

DECLARE STATE OF EMERGENCY ON

ESCALATING KIDNAPPING CRISIS NOW!

The Centre for Crisis Communication (CCC) is sounding the alarm on the recent disturbing kidnapping crisis in Nigeria, and urging the Federal Government to declare a state of emergency to stem the tide of this national security threat. The Centre is convinced that without decisive action, the situation will degenerate into a crisis proportion, further endangering innocent lives and undermining national security. The kidnapping epidemic has evolved from sporadic criminal activity into a full-blown lucrative industry, with criminal-minded individuals, bandit groups and terrorist groups adopting it as a primary source of revenue. This alarming trend, even in the face of security measures being put in place, has not only deepened insecurity but also paved the way for other forms of violent crimes, severely destabilizing the nation. Since the beginning of the year, Nigeria has witnessed a dramatic and disturbing series of abductions, with the Northwest currently becoming the epicenter of the crisis. Just recently, the nation was jolted by the reported killing of a traditional ruler in Sokoto emirate who was earlier abducted on his way home by bandits. Few days before his eventual death in the hands of the abductors, the monarch was seen in a video pleading for his life while in captivity. It was quite saddening that despite the viral video that trended on social media, he was not rescued until he was savagely murdered by the kidnapers. It was only when the news of his death broke that government officials began to talk tough and issue directives. More saddening is the report that days after the death of the traditional ruler in the hands of his merciless abductors, the bandits regrouped, stormed communities in the same axis and reportedly abducted not less than 150 people! Those folks are still in the hands of the bandits. The story of the late Emir of Gobir and his community, the 20 medical students who were abducted



on their way to Enugu (but later freed) as well as that of Dr Ganiat Popoola, a medical doctor who has spent about eight months in the abductors' den (doctors are currently on nationwide warning strike to protest her prolonged captivity), are the sad depictions of the reality of worsening insecurity and unsatisfactory response at the three tiers of government since security is everyone's business.

As of today, there are indeterminable number of reported and unreported hapless Nigerians in the hands and mercy of kidnapers in various forests and fortresses across the country. Nigerians are no longer safe in their own country. They are not safe along the highways, they are not safe on the streets, they are not safe in schools, in farms, in churches nor mosques; not even in the sanctuary of their homes as kidnapers have laid siege everywhere! As of today, there are indeterminable number of reported and unreported hapless Nigerians in the hands and mercy of kidnapers in various forests and fortresses across the country. It is quite alarming the frequently reported cases of abductions on the highways, schools and places of worship which is a clear indication that kidnapping is gradually becoming a lucrative business model for

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steps that will prevent such incidents, rather than merely reacting to them after the fact. More importantly, security forces must justify the huge expenses by government in the security sector by producing visible results in their fight against insecurity. Furthermore, we would like to once again stress the importance of addressing the underlying socio-economic factors that contribute to the kidnapping crisis and indeed other insecurity plaguing the country. This include implementing economic empowerment programs in vulnerable communities, as well as improving access to education and healthcare, to reduce the appeal of criminal activities among the youth. The Centre prescribing a coordinated national response to the kidnapping crisis. This involves not only strengthening the capacity of security agencies and deepening synergy between and among them but also fostering greater collaboration between federal, state, and local governments, to able to get on top of the situation. The Government should take swift and decisive action to reverse the current trend and restore peace, security and stability across the regions. We also call on the international community to support Nigeria's efforts to combat kidnapping and other violent crimes. Time is of the essence. The government must act now to prevent a national crisis.

Signed,

**Maj Gen Chris Olukolade (Rtd) Chairman, Centre for
C r i s i s C o m m u n i c a t i o n**
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HURIWA blasts President Tinubu and Military Chiefs for Lack of Strategy in Tackling Insecurity

The Human Rights Writers Association of Nigeria (HURIWA) has strongly criticized President Bola Ahmed Tinubu and the current military leadership for what it described as a complete failure to implement a winning strategy in the fight against terrorism and banditry in Nigeria. The group expressed outrage over the recent developments in Zamfara and Niger states, where terrorists have not only continued to terrorize local communities but have also managed to capture military hardware, further exposing the weaknesses in Nigeria's security apparatus.

