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Fresh mass abduction from school hostel sparks outrage

February 18, 2021 in [Featured](#), [News](#), [News Update](#)

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By Justina Asishana, Minna, Bolaji Ogundele, Okodili Ndidi, Abuja and Kolade Adeymi, Jose

- ***One killed***
- ***Troops deployed***
- ***Governor: I won't pay ransom***
- ***Senate, NLC, NUT, PDP angry***

In another mass abduction, bandits in the wee hours of Wednesday invaded Government Science College, Kagara, Rafi Local Government Council in Niger State, and abducted 27 pupils.

Three staff members and 11 members of a family living within the school premises were also kidnapped.

One pupil – Benjamin Duma – was shot dead by the gun-wielding criminals.

The incident sparked outrage. Many questioned why the school was left porous after the previous school abductions.

Governors, the Senate, Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC), Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and the Nigeria Union of Teachers (NUT) expressed anger over the abductions and called for the immediate release of the pupils and others.

Governor Abubakar Sani-Bello, who confirmed the incident, said bandits who on Sunday abducted passengers of a state-owned commercial bus had made a N500 million ransom demand.

The governor vowed that no ransom would be paid to the bandits.

In December last year, about 400 pupils of Kankara Government Science Secondary School in Katsina State, were abducted from their hostels. But they were freed within 48 hours.

On May 25, 2017, gunmen invaded the Lagos State Model College, Igbo Nla, Epe, abducting two principals and six students.

On February 19, 2018, 110 schoolgirls were kidnapped from the Government Girls' Science and Technical College (GGSTC), Dapchi in Yobe State.

Principal of Kagara GSC, Dan Asabe Ebaidu, said the number of bandits on the raid was unknown and that they didn't come on motorcycles.

He said they were dressed in camouflage and rounded up the pupils in the hostel.

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He said before he managed to escape, he observed that the invaders started the operation from the staff quarters which was why they abducted 12 family members.

He said after raiding the staff quarters, they headed for the hostel where they abducted pupils from one of the hostel blocks.

He noted that they gained easy access because the security of the school was porous.

It was gathered that there were about 650 pupils in the school.

The Governor promptly closed all boarding schools in Rafi, Mariga, Munya and Shiroro local government areas.

Bello said the government won't pay ransom to bandits because they use the money to buy sophisticated weapons to cause further harm.

"It is not in our policy as a government to pay ransom to bandits because we have noticed that they use this money to buy arms and ammunition. However, the government will be ready to support and assist repentant bandits."

President Muhammadu Buhari dispatched a team of security chiefs in Niger State capital to coordinate the rescue of staff and pupils

The President described the abduction as brazen and cowardly.

He directed the police and the armed forces to ensure the immediate return of the abducted persons.

According to a statement by his Senior Special Assistant on Media and Publicity, Mallam Garba Shehu, President Buhari charged the armed forces to do all that is needed to end the reign of terrorists and bandits in different parts of the country.

“President Muhammadu Buhari has received reports of the brazen attack on Government Science College, Kagara, Rafi Local Government Area of Niger State, following which a yet to be ascertained number of staff and students have been abducted by gunmen.

“Following these reports, the President has directed the Armed Forces and Police, to ensure immediate and safe return of all the captives.

“The President has also dispatched to Minna, Niger State a team of security chiefs to coordinate the rescue operation and meet with state officials, community leaders, as well as parents and staff of the College.

“President Buhari has assured of the support of his administration to the Armed Forces in their brave struggle against terrorism and banditry and urged them to do all that can be done to bring an end to this saga, and avoid such cowardly attacks on schools in the future”, the statement said.

“Our prayers are with families of the victims of this attack,” said the President.

Director Army Public Relations, Brigadier General Mohammed Yerima, in a statement said: “The Nigerian Army (NA) troops in a renewed effort and swift response to the unfortunate incident has mobilized and soldiers are currently in hot pursuit of the criminal elements in the general area.

The federal government promised to deploy all resources at its disposal to ensure the release of all the kidnapped victims.

The message was delivered to the Niger state governor by the Federal Government delegation sent to the state.

The four man delegation is made up of Minister of Information Lai Mohammed, Minister of Interior Rauf Aregbesola, National Security Adviser Baba Gana Munguno and Inspector General of Police Mohammed Adamu.

Mohammed said: “We have been sent by the President to assure the people and government of Niger state and Nigeria that the administration will leave no stone unturned to ensure the safety of lives and properties in the country.

“We are glad at what we have witnessed, that the state government is exploring kinetic and non-kinetic options to ensure the safe release of the victims. On our part as the federal government, we will deploy all resources to ensure the safe release of the victims.

“We want to assure you that we will employ all means to ensure the safe release of all the victims across Nigeria.”

Adamu said: “What is happening in Niger state is an issue of concern. A lot of strategy is put in place. We are working to ensure that the pupils are returned unharmed.

“We are using the same strategy as we used in the past case but it won’t stop us from apprehending those who committed the act. We have deployed four units of mobile police men to reinforce security in the state.”

Governor Sani Bello applauded the Presidency for responding to the cry of the people promptly.

He lamented the surge in banditry and kidnapping in the state adding that the state is doing its best to secure the release of the victims of both cases.

“I am confident that with the effort so far that we will secure the release of the children and other victims at the shortest possible time.”

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