



■ Cross section of newly appointed Court of Appeal justices, during their swearing-in at the Supreme Court Abuja yesterday.

PHOTO: FELIX ONIGBINDE

## How we escaped from Boko Haram hide out, by abducted girl

By Ibrahim Kabiru Sule

One of the school girls abducted by members of Boko Haram early this year has narrated her shocking experience in the sect's camp in Sambisa forest.

She said she and the others spent two weeks in captivity and witnessed shocking and revolting scenes of captives having their throats slit regularly.

In an interview with the BBC Hausa Service yesterday, the girl said they managed to escape from the camp when an opportunity presented itself.

The girl, whose identity was left out due to security reasons, said out of the 6 girls that attempted to escape from the forest, only three of them eventually reached their houses alive.

She recalled that they were abducted on their way back to school from Maiduguri to Bama after the holidays.

"I left my sister's house in Maiduguri back to school in Bama at the end of the holiday. The road was blocked and therefore a long traffic had developed.

"There were more than 50 vehicles

on the traffic. Some people amongst us in the commercial vehicles suggested we take an alternate route through the forest. But unknown to all of us, they were members of the sect.

"The road is narrow and passes through a thick forest. Some people in military uniform suddenly appeared from nowhere and ordered us to stop. We earlier thought they were Nigerian soldiers on a routine check.

"But then we noticed that some of them had covered faces, we then realised they were insurgents," she said.

"They started checking for ID cards, if they found out you work with government or that you are a Muslim, they instantly slaughter you. They would first say: 'we banned you from government work, but you refused to heed'.

"Amongst us, there were many girls from Konduga who finished their WAEC/NECO exams, going back home. They slaughtered some of them who dressed in skimpy dresses, and those with hair attachments. Their male colleagues were then taken to their training ground, to incorporate them into their fighting force.

"There were about 10 remaining

vehicles yet to be checked when darkness set in, they took us to their hide out within the forest."

"How I managed to escape was that, we were many - the captured girls. They gave us everything. But ever since I was taken to the place, I became heartbroken out of apprehension. Therefore I could not eat the food they brought to us for up to 12 days.

"They came to me and inquired about my health problem. I told them I had a heart problem. They asked me for how long have I been with it, and whether it started after they kidnapped us or it developed before that time. I replied that it was before they captured us.

"Then, they told me to visit their hospital, but I could not attend because I was so weak. They later brought me some medicine, which I took.

"On our 11th day, they returned to me for the second time and asked whether I am a Muslim or Christian. I told them that I am a Christian. Then, they told me one of them loved me and that they would convert me to Islam the following day so that I could marry him.

"The following day, they told us that they have many members, some of which would go out for operation and some would remain at the training base," she said.

She added that after they set out with a number of cars to go out for the operation, "one of us stood up and said death comes only once and that God ordained them to be brother's keepers. And that if anyone wanted to follow him, he or she should come.

"Hence, 6 of us and the driver joined one of the vehicles, a Golf car. But only the three of us eventually escaped, others died on our way.

"They (terrorists) followed us on a motorcycle, firing either at our driver or our vehicle's tyre. But due to the dust haze, they could not score a hit. We didn't know that some of the shots had already killed those at the back seat.

"We came to discover they were dead when the terrorists retreated, that is when we approached Bama town."

Upon reaching home, she said she fainted and was quickly rushed to hospital where she spent three days in a coma.