



NEWS SITUATION TRACKING - NIGERIA

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KIDNAPPING IN NIGERIA

Vol. 1



Location: Borno and Oyo States

Issue: 88 people including schoolchildren and 7 staff members abducted in coordinated

Terrorists attacks on schools in Borno and Oyo States

Date: May 15, 2026

COMMUNITY PROFILING

Population: Borno and Oyo States have an estimated population of approximately 7 and 8 million people as of 2026.

Basic Demography: Borno State shares international borders with Niger, Chad, and Cameroon, making it strategically significant but also vulnerable to cross-border insecurity and internal while Oyo State borders with Yobe, Borno and Gombe States. Oyo State shares International boundary with the Republic of Benin and internal boundaries with Ogun, Osun and Kwara States.

LGA: The two states comprise a total of 60 Local Government Areas (LGAs), with 33 LGAs in Oyo State and 27 LGAs in Borno State.

Ethnicity: Borno State is home to more than 20 ethnic groups, with the

CRITICAL STAKEHOLDERS

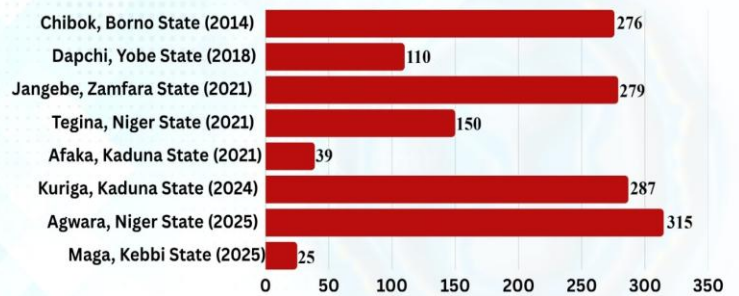
Direct Actors: Suspected terrorists
Affected Persons: Schoolchildren, teachers, parents and community residents
Interested Actors: Federal Government of Nigeria, Oyo and Borno State Governments, Nigeria Police Force (NPF), Nigerian Army (NA), Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), Ministry of Education, Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC), National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Community leaders and Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs)

INCIDENT PROFILING

The persistent threat of school abduction in Nigeria continues to generate significant security concerns. The recurrent attacks on educational institutions have created a climate of fear and insecurity that undermines access to education, child protection, and sustainable national development. This security challenge continues to have far-reaching implications for public safety, social cohesion, and human security across affected communities.

Below is a Comparative Analysis of Major School Abductions in Nigeria, 2014–2025 as recorded in the WANEP NEWS

Chronology of Major School Abductions in Nigeria Between (2014–2025)



These incidents highlight the persistent vulnerability of schools and students to attacks by criminal and armed groups. Enduring challenges including weak security intelligence, inadequate protection of educational facilities, youth unemployment,

¹ <https://www.infoplease.com/atlas/africa/nigeria-map>

Kanuri, Shuwa Arab, Babur/Bura, Marghi, Fulani, and Hausa among the major groups. While Oyo State is predominantly inhabited by the Yoruba ethnic group, alongside other ethnic communities including Hausa, Igbo, Fulani, and Nupe residents.

Kidnapping in Nigeria

Kidnapping for economic and ideological purposes by various criminal groups, including suspected armed bandits, militants, pirates, and terrorist groups such as Boko Haram and the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP), remains a critical human security challenge in Nigeria. The evolving pattern of kidnapping incidents across the country demonstrates a significant expansion in both the geographical scope of attacks and the range of potential targets, irrespective of victims' social or economic status. Unlike the earlier trend, which primarily targeted wealthy individuals and expatriates for ransom, vulnerable populations such as Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), students, commuters, and residents of low-income communities have increasingly become victims of abduction.

According to the WANEP National Early Warning

porous borders, the proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW), and the activities of terrorists and criminal networks continue to facilitate the prevalence of school-related insecurity across communities. The recurring nature of these attacks highlights the urgent need to strengthen the implementation of the Safe Schools Declaration and enhance preventive security measures around educational institutions nationwide.

