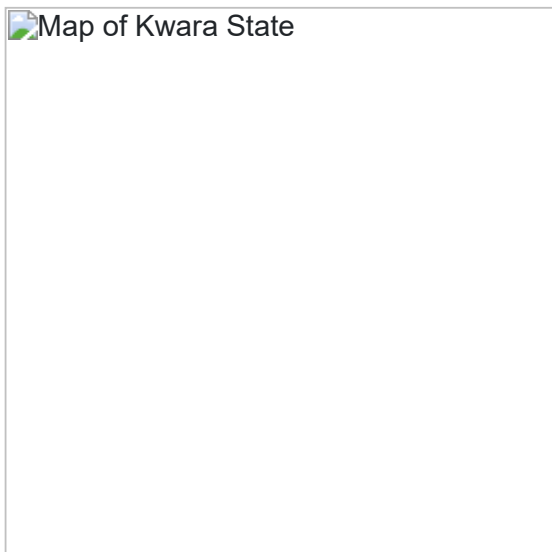


Five abducted Kwara worshippers feared dead in captivity

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 Map of Kwara State



| By Toheeb Omotayo

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Fresh concerns have emerged over the fate of worshippers abducted from the Evangelical Church of West Africa in the Omugo axis of Ifelodun Local Government Area in Kwara State after reports surfaced that five of the victims may have died while in captivity.

The victims were among eight worshippers kidnapped by gunmen during an attack on the church on March 22, 2026.

Sources familiar with the development told *The PUNCH* on Wednesday that information about the alleged deaths came from one of the captives who reportedly escaped from the kidnappers' den.

A source, who spoke to our correspondent on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the matter, said relatives of the affected victims had already been informed of the development.

According to the source, the wife of the church minister, Pastor Omole, is among those feared to have died in captivity.

“It is with deep pain in my heart that I inform you that out of eight people who were abducted from ECWA Omugo on March 22, 2026, only three people are still with the kidnappers. The remaining five have gone to be with the Lord,” the source said.

The source identified the deceased victims as Elder David Omopariola, Chief Joseph Ibitoye Afariogun, Mrs Iyabo Aniyi, Elder Joshua Akanbi Adeyemi and Mrs Rachel Oluwaremilekun Omole.

“May God console their immediate families and the church at large,” he added.

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Meanwhile, the circumstances surrounding the alleged deaths remained unclear as of the time of filing this report, while details of where and how the victims reportedly died could not be independently verified.

When contacted, the spokesperson for the Kwara State Police Command, Adetoun Ejire-Adeyemi, said the command had not received any report confirming the alleged deaths of the abductees.

She said, “The command is not aware of such an incident, especially relating to the abductees being killed. Nonetheless, I will do my findings.”

The abduction occurred on March 22 when armed men invaded ECWA Church, Omugo, during a worship service, with witnesses saying the attackers fired sporadically to create panic before marching worshippers into a nearby forest.

Eight church members were initially taken away by the assailants, with police authorities later confirming that most of the victims were elderly persons aged 70 years.

Following the abduction, the kidnappers reportedly demanded a ransom of N1bn for the release of the victims.

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Although the amount was said to have been reduced during negotiations, reports indicated that relatives eventually paid N20m alongside food items and drinks, yet the captives were not freed.

Security agencies had earlier assured residents that efforts were ongoing to rescue the victims and bring the perpetrators to justice.