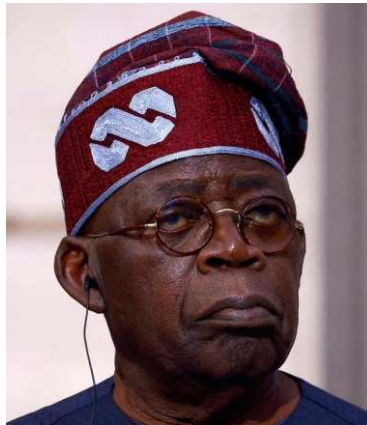


# Nigerians ask Tinubu, how did you get the abducted people out without killing terrorists?

Since the Nigerian government confirmed that the abducted 38 worshippers in Kwara State and the 24 Kebbi schoolgirls had been freed, many Nigerians have been awaiting updates about the arrest or killing of their abductors. The silence of the federal and state governments on consequences for the perpetrators has led many to believe that the government likely negotiated with the terrorists and paid ransom to have the abductees released. FIJ called the spokespersons of the Nigerian Army (NA) and the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) on Wednesday morning, but neither provided answers to questions about the abductors. Shortly after Kebbi Governor Nasir Idris and Bello Matawalle, Minister of Defence, announced that the 24 students had been freed, the terrorists who abducted the girls released a video, saying the government negotiated with them for the girls' release. "In the video footage, one of the kidnappers even asks the students how many jets flew over the forest. The students respond, 'Uncountable.' The kidnapper then boasts that the government could not secure their freedom by force, but only through negotiation with them," Salim Musa, a former chairmanship aspirant in Zamfara, wrote on X.

Loosely translated to English, one of the kidnappers said, "The government couldn't free you by force. They had to negotiate with us to secure your release." Although the government has not admitted to paying a ransom to secure the girls' freedom, many Nigerians find this recovery operation suspicious. When the news of the students' release made it to X on Tuesday evening, Adam Sanusi asked, "How? No arrests, no names, no negotiations? Did they just walk back themselves?" Like Sanusi, many others have been asking [questions](#). Folarin Falana, a lawyer and musician popularly known as Falz, also asked, "How can you conduct a rescue operation, and you are saying absolutely nothing about the abductors? Who has been arrested so far?" Elnathan John, a lawyer and author, said, "What tactics? Counting the ransom money tactically? Handing over the money tactically? Leaving them in peace with more resources to buy more high grade weapons tactically? What is tactical about the team?" "Glad to hear that the kidnapped victims are being 'brought back' or 'freed in a deal', not necessarily rescued, as there was no raid, no arrests, no shots fired. Was cash or prisoner swaps quietly transferred. Language matters; it can mislead and obscure facts in propaganda," asked another. "How did you rescue them? Did you pay ransom money or not? Where are the arrested terrorists or even better, where are their bodies?" Tonny Silas wrote. "How did you rescue them? Who did you arrest? What happened to the captors who kidnapped these innocent children from their school in the early hours of the morning traumatising them for life?" Dara



Oluwatoye asked. "See Nigeria's Minister of Defence. Your tactical team successfully rescued the abducted students... and freed the terrorists right? Did you rescue those captive girls without paying ransom to Sheikh Gumi to appease the Jihadi boys?" commented Giovanni Ifedi-Williams, Funmilayo Ogunsanya's comment reads, "Another magical 'rescue and recovery'. No arrest of the terrorists. No resistance from the terrorists. No exchange of gun fire with anybody. Nobody injured, harmed or killed in the magical rescue mission. Just a simple change of heart by terrorists who now decided to be nice." "Where are the arrested culprits? When will they face trial? You cannot tell us this without details," Anthonia Umoh noted. "Not a single abductor or terrorist killed."—@okpotimajor

FIJ observed that similar questions arose on Sunday when President Bola Tinubu [announced](#) that 38 Christians abducted from Christ Apostolic Church (CAC) in Eruku, Kwara State, had regained their freedom. Wemimo Adewuni, who wanted to know if the Eruku terrorists were killed or arrested, said, "Thank God the Eruku victims are rescued. How many terrorists were destroyed and/or arrested?" "All 38 worshippers abducted in Eruku, Kwara, have been rescued or ransom paid? If rescued, where were they rescued from, and how many of the terrorists were neutralised?" Frank asked as well. Video editor Emmanuel wrote, "You people negotiated with terrorists? Or how were they rescued?" Tosin Nathan commented, "Please tell us how they were rescued. Did you pay for their release? I'm happy they are home and safe, but we need to know if this will continue." For Vincent Okeke, Nigerians need to know what the government did to the kidnappers: "Where are the dead bodies of the kidnappers, or are they still roaming free so they can kidnap and kill again tomorrow? That's what we need to see at the moment!"

Meanwhile, the terrorists who abducted the Kebbi students on November 17 killed two non-academic staff members of the school, and the ones who attacked Eruku during a mid-week service on November 18 killed three residents. Since the government authorities in both cases acknowledge the efforts of security agencies in the rescue operation, FIJ reached out to the Army and Police for comments. Appolonia Anele, the army spokesperson, told FIJ, "The army has not released any statement." While Ben Hundeyin, the spokesperson for the police force, did not answer his call, he asked that a text message be sent. FIJ sent him one, but no response had been received at press time.