On 15th May 2026, forty-two (42) people including thirty-two (32) schoolchildren were reportedly abducted in an attack carried out by suspected Boko Haram terrorists on Mussa Primary School and Government Day Secondary School in Mussa Community, Askira/Uba Local Government Area of Borno State.² According to reports, four (4) students comprising two (2) males and two females were abducted from the Government Day Secondary School, while twenty-eight (28) pupils were abducted from the primary school section. Additionally, ten (10) children were reportedly abducted from their various residential homes within the community.

On 15 May 2026, one (1) person was reportedly killed and forty-six (46) others, including 39 pupils/students, seven (7) teachers, and school administrator, were abducted during coordinated attacks on Baptist Nursery and Primary School, L.A. Primary School, and Yawota Community High School in Ahoro-Esiele, Oriire Local Government Area of Oyo State. During the attacks, one teacher was reportedly killed while attempting to escape with students from their abductors.³ The abducted staff reportedly included a female Vice Principal, four male teachers, and two female teachers. The attackers also allegedly stole and later burnt the abducted Vice Principal's vehicle before fleeing into a nearby forest. Kidnapping for ransom has been attributed as the motive behind the crime.⁴

² <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2026/05/42-abducted-after-school-invasion-in-borno-village-ndume/>

³ <https://punchng.com/just-in-bandits-behead-abducted-oyo-teacher/>

⁴ https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2026/jun/05/children-how-chibok-style-school-abductions-spreading-nigeria?utm_source=chatgpt.com

System (NEWS), over 2,465 persons, including 379 females and 245 children, were kidnapped between January and April 2026 across the 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). Despite ongoing security interventions by the Federal and State Governments to address the menace, challenges such as weak intelligence gathering, inadequate surveillance capabilities, and gaps in inter-agency coordination continue to undermine preventive and response efforts.

RESPONSE BY ACTORS

- In response to the current volatile security in the Oyo and Borno States, relevant stakeholders are implementing a swift and multi-faceted response involving various agencies.
- The Nigerian Army reportedly deployed troops to Mussa Community in Askira/Uba Local Government Area of Borno State following the attack on Mussa Primary School and Government Day Secondary School.
- Security operatives commenced search-and-rescue operations to locate and secure the release of the abducted pupils and students.
- The Nigeria Police Force announced the arrest of three suspects shortly after the attack on schools in Oriire Local Government Area. The suspects were reportedly identified with the assistance of local residents, while investigations and efforts to locate the abducted pupils continued.
- The Oyo State Government condemned the attack and pledged to work with security agencies to secure the release of the victims and strengthen security around schools. Community leaders and civil society groups also demanded urgent government intervention.
- Security agencies intensified search-and-rescue operations in affected communities, while stakeholders, including the Federal and State Ministries of Education, security agencies, local authorities, civil society organizations, community leaders, and international partners, renewed calls for the effective implementation of the Safe Schools Declaration (SSD) to strengthen the protection of schools, learners, teachers, and other educational personnel across the country.
- The Federal Government approved the recruitment of 1000 forest guards and directed a specialized security unit to intensify ongoing operations aimed at securing the release of the abducted pupils and teachers.⁵

RISK ANALYSIS:

The recent school abductions in Borno and Oyo States highlight the persistent threat posed by terrorist, violent extremist, and criminal groups to educational institutions in Nigeria. These incidents demonstrate that schools, particularly those in rural and underserved communities, remain vulnerable to attacks by armed actors seeking financial gain, publicity, operational leverage, and opportunities to undermine public confidence in state institutions. While the attack in Borno State reflects the continued capability of Boko Haram insurgents to target civilians despite ongoing counterinsurgency efforts, the incident in Oyo State suggests that school-related kidnapping is increasingly extending beyond traditional conflict-affected areas.