HURIWA took particular issue with President Tinubu's decision to send a delegation led by the Minister of State for Defence, Dr. Bello Muhammed Matawalle, and the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) to Sokoto as part of efforts to address banditry and terrorism in the North West. The organization dismissed this move as mere political posturing that fails to address the root causes of insecurity or provide a concrete strategy for victory.

In a sharply-worded statement issued, HURIWA questioned the effectiveness of dispatching high-profile government officials to Sokoto without a clear, actionable plan. "Sending a Minister or the CDS to Sokoto is not a strategy; it is a political stunt. Are these officials going to lead troops into battle? Are they going to dismantle terrorist networks themselves? This is not what Nigerians expect from their leaders. Nigerians want a real, winning strategy—something the current administration and military chiefs have failed to deliver," said Comrade Emmanuel Onwubiko, HURIWA's National Coordinator. HURIWA did not mince words in calling out what it sees as the underlying reasons for the persistent failure in the fight against terrorism: incompetence at the highest levels of the military and the politicization of key appointments. The organization lamented that the President, possibly due to ethnic considerations or political patronage, has refused to appoint the most competent Generals to lead the nation's armed forces. "There is no excuse for the President to continue appointing incompetent military



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leaders when there are qualified generals across various ethnic groups who can lead this country out of the security quagmire. The continued reliance on generals who lack the strategic acumen to defeat these terrorists is not only frustrating but dangerous for the country," HURIWA stated.

The group pointed to the recent events in Zamfara State, where terrorists led by Bello Turji were seen celebrating the capture of an Armoured Personnel Carrier (APC) belonging to the Nigerian Army. According to reports, the military vehicle got stuck in a marshy area, forcing troops to abandon it temporarily. However, the situation was exploited by terrorists who then boasted about their capture of the vehicle, further demoralizing both the military and the general populace.

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explanation for the continuous failures we are witnessing. The President must put aside political considerations and appoint leaders based on merit if he truly wants to see an end to this crisis," HURIWA declared.

HURIWA also expressed deep concern over the failure of Nigeria's intelligence community to monitor and intercept terrorist communications effectively. The organization noted that despite the significant resources allocated to intelligence and security agencies, they have been unable to detect and disrupt terrorist networks operating within the country.

Citing a recent report by SB Morgen (SBM) Intelligence, HURIWA highlighted the grim reality that over 1,056 Nigerians were killed in kidnap-related incidents between July 2023 and June 2024, while kidnapers demanded an astounding N10.9 billion in ransom during the same period. The organization criticized the government's lack of a comprehensive strategy to combat these crimes, which have become increasingly brazen and widespread. "It is beyond comprehension that terrorists can communicate openly and plan their attacks without being intercepted by our intelligence agencies. The same terrorists are now taunting the Nigerian government on social media, yet the security forces seem powerless to stop them. What is the use of linking National Identification Numbers (NIN) to mobile networks if the intelligence community cannot use this data to track and neutralize these threats?" HURIWA asked.

In light of these failures, HURIWA called for a complete overhaul of the military leadership and a new, merit-based approach to appointments within the armed forces. The organization stressed that the only way to defeat the terrorists and restore peace to Nigeria is through competent leadership that is not compromised by political or ethnic considerations.

"Nigeria needs a winning strategy, and this can only be achieved by appointing, particularly a Chief of Army Staff who has the vision, the experience, and the tactical knowledge to defeat these terrorists. If the President insists on appointing a Yoruba man to this position, there are many competent Yoruba generals to choose from. But the current crop of leaders has proven time and again that they are not up to the task," HURIWA stated. HURIWA also demanded immediate action from the President to ensure that the lives and properties of Nigerians are protected. The group emphasized that the government's top priority should be the security and well-being of its citizens, and this can only be achieved through decisive leadership and a clear, coherent strategy.

In conclusion, HURIWA reiterated its call for accountability at all levels of government and the military. The organization warned that unless there is a radical change in the way the security challenges are being handled, Nigeria risks descending further into chaos. "The time for political shenanigans is over. Nigerians deserve better. They deserve a government that will take their security seriously and a military that is capable of delivering victory," HURIWA's statement concluded.