ogunyemi, confirmed this relocation to The PUNCH on Monday.

He said, "The operational base of Zone XI has shifted to Ogbomoso, where the rescue mission is being coordinated.

"The AIG is concerned about the abducted teachers and students, and he promised that the police will do everything possible to make sure that those people are rescued."

He added that the police were working with other security agencies to ensure that those in captivity were rescued unhurt.

Ogunyemi further said, "We are working with other security agencies to make sure that we bring those people alive as soon as possible."

Meanwhile, the Oyo Police Public Relations Officer, Olayinka Ayanlade, confirmed on Monday that six suspects have been arrested in connection with the incident.

He said, "We have six suspects in custody, and they are assisting the investigation."

On the viral video of a beheaded teacher, the police command said, "The footage is presently undergoing comprehensive forensic examination to determine its authenticity and further aid ongoing investigations, rescue operations, as well as the identification and arrest of the perpetrators behind the heinous act."

Meanwhile, the arrested persons, suspected to be informants to bandits, were apprehended at different locations by joint security operatives comprising the Nigerian Army, the Nigeria Police Force, the Western Nigeria Security Network codenamed Amotekun, the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps and the Agro-Ranger.

The suspected informants were tracked, having reportedly made telephone conversations with the abductors on how to navigate the National Park to a haven.

An informed source confided to our correspondent that the suspects are currently being interrogated at the state Criminal Investigation Department in Ibadan.

The source, who spoke with The PUNCH on the telephone, said, “The last thing we heard was that a teacher was beheaded, but yesterday (Sunday), five or six people were arrested. The informants of those people (kidnappers), about five or six, were tracked through their telephone numbers, because they were communicating with the bandits.

“There hasn’t been any development as of today (Monday). The security operatives have taken over that place. What they are now doing is using those children as a human shield. So, the police won’t be able to shoot them.

“Those bandits also deployed improved explosive devices in the direction of security agents. We learnt that one of the security operatives was killed during the attack, while some sustained injuries. The injured ones told us this during our visit to the hospital.”

Teachers protest

Meanwhile, some teachers in some public schools in Oriire Local Government Area of Oyo State have called on the government and security agencies to ensure the release of their colleagues and students.

The teachers made the demand during a peaceful protest in the early hours of Monday.

A check by our correspondent showed that schools in the area were deserted on Monday morning.

The teachers who carried various placards sang solidarity songs, urging the government and the security agencies to rescue the abductees without delay.

A teacher in one of the schools said, “In my school, only two students came, and one or two teachers were there at the time I left. We couldn’t even go into the school premises; we stayed at the school gate, fearing any eventuality.”

In another viral video, an abducted principal of Community High School, Ahoro-Esinele, Mrs Alamu had, on Sunday, called on the Federal Government and the Oyo State Governor, Seyi Makinde, to come to her rescue alongside over 30 others.

In the video sighted on Sunday by The PUNCH, the abductee appealed to the Federal Government, the State Government, the Christian Association of Nigeria and well-meaning Nigerians to intervene and secure their release.

Speaking from captivity, the visibly distressed school administrator said she and several students and staff members had remained with their abductors since the attack on Friday.

She pleaded with authorities to ensure a peaceful resolution to prevent loss of lives.

Another abductee, in a viral video, on Sunday, said, "I am Dahunsi Temitope Mary, I'm from Ibadan, working at First Baptist Church, Ogbomosho Yawota area. On Friday, people came to our school, and we were kidnapped, both the teachers and the children.

"We are all here; we need help from the Federal Government and State Government; from both the church, the Baptist Church Yawota and the community. So that these people will release us, please help us.

"We need help from our President, Bola Tinubu, our State Governor, Seyi Makinde and all Nigerians. The children are here crying so that they will not waste our lives. Please help us, don't neglect us."

Ooni, Oluwo, CAN condemn attack

Meanwhile, many Nigerians have intensified calls on the government and security agencies to secure the release of the kidnapped students and teachers.

On Monday, the Ooni of Ife, Oba Adeyeye Ogunwusi, called for swift security action and a united national effort against kidnapping and violent crimes across the country.

The royal father described the abduction of students and teachers from schools within the Ahoro-Esiele/Yawota axis of Ogbomoso as heartbreaking, disturbing and unacceptable.

In a statement on Monday signed by the Director of Media and Public Affairs, Ooni's Palace, Moses Olafare, the monarch called on security agencies to intensify rescue operations to ensure the safe return of all victims still in captivity while bringing the perpetrators of the attack to justice.

He also urged "governments at all levels to strengthen security architecture in vulnerable communities, particularly around schools and rural settlements, to prevent future occurrences."

