



NIGERIAN ACADEMY OF EDUCATION (NAE)

**PRESS RELEASE ON THE ATTACKS ON
SCHOOLS IN NIGERIA**

*The Shame of the Nation: Why Nigeria Must
Act Now to Protect Its Schools*

Tuesday, 25 November, 2025

1.0 A Nation Under Siege

The statistics available to the Nigerian Academy of Education (NAE) on the ongoing saga of attacks on schools in Nigeria hover around 92 school invasions, 2,500 abducted learners, over 180 children killed, 90 injured, more than 90 remain missing, about 60 school teachers and staff members kidnapped, and over 1 million Nigerian children have reported fear of attending school any more, due to insecurity. This is in addition to millions of parents, relatives and the general public who are as concerned as everybody else. All these began since the Chibok abduction in 2014 to the latest at St. Mary's School, Niger State on November 21, 2025. This has led to the closure of schools by the Federal Ministry of Education (FME) and some state governments. These are not mere statistics, they represent shattered dreams, grieving families, and a generation at risk. Education, the cornerstone of national development, is being eroded by violence.

1.1 Condolences and National Pain

The Nigerian Academy of Education (NAE) extends heartfelt condolences to all affected learners, their families, and communities. We share in the grief and uncertainty that millions endure. Every abduction, every life lost, chips away at the hope of a brighter future.

1.2 Destabilisation of Education

Schools should be sanctuaries of safety and learning, not spaces of fear. Persistent attacks have destabilised Nigeria's education system, creating psychological, emotional, and social barriers to learning. The closure of schools in many parts of Nigeria underscores the gravity of the situation. This reality threatens national development and undermines the future of our children. As UNICEF rightly asserts: "No child should be put at risk while pursuing an education." Yet, in Nigeria today, classrooms have become battlegrounds.

1.3 Government Efforts and Gaps

The NAE acknowledges government initiatives such as the Safe Schools Declaration (2015), the National Plan for Financing Safe Schools (2023–2026), and the establishment of the Response Coordination Centre (2022). While commendable, these measures remain insufficient. Current

actions risk creating a false sense of security, as schools - particularly in the North East and Middle Belt - remain vulnerable to attacks and kidnappings. The ₦15 billion funding commitment and policy documents are important, but without effective implementation, they amount to lip service. The government's constitutional duty to protect lives and property (Section 14(2)(b)) appears neglected, eroding public trust in education as a national priority.

1.4 Erosion of Public Confidence

As educators and administrators, we cannot confidently claim that Nigerian schools are safe. Many lack basic governance, emergency response systems, and secure infrastructure. Neglected signposts at previously attacked schools symbolise a troubling pattern of indifference. Parents, teachers, and learners live in fear, casting serious doubts on Nigeria's commitment to education as a driver of national progress.

1.5 Psychological Trauma: The Hidden Cost of School Attacks

Beyond the immediate physical dangers, the persistent attacks on schools in Nigeria have inflicted deep psychological wounds on learners, teachers, and families. The trauma experienced by abducted children, survivors, and those living in constant fear of violence can have lifelong consequences. Symptoms such as anxiety, depression, nightmares, and difficulty concentrating on studies are increasingly common among affected students. Many children now associate school with danger rather than safety, undermining their motivation to learn and their trust in society. Teachers and parents, too, face emotional distress, grappling with feelings of helplessness and guilt. Without adequate psychological support and trauma care, these invisible scars may hinder academic achievement, social development, and future prospects. It is imperative that the government and stakeholders prioritise mental health interventions alongside physical security measures. Providing counselling, safe spaces, and community-based support will help to restore hope and resilience among Nigeria's young learners.

1.6 Impact on Teachers: The Unsung Victims

While much attention is given to the plight of learners, teachers are also deeply affected by the ongoing attacks on schools. Many educators face daily threats to their safety, leading to heightened stress, anxiety, and fear. Some have been abducted, injured, or even killed in the line of duty. The psychological burden of working in such a hostile environment can result in burnout, absenteeism, and a decline in teaching quality. Teachers are often forced to make difficult choices between their commitment to education and their personal safety. The trauma of witnessing violence or losing colleagues and learners can have lasting effects on their mental health and professional motivation. In some cases, qualified teachers have left the profession or refused postings to high-risk areas, exacerbating the shortage of skilled educators in affected regions. Supporting teachers with adequate security, mental health resources, and recognition for their resilience is essential. Their well-being directly influences the quality of education and the recovery of affected communities.

1.7 Impact on Families: The Ripple Effect of Insecurity

The ongoing attacks on schools have devastating consequences for families across Nigeria. Parents and guardians live in constant fear for the safety of their children, often facing agonising decisions about whether to send them to school or keep them at home. The trauma of school invasions, abductions, violence, and uncertainty can lead to emotional distress, anxiety, and a breakdown of trust in the education system. Families who have lost children or whose loved ones have been abducted endure profound grief and, in many cases, financial hardship due to ransom demands or the loss of future opportunities. The disruption of education affects not only the immediate victims but also siblings and extended family members, creating a cycle of fear and instability within communities. Supporting families with counselling, financial assistance, and community engagement is essential for healing and rebuilding confidence in the nation's schools.