⁵ <https://guardian.ng/news/oyo-kidnap-crisis-tinubu-orders-1000-forest-guards-special-rescue-deployment/>

Schools and schoolchildren continue to hold strategic value for both terrorist and criminal groups. Attacks on educational institutions generate widespread public attention, heighten fear and insecurity, and produce psychological effects that resonate far beyond the immediate victims and affected communities. As symbols of government presence, social development, and future economic opportunity, schools represent targets through which perpetrators can disrupt learning, weaken community resilience, and challenge public confidence in state authority. In some cases, abducted children may be subjected to exploitation, indoctrination, recruitment into armed groups, forced labour, or forced marriage, while mass kidnappings can also serve as a means of securing ransom payments or other concessions. The recurrence of such attacks is likely to heighten fear among students, parents, teachers, and community members, potentially discouraging school attendance and leading to temporary school closures. This could further increase Nigeria's already high number of out-of-school children and negatively affect educational outcomes, particularly in vulnerable communities. Beyond disrupting access to education, persistent insecurity may undermine human capital development, weaken social cohesion, and constrain long-term socio-economic progress.

School abductions also present serious child protection concerns. Victims may experience physical harm, psychological trauma, abuse, and other forms of exploitation during captivity. The effects often extend beyond the period of abduction, with long-term consequences for victims' wellbeing, educational attainment, and social reintegration, while also placing significant emotional and psychological burdens on affected families and communities. The impact on the education sector may be equally significant. Growing security concerns could discourage teachers and school administrators from accepting postings in remote or high-risk areas, thereby affecting the availability and quality of education services. Furthermore, the apparent use of kidnapping for ransom as a motive in the Oyo State incident may encourage copycat attacks if schools continue to be perceived as accessible and profitable targets.

At the community level, persistent attacks on schools may contribute to displacement as families relocate in search of safer environments. Such movements can place additional pressure on host communities and local resources while weakening social cohesion and public trust in the ability of authorities to provide adequate protection for schools and other critical social infrastructure. The persistence of school abductions across different parts of the country underscores the need for sustained and coordinated action to safeguard educational institutions. Strengthening intelligence gathering, enhancing security around schools, improving community-based early warning and response mechanisms, and effectively implementing the Safe Schools Declaration (SSD) are essential to reducing vulnerabilities and ensuring that children can learn in a safe and secure environment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The Federal and State Governments should strengthen the protection of educational institutions through the full implementation of the Safe Schools Declaration (SSD) and the National Policy on Safety, Security and Violence-Free Schools. This should include the development and operationalization of school safety plans, periodic risk assessments, and the establishment of emergency response mechanisms in schools, particularly those located in high-risk and rural communities.
- Security agencies should enhance intelligence gathering, surveillance, and threat assessment around educational institutions and vulnerable communities. This should be complemented by improved coordination among the Nigerian Army, Nigeria Police Force, Department of State Services (DSS), Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), local vigilante groups, and community-based security structures to facilitate timely detection and prevention of attacks.
- The Federal and State Ministries of Education should work with school authorities to strengthen security infrastructure in schools through the provision of perimeter fencing, controlled entry and exit points, alarm systems, communication equipment and security lighting. Schools in high-risk areas should also establish emergency evacuation and lockdown procedures and regularly conduct safety drills for students and staff.
- Community leaders, Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs), School-Based Management Committees (SBMCs), and local stakeholders should be actively engaged in school protection initiatives. Community-based early warning and early response mechanisms should be strengthened to facilitate the timely reporting of suspicious activities and emerging threats to relevant authorities.
- The Federal and State Governments should provide comprehensive psychosocial support, trauma counselling, and rehabilitation services for abducted victims, their families, teachers, and affected communities. Long-term mental health support should be integrated into recovery efforts to address the lasting psychological impact of abduction and promote the successful reintegration of survivors.