Ooni Ogunwusi said attacks on schools and educational communities represent a "direct assault on the future of the country," stressing that "children and teachers must never become victims of criminal activities."

He appealed to Nigerians to support security agencies with credible information, vigilance and community cooperation, and charged Nigerians to unite and fight against kidnapping.

In his reaction, the Oluwo of Iwo, Oba Abdulrasheed Akanbi, called on President Bola Tinubu to empower traditional rulers with security votes and logistics support to prevent further encroachment of bandits into Yorubaland.

Oluwo, in a statement issued on Monday by his Press Secretary, Ibrahim Alli, suggested the provision of security votes, security vehicles and other logistics to enhance the coordination of local security outfits and improve security surveillance in Yorubaland.

He stated that such empowerment could commence with first-class traditional rulers.

The monarch said palaces were always the first point of contact whenever the security of a town was threatened, urging the government to strengthen monarchs for a swift response to security breaches in their respective communities.

Oba Akanbi disclosed that Iwo had many paramilitary groups working with the police to prevent bandit invasion, but lacked government support.

He also called on Yoruba stakeholders and South-West governors to harmonise their interests to ensure Yorubaland was not infiltrated by bandits.

The monarch urged South-West governors to invite traditional rulers and summon all security forces for a collaborative dialogue on ways to repel bandit attacks in Yorubaland.

The statement read, “The bandit attack in Ahoro-Esinele area of Oriire Local Government of Oyo State is condemnable. It’s a heinous act against humanity. It was a complete desecration of Yorubaland and its heritage.

“I call on President Bola Tinubu to add another credit to his achievements by ensuring traditional rulers are empowered to secure their respective domains through the provision of necessary support and logistics.

“The government, most especially our governors, must brace up to curtail further encroachment and bandit attacks on Yorubaland. The government has to empower traditional rulers with security votes and other logistics support because they are always the first point of contact.

“For example, in Iwo, I have paramilitary personnel working with the police and other official security outfits to curtail crime, fight criminals and carry out both day and night surveillance, but there is no support.

“An emergency meeting of Yoruba stakeholders is a necessity. Our governors should harmonise their interests, invite and promote synergy among security outfits to protect Yorubaland and fight the common enemy.

“Provision of logistics for the monarchs will hasten response from the palace, which is usually the first point of contact in distress calls. Yoruba monarchs must also be vigilant.

“All monarchs must improve surveillance in their respective palaces.”

Also, the Christian Association of Nigeria condemned the abduction, describing the incident as a “national disgrace” and a dangerous spread of organised criminal violence into the South-West.

The Christian body expressed outrage that heavily armed attackers allegedly stormed multiple schools, terrorised communities, killed innocent people and abducted dozens of pupils and teachers.

In a statement issued on Monday and signed by CAN President, Archbishop Daniel Okoh, the association said the invasion of schools by armed criminals in broad daylight reflected a frightening collapse of security across the country.

The association added that it was “intolerable, disgraceful and utterly unacceptable that Nigerian children can no longer sit safely in classrooms without the fear of being kidnapped by armed gangs.”

It added that, “The invasion of schools by armed criminals in broad daylight, the murder of innocent citizens, and the forceful abduction of defenceless children represent a horrifying collapse of security and a direct assault on the conscience of our nation.

“This is not merely another security incident. It is a national disgrace and a frightening reminder that organised criminal violence is spreading into parts of the country once considered relatively secure,” the statement said.

Related News

FULL LIST: Wike-backed PDP names candidates for Oyo Reps seats

FG commences payment of outstanding 2025 allowances to BEA scholars abroad

Tinubu doesn't fully trust me because I supported Peter Obi — Cubana Chief Priest

CAN also mourned the reported killing of an assistant headmaster who reportedly tried to protect the children during the attack, alongside other victims caught in the violence.

“Their sacrifice must never be forgotten, and those responsible must be identified, apprehended and prosecuted without hesitation,” the association stated.

The group further lamented what it described as growing public frustration over repeated attacks and insecurity in parts of the country.

“Nigerians are exhausted by condolences without consequences and promises without protection. The continued failure to decisively dismantle kidnapping networks and armed criminal groups is steadily normalising terror across the country,” CAN said.

The association warned that insecurity, once concentrated in parts of northern Nigeria, was now “spreading dangerously into the South-West and other regions, threatening national stability, public confidence and the safety of future generations.”

CAN called on the Federal Government, security agencies and the Oyo State Government to take immediate and coordinated action to rescue the abducted victims and bring the perpetrators to justice.

“Every available security and intelligence resource must be deployed to secure the unconditional release of the abducted victims and bring the perpetrators and their collaborators to justice,” the statement added.

The association stressed that schools and children must not be surrendered to criminal groups, urging authorities to strengthen security around rural communities, forest corridors and suspected criminal hideouts.

