

I'll sell abducted schoolgirls, Shekau threatens in video

■ Two students die of snakebites, 20 ill, reports AP

BY EMMA EMEOZOR, with agency reports

Barely 24 hours after President Goodluck Jonathan promised, during the Presidential Media Chat in Abuja that the government would effect the release of the abducted Borno State schoolgirls, Boko Haram has threatened to sell the victims as "slaves."

In a 57-minute video obtained by international news agencies, leader of the sect, Abubakar Shekau, stated: "I abducted your girls," while referring to the 300 students kidnapped from their hostel at Government Girls' Secondary School, Chibok, Borno State, three weeks ago.

According to AFP report, in the latest video, Shekau is seen dressed in combat fatigues standing in front of an Armoured Personnel Carrier (APC) and two pick-up trucks mounted with sub-machine guns. Six armed men stand beside him with their faces covered.

The news agency stated that the images were blurry at times, but zooms in to Shekau, who spoke in the local Hausa language and Arabic, as well as English.

The AFP stated: "For the first 14 minutes, he takes a swipe at democracy, western education, efforts for Muslims and Christians to live in peace and rails against non-believers in Islam."

The agency quoted Shekau as saying

in the video: "I abducted a girl at a western education school and you are disturbed. I said western education should end. Western education should end. Girls, you should go and get married. I will repeat this: Western education should fold up. I abducted your girls.

"I will sell them in the market, by Allah. I will marry off a woman at the age of 12. I will marry off a girl at the age of nine."

AFP reported that unconfirmed reports from local leaders in Chibok suggested that the girls had been taken across Nigeria's borders with Chad and Cameroun and sold as brides for as little as \$12.

AP, in its report, stated that an intermediary, who said that Boko Haram was ready to negotiate ransoms, for the girls, revealed that two of the girls had died of snakebites and about 20 ill.

The news agency also stated that Christians among the girls had been forced to convert to Islam, adding that source, an Islamic scholar, spoke on condition of anonymity because of the sensitive nature of his position.

It also reported that controversy trails the suspected arrest of two protest leaders, on the orders of the First Lady, Mrs. Patience Jonathan.

The news agency quoted Saratu Angus Ndirpaya of Chibok town of saying that operatives of the Department of

Security Service (DSS) drove her and protest leader, Naomi Mubah Nyadar, to a police station yesterday after an all-night meeting at the Presidential Villa in Abuja.

AP revealed that Angus stated that the police immediately released her, but that Nyadar remains in detention.

Deputy Superintendent Daniel Altine, police spokeswoman for Abuja, however, told AP that she had no information, but would investigate.

Reacting to the alleged arrest of the two protesters, Mrs. Jonathan, in a statement, denied reports that she had ordered Nyadar's arrest, but had urged the protesters in Abuja to go home.

Meanwhile, AP reported that international attention on the plight of the missing girls was initially slow but has grown quickly in recent days, in part because of a social media campaign:

It quoted United States Secretary of State John Kerry of vowing, on Saturday, that Washington would do "everything possible" to help Nigeria deal with Boko Haram militants and bring the children home.

On Friday, Washington issued a security warning to its citizens in Nigeria to avoid two Sheraton hotels in Lagos, because of an unspecified threat.

In another development, security has been beefed up in Abuja for the World Economic Forum, taking place from tomorrow to Friday.

was going. They only told me to go to Damaturu," he said, while he was paraded before journalists.

Giving more insight into his mission, Umar said that he had a guide on his journey to Damaturu for the suicide mission. "I have never been to Damaturu not to talk of knowing the police station. Somebody who understood the road and knows the police station accompanied me. He was my guide on the mission and on reaching Damaturu, he pointed at the place (A Division) and asked me to press the remote to trigger off the bomb. We arrived in Damaturu together, but he later left me alone to carry out the task, I refused his order. I didn't press any button," he explained.

Umar said he refused to carry out the task because he was worried. "My worry is that why should I kill myself and other innocent people?" He stated. A police bomb expert from the anti-bomb squad of the state police command, Mohammed Danladi, who noted that the explosive-laden van would have wreaked great havoc had the bomber succeeded in carrying out his heinous act.

Danladi, an inspector, explained that the capacity of the explosives revealed that a large consignment ever recovered from any terrorist since the commencement of the insurgency, adding that it would have been devastating and affected about 500 meter radius within the town, had the explosives exploded.

The state Commissioner of Police, Sanusi Rufai, said investigation has revealed that the bomber was recruited in Maiduguri four months ago and taken to the Sambisa forest where he was trained as a terrorist.

Rufai said the suspect has confessed coming to Damaturu to bomb the A division as well as kill innocent people in Damaturu central area. He also said the suspect was blindfolded from the point where he took off and was later unfolded on approaching Damaturu as he was then given the pick-up van to drive up to the destination.

"Though investigation is still continuing, he will, however, be handed over to the Joint Task Force (JTF) for further interrogation," he disclosed.