

CSOs seek justice for four-year-old killed in Sokoto

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A coalition of civil society organisations (CSOs) has called for immediate justice following the abduction and killing of four-year-old Ayman Abubakar in Sokoto State, describing the incident as a stark warning of the threats facing children in Nigeria.

At a press conference held on Saturday at the American Corner in Sokoto, leaders of the Network Against Child Trafficking, Abuse and Labour (NACTAL), the Child Protection Network (CPN), and the Sokoto Response Team on Sexual and Gender-Based Violence/Child Protection demanded urgent steps to ensure child safety and accountability.

“This is a horrific violation of a child’s rights and a tragic reminder of the growing dangers facing Nigerian children,” the groups said in a joint statement signed by Abdulganiyu Abubakar (NACTAL National President), Usman Ahmad Suka (CPN State Coordinator), and Rabiu Bello Gandi (Chairman, SGBV/CP Response Team).

“We stand in solidarity with the family and with every Nigerian parent grieving a child lost to violence. No parent should ever have to endure such a brutal loss,” the statement added.

The groups welcomed the reopening of the investigation by the Sokoto State Police Command but stressed the need for urgency and transparency. They outlined specific demands, including a thorough investigation into the circumstances of Ayman’s disappearance and murder, the arrest and prosecution of all those involved, regular updates to the public, and the strengthening of child protection systems and safety measures in schools, places of worship, and communities.

According to the coalition, the safety of Nigerian children must be a national priority. They implored government institutions, security agencies, and community leaders to unite to achieve and visibly demonstrate justice.

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The coalition pledged continued close monitoring of the case, asserting that justice for Ayman represents justice for all.

At the event, Ayman's father, Dr. Abubakar, acknowledged the irreversible loss of his son but stressed the importance of holding the culprits accountable. He appealed to civil society organisations and the media to bring greater attention to their cause.

Dr. Abubakar then detailed the circumstances of his son's disappearance, noting that Ayman vanished on March 29, the day before Sallah, shortly after attending prayers at a local mosque.

According to a neighbour's child, Ayman was last seen playing before being taken away in a car by some men.

More than seven weeks later, on May 15, Ayman's body was discovered. The same child who had seen Ayman last reportedly identified the vehicle used in the abduction.

The police investigation is ongoing, with several suspects reportedly in custody. An autopsy report is expected to be submitted to the police in the coming days.