“When children are hunted in their classrooms, silence becomes complicity and delay becomes dangerous. Nigeria must act decisively to defeat these criminal networks before more innocent lives are destroyed,” CAN warned.

The association also expressed solidarity with affected families, churches and residents of Oriire Local Government Area, while praying for the safe return of all abducted victims.

Also, the senator representing Oyo Central Senatorial District, Yunus Akintunde, an All Progressives Congress governorship aspirant, Ololade Bakare, and the Soko Agoriesin of Ile-Ife, Oladotun Hassan, decried the incident as “barbaric.”

Akintunde described the attack on schools and innocent children as painful and unacceptable.

Akintunde said, “My heart goes out to the affected pupils, teachers, parents, and the entire communities. An attack on innocent children and places of learning is painful and unacceptable.”

He commended security agencies and the Oyo State Government for their swift response to the incident, while urging them to intensify efforts to rescue all abducted victims safely.

The senator also called for the immediate prosecution of those responsible for the attack, stressing that insecurity must not disrupt learning or create fear among residents.

On her part, Bakare condemned the abduction of the students and teachers, describing the incident as a “heinous and cowardly attack.”

He said, “The targeting of our schools is a disgrace and a betrayal of our collective responsibility to safeguard the future of our children.

“Oyo State, with its proud history as a centre of learning and civilisation, must not be reduced to a place where students are hunted, and educators are terrorised.”

The APC chieftain blamed the worsening insecurity on what he termed the failure of leadership, insisting that urgent and decisive action must be taken to restore public confidence.

Bakare urged security agencies to intensify rescue operations to ensure the safe return of the abducted victims, warning that “anything less than urgent action is unacceptable.”

Also reacting, Hassan described the killings as barbaric, wicked, and unacceptable, noting that schools should remain safe spaces for learning and moral development.

He called on security agencies to intensify efforts to rescue all victims still in captivity and ensure that perpetrators are arrested and prosecuted.

Hassan also advocated for stronger collaboration among security agencies, local vigilantes, hunters, OPC, and Agbekoya groups to improve surveillance of vulnerable communities and schools.

The monarch further appealed to the Ooni of Ife and the Osun State Government to convene the second edition of the Yoruba Obas Conference to address rising insecurity, kidnappings, and violent attacks across Yorubaland.

He urged Nigerians to support security operations through vigilance and intelligence sharing, stressing that insecurity could only be defeated through collective commitment and unity.

The Foundation for Peace Professionals called on the Federal Government to immediately conduct a comprehensive territorial and security audit across the country over fears that sophisticated operational structures linked to foreign interests may be aiding terrorism and violent crimes.

Executive Director of the organisation, Abdulrazaq Hamzat, made this call in an interview with The PUNCH.

He argued that the scale, coordination and persistence of recent attacks suggested the existence of entrenched “industrial-based backup systems” beyond the capacity of isolated non-state actors.

His comments come amid renewed public anxiety following the kidnapping of schoolchildren and teachers in Oyo State, as well as recent military operations targeting ISWAP commanders and insurgent hideouts in the North-East.

According to Hamzat, modern terrorist groups operating in Nigeria now exhibit operational capabilities that indicate deeper transnational connections and covert support structures.

“Modern asymmetric conflicts across Africa have increasingly evolved beyond conventional insurgency into proxy-driven destabilisation involving foreign interests, mercenary networks, illegal resource extraction systems and covert geopolitical competition,” he said.

He warned that the increasing sophistication of attacks across parts of the country should no longer be viewed as isolated criminal incidents but as part of broader and more organised security threats requiring urgent national attention.

The PeacePro director also urged security agencies to intensify surveillance around forests, border communities, remote airstrips and ungoverned territories vulnerable to infiltration by armed groups.

The Oyo State chapter of the African Action Congress accused Makinde of failing to tackle worsening insecurity in the state following the abduction of more than 35 pupils in Orire Local Government Area.

In a statement issued on Sunday by the Chairman of the AAC in Oyo State, Kayode David, the party described the incident as a disturbing escalation of insecurity in Oyo State, alleging that residents now live in fear amid increasing cases of kidnapping and violent attacks.

“Oyo State turns into a kidnapping zone,” the statement read, adding that “farmers are now afraid to go to their farms, traders fear being kidnapped while travelling, students are no longer safe, and parents are living in constant fear over the safety of their children.”

The opposition party further accused the administration of neglecting its constitutional responsibility to protect lives and property.

“This is the first time Oyo State will witness such a mass kidnapping involving school pupils. We have not had it this bad in Oyo State since creation,” the party stated.

“Any government that fails to protect the lives of its people is a failed government, and such a party or character should never be allowed close to power again,” it added.

