

Kogi Jailbreak: How Inmates Killed Warder, Tied Up Two Others



The Acting Controller General of the Nigeria Correctional Service, Sylvester Nwakuche (middle), during an assessment visit to the Koton Karfe Medium Security Custodial Centre, Kogi State, after the jail break on Monday.

By Our Reporters

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Twelve inmates at Koton Karfe Medium security prison yesterday overpowered officers on duty, killed one of them, tied up two others and escaped.

Witnesses said the inmates tied the officers together and strangled one of them.

“With no one to challenge their movement, the escaped inmates left the prison via the collapsed portion of a window. Before the reinforcements could reach the prison, many of them had left”, a witness said.

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The acting Comptroller-General of the Nigeria Correctional Service, Sylvester, Nwakuche, who visited the Koton Karfe correctional centre yesterday, confirmed that five of the 12 escaped inmates had been recaptured.

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- [FG orders probe into prison break in Kogi](#)

“We regret that one of the officers of the correctional service was killed by the escaped prison inmates,” he said.

Nwakuche added that a manhunt had been launched to apprehend the fleeing inmates, calling on the general public to provide security agencies with all the needed information that would lead to their arrest.

The re-arrested inmates were said to be providing valuable information to the law enforcement agents to ease investigation into the incident.

Federal government's earlier comments on custodial centres

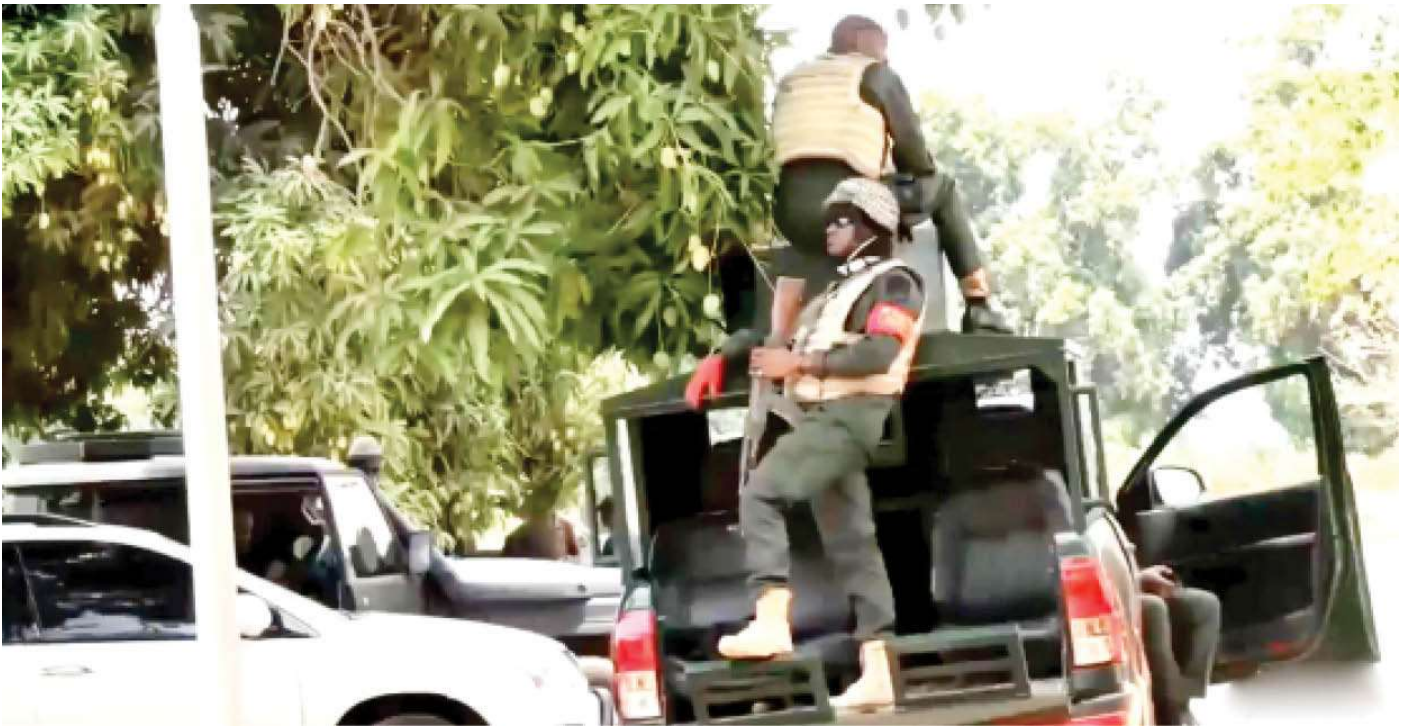
It would be recalled that last month, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu approved the relocation of 29 correctional centres across Nigeria.

