

# Bandits open fire on worshippers in Kaduna, kill 2

- Escaped Kuriga student recounts ordeal
- Amnesty Int'l demands safe release, return of abductees
- Tinubu directs immediate rescue of Borno, Kaduna captives

Mohammed Ibrahim Yaba (Kaduna), Baba Martins & Chidimma C Okeke (Abuja)

**B**andits yesterday killed two worshippers and abducted others when they opened fire on villagers during Juma'at prayer at a mosque in Angwar Makera under Kwasakwa community of Birnin Gwari Local Government Area of Kaduna State.

The incident happened around 2pm, according to locals in the area.

A community leader in the area, Hudu Kwasakwa, who confirmed the incident, said the bandits opened fire on the worshippers.

"The two worshippers killed were among other Muslims attacked at the Juma'at Mosque in Angwar Makera when the bandits opened fire on them and abducted others today (Friday). The victims have been buried at Old Kuyello Cemetery this evening," he said.

He said the people were in the second raka'at of the prayer when they were attacked, forcing many of the worshippers to run for their lives.

According to Hudu, the bandits have gone on a rampage these few days, attacking innocent villagers with impunity.

He added that a few days ago, the same bandits abducted about nine people at a community called Angwar Kanawa under Kwasakwa area.

He appealed for help from authorities concerned, saying the bandits are terrorising the communities unchallenged.

The state government and the Police Command did not react to the mosque incident up to press time yesterday as the Police Public Relations Officer, ASP Mansir Hassan could not be reached on the phone and did not reply to a text message sent to him seeking clarification.

**Community apprehensive as bandits delay contact with schoolchildren's families**

Meanwhile, residents of Kuriga village under Chikun Local Government Area of the state are apprehensive as the bandits who abducted 285 schoolchildren in the village were yet to contact their parents, more than 24 hours after the incident.

It was reported on Thursday how the bandits abducted children of LEA Primary School, Kuriga 1 around 7:47am shortly after an assembly briefing.

The bandits, heavily armed, rode into the

village and carried out the atrocity, and since then, the whereabouts of the children remain unknown.

The state governor, Senator Uba Sani, assured the residents that his administration, in collaboration with security agencies, would do everything possible to rescue the students.

*Daily Trust Saturday* spoke with a mother of one of the abducted children, Hasiya Usman, who begged the government at all levels to release her child and the others.

"We are confused and worried because we don't know what is happening to the children in the forest. I haven't eaten since the incident happened. We are appealing to the government to help us," she said.

Lawal Kuriga, another resident, told our correspondent that the community was very much worried because residents want to hear from those who abducted their children.

One of the pupils who returned to the community on Friday morning, Muktar Abubakar, narrated how he escaped as they were being moved into the forest.

"We trekked barefooted for hours before we reached a place where they gave us three oranges each. Among us were very little ones that could hardly walk.

"So, after a few minutes' rest, we continued walking, but because we were many, I managed to hide in a hole until they left before I came out that night and walked to another community called Gayan. That was how I returned home," he said.

He said that even the bandits were thirsty and struggled to take from the few oranges and water brought to them.

The vice principal of Junior Secondary School, Kuriga, Bilyaminu Mu'azu, said the bandits divided the children into two groups. He said some were taken on motorcycles while others were moved on foot because they were many.

He said Governor Sani assured them of the safety of the children when he visited the school.

He said the victims were from both the primary and junior secondary sections of the school.

**Amnesty Int'l demands safe release, return of abductees**

Amnesty International, while reacting to the recent mass abductions, said the Nigerian authorities must ensure safe release and return of

all the people abducted this week.

The organisation, in a statement yesterday, said mass abductions of more than 400 displaced people in Borno State and 287 students and teachers in Kuriga, Kaduna State, are a shocking indictment of the authorities' persistent failure to protect people from attacks by armed groups that have killed thousands of Nigerians in the last five years.

The organisation called on the Nigerian government to take all necessary measures to ensure the safe release and return of those abducted to their families.

"Authorities must also promptly, thoroughly, impartially, independently, effectively, and transparently investigate the recurring cases of abductions in many parts of the country, make public the findings of any investigation and ensure that the suspected perpetrators are brought to justice in fair trials," part of the statement said.

**Tinubu directs immediate rescue of Borno, Kaduna captives**

Meanwhile, President Bola Tinubu has condemned the abduction of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Borno State, as well as schoolchildren and teachers in Kaduna State.

The presidential spokesman, Ajuri Ngelale, in a statement in Abuja on Friday, described the abductions as heinous, and asked security operatives to immediately rescue the victims.

According to him, after receiving reports from security chiefs on the two incidents, the president said, "I am confident that the victims will be rescued. Nothing else is acceptable to me and the waiting family members of these abducted citizens. Justice will be decisively administered."

He said President Tinubu "condemns the heinous incidents of abduction involving very vulnerable victims in the two states.

"The president directs security and intelligence agencies to immediately rescue the victims and ensure that justice is served against the perpetrators of these abominable acts. He also sympathises with the families of the victims, assuring that they would soon be reunited with their loved ones," the statement said.

On his part, the Minister of Education, Prof. Tahir Mamman, has appealed to the Kaduna State government and security agencies to ensure the quick rescue of the 287 schoolchildren and teachers kidnapped in the state.