1.8 Impact on Communities: The Wider Consequences of School Insecurity

The insecurity affecting schools reverberates throughout entire communities, undermining social cohesion and development. When schools are attacked or closed, communities lose vital centres for learning, social interaction, and growth. The fear and trauma experienced by learners, teachers, and families can erode trust among neighbours and weaken the collective spirit needed to overcome adversity. Economic activities may suffer as families relocate or withdraw children from school, and local businesses that depend on educational institutions face uncertainty. Community leaders and members often struggle to mobilise resources for protection and recovery, while the stigma of violence can discourage investment and progress. Restoring safety and confidence in schools is essential for rebuilding resilient communities. Collaborative efforts involving local stakeholders, security agencies, and government can help foster unity, support recovery, and ensure that education remains a pillar of hope and opportunity.

1.9 Economic Impact of School Attacks: A Costly Crisis

The economic consequences of attacks on schools in Nigeria are profound and far-reaching. According to UNICEF, over 11,500 schools in Northern Nigeria have been forced to close since December 2020 due to insecurity, leaving millions of children without access to formal learning. The resulting disruption has led to an estimated 3 million children at risk of dropping out of school entirely, with long-term implications for the nation's workforce and economic growth. A UNICEF report highlights that, in 2020 alone, 5 million children lost a quarter of the academic session due to school closures, and the lifetime economic loss associated with these disruptions is unquantifiable. The closure of schools not only affects learners but also teachers, families, and local economies that depend on educational institutions for employment and commerce. Ransom payments for abducted learners and staff further strain family and community resources, while the fear of violence discourages investment in affected regions. The cumulative effect is the weakening of

Nigeria's human capital, increased poverty, and a diminished capacity for national development.

1.10 Impact on National Development: Threatening Nigeria's Future

The persistent attacks on schools pose a grave threat to Nigeria's national development. Education is the foundation for building skilled human capital, fostering innovation, and driving economic growth. When children are denied safe access to learning, the nation's ability to produce future leaders, professionals, and entrepreneurs is severely compromised. The closure of schools and the trauma experienced by learners and teachers contribute to lower literacy rates, reduced productivity, and a widening skills gap. This undermines efforts to achieve national goals such as poverty reduction, gender equality, and sustainable development. The loss of confidence in the education system can also discourage foreign investment and limit Nigeria's competitiveness on the global stage. Protecting schools and ensuring uninterrupted education is not only a moral imperative but also a strategic necessity for Nigeria's progress and prosperity.

2.0 Call for Concerted and Truthful Protection

The Nigerian Academy of Education urges the following:

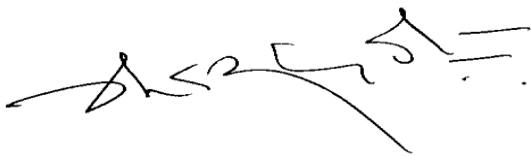
- 2.1 NAE make bold and accentuates that learners, teachers, workers in schools and education facilities must be protected from all forms of invasion violence, abduction as contained in the international humanitarian and human rights law.
- 2.2 The attacks bring misery, loss of hope and state of helplessness to many Nigerians who feel the government is failing in one of its constitutional duties of protecting lives and properties. We therefore demand accountability and the harshest of punishment for those responsible, in accordance with local, national and international dictates.

- 2.3 Government and relevant stakeholders should overhaul and rework existing policies and declarations that bring fail to halt the miseries currently being experience.
- 2.4 School community members, and local communities must be empowered with necessary knowledge, attitude, skills facilitated by personnel, equipment and materials by all levels of government in a coordinated approach that make them alive to their responsibilities and safe us all from the traumatic unending disruption of schooling facilitated by personnel at all levels of government in a coordinated approach.
- 2.5 Perpetrators and their collaborators must be seriously dealt with, and gallant security officers must be rewarded, to serve as motivation for others.
- 2.6 The wounded and traumatised must be promptly treated, counselled while families of those killed be publicly compensated.
- 2.7 The sanctity of human lives must be ingrained in the lives of all citizens. Therefore, premium must be placed on high intelligence gathering and sharing in real time and in a coordinated approach among security agencies, staff and learners. This must be the norm in addressing school security issues.
- 2.8 Long lasting solutions must be sought to put this matter of school invasion, learners' abduction and the untold misery visited on parents and families to be permanently solved.

3.0 Conclusion: A National Imperative

Education is the lifeblood of any nation. If Nigeria fails to protect its schools and its young ones, it fails to protect its future. It means that we are by our own hands and inaction consigning the future of Nigeria and Nigerians into oblivion. Failure to act decisively risks consigning Nigeria's future to uncertainty and despair.

The NAE calls on government, security agencies, civil society, and all stakeholders to rise above rhetoric and take bold, coordinated action. The time for promises has passed, the time for results is now.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'O. Jegede', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Emeritus Professor Olugbemi Jegede, FNAE
NAE President

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Chukwurah', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Prof. Chris Chukwurah, MNAE
NAE Secretary General