Highlighting the need for the initiative, the Minister of Interior, Olubunmi Tunji-Ojo, pointed out that many existing facilities, including those in Suleja and Ikoyi, were built in the 19th century and were no longer fit for purpose.

“The president has graciously approved for us to start the process of relocating 29 correctional centres,” Tunji-Ojo stated during the commissioning of 39 new vehicles and five bullet-resistant guard booths for the Nigerian Correctional Service (NCoS) in Abuja.

The relocation initiative was aimed at addressing critical infrastructural deficiencies, enhancing security and creating an environment conducive for effective rehabilitation, it was gathered.

Tunji-Ojo stressed that the move would ensure modernised correctional systems that support both officers and inmates.



Security personnel at the Koton Karfe Medium Security Custodial Centre, Kogi State, during a visit by the Acting Controller General of the Nigeria Correctional Service, Sylvester Nwakuche, yesterday

Koton Karfe prison

The Koton Karfe Correctional Centre, with a capacity of 160 inmates, is located along the Kpareke-Adeghele road in the ancient town.

It replaced the first prison that was established in the early 1900s, located a few meters to the Ohimeghe Iguh's palace in the town.

It was set up to respond to the inadequacies of space and dilapidating structures of the old prison.

Koton Karfe prison is located about 1.5km from the Ohimeghe Iguh's palace or from the old prison towards Kpareke -Adeghele road at the bank of the River Niger.

It has recorded jail breaks and natural disasters which aided the escape of inmates in the past years.

It was gathered that last month, five inmates who had earlier escaped from the prison were recaptured.

In 2012, a jailbreak at the facility was accompanied by explosion where many inmates, including one Kabir Sokoto, a suspected Boko Haram kingpin, escaped.

On July 30, 2016, at least 13 inmates, three of them convicts, broke their cells and escaped through the fence, though five of them were later rearrested.

Escape of inmates unfortunate – Kogi govt

The Kogi State government described yesterday's incident as "unfortunate", assuring the citizens that it was taking decisive steps to prevent a recurrence.

The Commissioner for Information and Communications, Kingsley Femi Fanwo, said in a statement, that, "The theory that the inmates escaped through the tower without causing any structural damage raises serious concerns. This calls for a thorough investigation to determine the

exact circumstances of the escape, arrest the fleeing inmates, and identify possible saboteurs within the system.

“Governor Ahmed Usman Ododo has directed the State Security Adviser to collaborate with the correctional centre and other security agencies to ensure such security breaches do not happen again.

“The state government has also reaffirmed its commitment to supporting federal security agencies through logistics and other necessary resources to enhance their operational effectiveness.”

While the government commended the swift response of security agencies in handling the situation, it urged residents to remain vigilant.



kogi jailbreak

“We call on the public to report any suspicious individuals in their communities. Anyone found harbouring an escaped inmate will be held accountable,” the commissioner added. The Nigeria Correctional Service (NCoS) said it recaptured five of the 12 inmates who escaped from the Kogi custodial centre on Monday morning.

A statement issued by Abubakar Umar, the service’ Public Relations Officer (SPRO), Deputy Controller of Corrections, (DCC), on Monday in Abuja, said some of the Awaiting Trial Inmates (ATIs) in a section of the facility manipulated the padlocks, leading to the escape of 12 inmates.

Umar stated that upon receiving reports of the incident, the acting Controller-General of NCoS, Mr Sylvester Nwakuche, in collaboration with heads of sister security agencies immediately mobilised to the facility.

He said that personnel were also deployed to secure the facility, restore order and initiate a manhunt for the escapees.

“As of this moment, five of the fleeing inmates have been recaptured, while efforts are ongoing to apprehend the remaining inmates and bring them to justice.

“The NCoS acting controller-general has ordered a comprehensive investigation into the circumstances surrounding the incident.

“Additionally, a security audit is being conducted across all correctional facilities nationwide to prevent future occurrences.

“We urge members of the public to remain calm and cooperate with security agencies by providing any useful information that may assist in the recapture of those still-at-large inmates.

“Citizens are also encouraged to report any suspicious activities to the nearest security agency,” he said.

FG orders probe

Meanwhile, the federal government earlier yesterday ordered probe into the jailbreak.

The Minister of Interior, Olubunmi Tunji-Ojo, described the incident as unfortunate and vowed to ensure all fleeing inmates are captured leveraging the service's robust biometrics and already deployed technology solutions.

A statement by Babatunde Alao, a media aide to the Minister of Interior, said Tunji-Ojo ordered the acting Comptroller-General of the Nigerian Correctional Service (NCoS), Sylvester Ndidi, to visit the facility in Kogi to evaluate the situation and commence a comprehensive audit to unravel the events that led to the incident.

“We are on top of the situation. Our men are on ground in Kogi, and I have ordered a comprehensive audit of the situation,” the minister said.