The party said insecurity and banditry had continued to spread across parts of the state while residents struggled with fear and uncertainty.

It also called on security agencies to intensify rescue efforts and ensure the safe return of the abducted pupils.

“We call on security agencies to act swiftly and rescue the kidnapped pupils,” the statement said.

The AAC criticised the governor for allegedly focusing on political activities instead of addressing security challenges confronting residents.

“This is the current state of Oyo, yet Makinde’s priority remains politics and how to install one of his puppets,” the statement said.

The party expressed sympathy with affected families and paid tribute to those who reportedly lost their lives during the attack.

“Our condolences go to the family of Mr Joel Adesiyan, the Assistant Headmaster of L.A. Primary School, who lost his life while trying to protect the pupils, and also to the innocent motorcycle rider who died during the incident,” the statement added.

In its reaction, the Afenifere National Youth Council called on South-West political leaders and security agencies to take urgent and coordinated action against rising insecurity in the region.

In a statement signed by National Secretary Abiodun Aderohunmu, the group described the attack as “barbaric” and “a direct assault on the safety of our children, the sanctity of our schools, and the peace of our communities.”

The organisation said the increasing wave of kidnappings and violent attacks across the South-West demands immediate intervention from governments at all levels, warning that criminal activities once considered alien to Yoruba land are becoming increasingly frequent.

“It is unacceptable that learning institutions, which should be safe spaces for the future of Yoruba land, have become targets for criminals,” the statement read.

The group expressed frustration over what it described as the failure of authorities to act decisively despite repeated warnings from civic organisations and community stakeholders about worsening insecurity in the region.

“We are outraged that despite our continuous calls, press statements, and publications over the past years warning of the rising tide of insecurity in the South West, decisive and coordinated action remains absent,” the council said.

The youth organisation demanded the immediate and unconditional release of the abducted victims, insisting that prolonged captivity reflects poorly on political leadership and the country's security structure.

"Every hour they remain in captivity is a stain on the conscience of our leaders and our collective humanity," the statement added.

Oyo surveillance aircraft

As part of Monday's briefing, Makinde said the surveillance aircraft purchased for N7.7bn in July 2025 had already arrived in Nigeria and were currently at the Nigerian Air Force headquarters hangar in Lagos, undergoing reassembly.

He explained that Chinese manufacturers handling the equipment arrived in the country a few days ago and were expected to complete installation and testing within two weeks.

The governor said the surveillance aircraft would become operational on or before the end of June, adding that the procurement was part of the state government's strategic efforts to strengthen monitoring along the Oyo-Kwara border as well as the international border between Oyo State and the Republic of Benin.

Makinde said, "The government initiated the surveillance project long before the current abduction incident, as part of proactive efforts to tackle emerging security threats.

"We didn't procure the aircraft because of this particular incident, but we wanted to improve our security capability and border monitoring.

"The operation is still ongoing. Yes, it is still a very fluid and difficult situation that our troops on the ground are faced with."

He added, "The manufacturers from China arrived in the country about three days ago. They should have about two weeks roughly to finish their work. So I can say conclusively that those surveillance aircraft will be in operation

before the end of June.

“We were proactive. We wanted to be able to cover the borderline between our state and Kwara State, and also the international border between our state and the Republic of Benin.

“However, we did not know this would happen at this stage. We did not procure the aircraft because we had this kind of incident in mind,” he said.

Makinde added that interested persons could visit the Nigerian Air Force base in Lagos to inspect the surveillance aircraft and ongoing work on them.

Responding to concerns about rising tension among residents following the abductions, the governor assured the people that his administration remained committed to securing lives and property across the state.

The governor said, “My charge to them is that their government will continue to be alive to its responsibilities to ensure that we have a safe and secure environment where people can go about pursuing their lawful endeavours.

“Yes, this is a blot, but we are doing everything within our power to ensure that normalcy returns and also, by God’s grace, that the children and teachers abducted are returned as quickly as possible.”

On whether the government had established communication with the abductors to understand their grievances, Makinde stressed the need for citizens to support security agencies with timely information.

He said, “What I can say first and foremost is that the citizens and residents of every area in Oyo State must also give timely information to the government.

“For me, I would just say, if you see something strange, say something, and then expect us to do something. We will keep engaging with the citizens.”

The governor, however, maintained that while the government would not capitulate to criminal elements, it remained open to dialogue to save the victims.

He said, "To the group, all I can say is that as a government, we will not give in to terror. We will do everything to ensure that our children and their teachers return safely.

"We once had a country where we were each other's brothers' keepers. How did we descend to this point? These are not foreign people. It is us against ourselves."

Addressing residents of the affected communities, the governor assured them that the government remained committed to protecting lives and property and restoring normalcy to the area.