

Parents abandon search for abducted schoolgirls

Another girl found; as terrorists raze Borno village, kill residents

HASSAN IBRAHIM AND
JAMES BWALA WITH AGENCY
REPORT

SEVERAL days after the kidnap of over 100 female students in Chibok, Borno State, by yet-to-be-identified terrorists, parents and relations of the abducted school girls, who had embarked on a wild search for their daughters in the Sambisa forest of the state, have reportedly returned with no trace of any missing girl.

However, the Borno State government, on Saturday, announced that another student had returned but noted that she was not one of those abducted, saying she had fled the school on the day of attack.

The number of missing children was still 84, it said, noting that the state already had 45 of the 129 missing children.

Also, in what appeared to be a damning verdict on the Nigeria military's operations in the state, one of the parents, who spoke with the **BBC Hausa** monitored in Kaduna on Saturday, Mr Enoch Mark, said that all through their fruitless search in the wild

forest, they did not come in contact with any Nigerian soldier.

Mark, whose daughter and two nieces were among those abducted, said he and others decided to turn back after locals told them the insurgents were nearby and were prepared to slaughter anyone who advanced further.

"If we were armed as they are we would surely go...and face them," Mark was quoted by the **AFP** to have said, adding that they saw no signs of a military build-up and questioned the seriousness of the ongoing rescue mission.

The father said on telephone that they started the search in the forests at about 6a.m. on Thursday but could not trace any of the abducted female students until they gave up at about 6p.m same day.

According to him, "we were about 200 in the forest but we had to return, as we couldn't sleep there. We saw makeshift huts that were erected in the forest and we saw vehicles like those of security agents in the forest. There were so many things, there was even bread.

"We saw different set

of people who asked of our mission and we told them. It is a very thick forest and anyone would be scared to explore the forest," he said.

Meanwhile, suspected Boko Haram terrorists have reportedly attacked Dalwa, one of the havens of the terrorists located about 22 kilometers from Maiduguri, the Borno State capital, killing scores of residents and razing down the village.

Sunday Tribune gathered that hundreds of residents of the village have fled for safety.

However, there were different accounts about the Dalwa attack, with some people who spoke with **Sunday Tribune** claiming that the village was burnt down by the military, because of the activities of the dreaded sect members, who had continued to attack travellers on the highway leading to Damboa and Biu in Southern Borno.

But another account stated that Boko Haram attacked the village because soldiers and **Civilian JTF** came to the village and ordered every youth in the village to join the **Civilian JTF** in hunting for Boko Haram members, particu-

larly those who lived in the village and others that visit every Friday to patronise the market.

According to a source, the youth of the village had carried arms and joined the Civilian JTF in the village to hunt for their kinsmen involved in the activities of Boko Haram, a development which led to the sect members and their sympathisers, who fled the village organising themselves and returning to attack the village on Thursday.

A local security man in Maiduguri, who patronised the Dalwa market, however, told **Sunday Tribune** people who went to the market on Friday told him the market day was observed as usual and that he could not confirm if Dalwa was indeed attacked, noting that if it was true that the village was attacked, it could not have been by the Boko Haram sect members, as they saw the village as their second home around Maiduguri, the state capital.

"I cannot tell you that Dalwa was attacked, I have not gone there in the last two weeks. But I am sure if there is any attack, it must come from the military,

because the sect members cannot attack Dalwa, as it remains one of their meeting points. The youth in Dalwa also did not join the civilian JTF because they know the sect members and the sect members know them. If they carry arms against them, there

Why our seats can't be declared vacant —37 defected reps

CHRIS AGBAMBU-ABUJA

THIRTY-SEVEN former Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) lawmakers who defected to the All Progressives Party (APC) in the House of Representatives have stated that their seats cannot be declared vacant, noting that it has become commonplace to read in the media calls on the Speaker of the House, Aminu Waziri Tambuwal, to declare their seats vacant.

The lawmakers, in a statement by Honourable Andrew Uchendu, said they were amused at such calls, which demonstrated inexplicable display of ignorance about how the system works.

They noted that when such calls emanated from people who should oth-

will be serious problem in that village. I believe Dalwa is well-known to all security operatives as the second home of Boko Haram, except that they don't want to act and these people are the ones attacking travellers along Damboa, Biu road," he said.

erwise know better, the intention to mislead the public immediately became apparent, saying that at the risk of being cited for contempt, "it needs to be reiterated that the issue of whether a seat is or is not vacant is a live matter before a competent court in Abuja and that once a matter is before the court, it behooves on civilised and law-abiding citizens to stay from drawing conclusions or deciding the matter before the court does so."

The statement read in part: "Such calls at this period amount to contempt of the judicial process. Those who are so concerned and eager to see the defectors out have option to approach the Federal High Court through a motion of joinder, and join PDP as plaintiffs in the ongoing matter.