

HURIWA to Military Chiefs: Wake Up from Slumber and Work, Stop the Killings

In a striking wake-up call, the Human Rights Writers Association of Nigeria (HURIWA) has unleashed a scathing denunciation of the apparent slumber of military chiefs amidst the escalating wave of violence and insecurity. The organization's fiery demand for action comes in the wake of the shocking revelation that the recent Nigerian Air Force (NAF) helicopter crash in Niger State, initially thought to be a tragic accident, was, in fact, a deliberate act of terror orchestrated by bandits. HURIWA's National Coordinator, Comrade Emmanuel Onwubiko, declared in an emphatic press release that the incident exposes a pressing need for transparency, accountability, and immediate intervention. The civil rights advocacy group minced no words as it condemned the spread of misinformation by government authorities, who first presented the incident as an unfortunate accident. This manipulation of information not only dishonors the memory of the lives lost but also erodes public trust in the government's handling of the nation's security challenges.

"What was initially reported as a tragic accident has now been unveiled as a premeditated act of terror orchestrated by bandits. This shocking disclosure not only underscores the gravity of the security crisis gripping our nation but also shines a harsh spotlight on the dire need for transparency, accountability, and immediate action. "Such blatant manipulation of information is not only a grave disservice to the memory of the brave soldiers and pilots who lost their lives but also erodes the public's trust in the government's ability to effectively manage the escalating security challenges that threaten the nation's cohesion".

Amidst this unsettling revelation, HURIWA drew attention to the unaddressed case of the military jet downed by bandits in Zamfara State in 2021. According to the foremost civil rights advocacy group, this unresolved issue casts a shadow on the nation's security apparatus, underscoring the urgency for decisive action. "The pilot had finished a raid against kidnappers when he came under intense fire, the Nigerian Air Force said. Flight Lt. Abayomi Dairo ejected and used "survival instincts" to avoid capture and find shelter, before rejoining his comrades. The attack happened on the border of northern Zamfara and Kaduna states.

"There was a shock in May 2021 in Nigeria, when the then Army chief, Lt. Gen. Ibrahim Attahiru, was killed in a plane crash alongside 10 other officers. Back in April of the same year, another Alpha Jet crashed in Borno State, one of the areas where Boko Haram Militants are most active. Reports that it was shot down by jihadists were denied by the

military. Before that, in February, a military aircraft in Abuja that was bound for Niger State to search for kidnapped schoolchildren there crashed, killing all seven people on board. "The failure to bring these culprits to justice sends a grave message that acts of terror can be executed with impunity. HURIWA boldly proclaims that this failure not only damages the morale of the armed forces but also perpetuates a culture of lawlessness and violence". With unwavering determination, HURIWA delivered an urgent call to the Federal Government to prioritize the safety, security, and well-being of all Nigerians, emphasizing that the escalating frequency of terrorist attacks and the loss of both Civilian and Military lives demand immediate and resolute action.

HURIWA further stressed that President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, along with relevant security agencies, must swiftly redirect their focus toward

countering internal insurgencies, terrorism, kidnappings, and major criminal activities that threaten the nation's future. Stating that the situation cannot be overstated, HURIWA called upon the President to shift immediate attention to the internal insurgencies, terrorist attacks, kidnappings, and other major crimes plaguing the nation, highlighting the urgency for the Federal Government to prioritize

citizens' safety and security above all else.

"Every Nigerian life matters, and no effort should be spared in securing the homeland. The recent incidents underscore the pressing need for the Federal Government to redirect its focus toward addressing internal security challenges rather than frittering our arms, ammunition, and men to fight an external war in Niger. While international relations and external matters hold importance, they should not overshadow the grave security concerns within our borders.

"Nigeria is sliding perilously towards a state of continuous terrorist attacks, and the response from the government remains lackluster. The lives of innocent citizens, including soldiers who risk their lives to protect us, are needlessly lost due to these inadequate efforts.

"HURIWA calls upon President Bola Ahmed Tinubu to immediately shift his attention to the internal insurgencies, terrorist attacks, kidnappings, and other major crimes that plague our nation. The Federal Government must prioritize the safety and security of its citizens above all else.

Highlighting that the nation teeters on the edge of continuous turmoil, HURIWA once again directed an impassioned plea to President Tinubu to display unwavering leadership in confronting these challenges head-on, just as the rights group concluded that the killings must end, and the safety of Nigerians must be paramount.

