

Kidnappers of school children should face the death penalty

...HURIWA

The government of Nigeria must never normalize the mass abductions of school children because the phenomenon if allowed to thrive would inevitably convey the message that Nigeria is a failed state even as the untold suffering the school children kidnapped in Kaduna were subjected to for weeks before they were released has been described as satanic and absolutely reprehensible, according to the HUMAN RIGHTS WRITERS ASSOCIATION OF NIGERIA (HURIWA).

HURIWA which regretted that both the federal government and the Kaduna State government have perennially failed to provide security and safety for school pupils and students of higher institutions who have constantly been bombarded by violent mass abductions by terrorists and armed bandits, the Rights group has asked the government to ensure that those involved in the planning and execution of this dastardly crime of mass abduction in Kaduna State are arrested and brought to justice. The persistent failures of government to arrest suspected terrorists responsible for the incessant kidnappings of school children is the fundamental driving force for the continuous proliferation of this criminal act.

HURIWA is by this media statement calling on President Tinubu and the Kaduna State Governor Uba Sani to ensure that the terrorists who kidnapped the over a hundred pupils of the schools in Kaduna State are arrested, prosecuted and sanctioned in the most severest of ways and should indeed be made to face firing squads for this terrorism which must never be allowed to be normalized because these latest mass abductions have shown that Nigeria is at the verge of being declared and classified as a failed state.

The information that the students kidnapped from their schools in Kuriga, Kaduna state, have been released by their abductors, could be considered a good piece of news but the truth is that these innocent children have done no crime to deserve this torment and absolute cruelty meted out to them by terrorists who are been allowed by the Federal and state authorities to operate freely because there is no logical reason why there are a lot of cases of mass abductions in Kaduna State which is one state that is home to over sixty five percent of Nigeria's strategic national defence and military assets.



"We were also very sad to note the deep-seated emotional trauma and apprehension in the faces of these innocent victims of this insane mass abduction in Kaduna State. This is not a time for celebration but a time for soul searching by those who are in public offices and can't put strategic decision-making in action to put to an end the incessant mass abductions of school pupils in parts of Northern Nigeria. Why are these terrorists targeting innocent school children and why have the governments failed repeatedly to protect school children from been abducted and dehumanised? What about the pupil who was killed as the mass abduction was happening?"

"We the members of HURIWA have meticulously read and digested the statement issued by Mr. Abdulaziz Abdulaziz, a media aide to President Bola Tinubu, who said in a Facebook post that "all the 137 abducted school children" were freed, and we were wondering what kind of freedom was secured for these innocent children that were left in the hands of their tormentors for many days by both the federal government and the Kaduna State government".

"We were also very sad to note the deep-seated emotional trauma and apprehension in the faces of these innocent victims of this insane mass abduction in Kaduna State. This is not a time for celebration but a time for soul searching by those who are in public offices and can't put strategic decision-making in action to put to an end the incessant mass abductions of school pupils in parts of Northern Nigeria. Why are these terrorists targeting innocent school children and why have the governments failed repeatedly to protect school children from been abducted and dehumanised? What about the pupil who was killed as the mass abduction was happening?"

HURIWA said Governor Uba Sani should cover his face in shame that his administration has repeatedly left innocent school children to be taken away violently into the deep forest and yet there is a government in place or so it seems, whose primary constitutional duty is to protect the lives and property of the citizens. To even notice that these politicians are celebrating the release of these innocent children from the hands of their tormentors after several weeks, is such a pathetic scene which demonstrates the poverty of Honour amongst government officials of the contemporary times. We call on Kaduna state government to ensure that these innocent children are taking through posttraumatic psychological healing periods and for adequate medical examination to be carried out on them at public costs.

HURIWA quoted the media as stating that the Kaduna state governor 'celebrated' the release by asserting that the students were "unharmd," Governor Uba Sani said in a statement."Our special appreciation goes to our dear President, Bola Ahmed Tinubu, for prioritising the safety and security of Nigerians and particularly ensuring that the abducted Kuriga school children are released unharmd," Sani said. "While the school children were in captivity, I spoke with Mr. President several times. He shared our pains, comforted us, and worked round the clock with us to ensure the safe return of the children", says the Kaduna State Governor. HURIWA recalled that terrorists gunmen attacked the LEA Primary School and Government Secondary School, both in Kuriga, on March 7 and kidnapped the students, according to officials.

HURIWA recalled that Kidnap-for-ransom is rampant in Nigeria's northwest region where the schools are located. The early morning attack was the second mass kidnapping in about two weeks in the wider northern region, illustrating the task faced by President Bola Tinubu, who has promised to improve security since coming to office in May. A week before the students were kidnapped, Islamist militants also kidnapped as many as 200, mostly women and children, from a camp for people displaced by jihadist conflict in northeast Borno State. Officials gave conflicting figures for the number of the missing people in that attack.

UN child welfare agency UNICEF has called on the government to do better at protecting schools in Nigeria, where hundreds of pupils have been kidnapped in the last three years. Most were released after weeks or months in camps hidden in forests following negotiations and ransom payments.

HURIWA is therefore challenging the Armed forces of Nigeria including the Department of state services and the police, to go all out to arrest all those involved in the latest mass abductions of school children so the federal government can subject them to lawful prosecution under the counter terrorism law just as the Rights group warned against laxity and failure on the part of government to go after the kidnapers because if that is the case, then the government is making room for the normalization of mass abductions of school children in the country and this is very bad for the nation's international image.