

**TERRORIST DIRECT NEGOTIATIONS WITH SUBNATIONAL AUTHORITIES:
A NATIONAL SECURITY, CONSTITUTIONAL AND ETHNO-REGIONAL SECURITY
ANALYSIS OF THE OYO STATE SCHOOL KIDNAP CRISIS AND THE “NO-
RANSOM, NO-NEGOTIATION” DOCTRINE**

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ABSTRACT

A statement attributed to Adigun Makanjuola Muhammed, President of Oodua Youth Congress, dated 29 May 2026, alleges that terrorists who abducted students and teachers from schools in Oyo State are demanding “direct negotiations” with the Executive Governor of Oyo State, Engineer Seyi Makinde. The statement frames the demand as an attempt to legitimize criminal actors, bypass federal security failure, and test Yorubaland for ransom payment, prisoner release, amnesty, disarmament of Amotekun, and media silence. This paper analyzes the phenomenon of non-state actors seeking direct negotiation with governors under Nigeria’s 1999 Constitution, using security, legal, and governance frameworks. Drawing on Akinade 2008a, 2008b, 2017b, 2018a, 2019a, as well as works by Awojobi 2014, Onuoha 2013, Forrest 2012, and Hoffman 2017, the paper argues that direct negotiation confers political legitimacy on terrorists, violates Section 14(2)(b) and Section 217 of the Constitution, and undermines national security policy. It examines likely terrorist demands based on empirical patterns from Katsina, Zamfara, Kaduna, and Niger States, and assesses constitutional constraints facing Governor Makinde as Chief Security Officer without command of federal forces. The paper rejects ransom payment and political concessions, and recommends kinetic response, intelligence-led operations, community policing through Amotekun, legal prosecution under Terrorism Prevention Act, and internationalization of the crime. It concludes that sovereignty is non-negotiable and selective state failure weakens “One Nigeria.”

Keywords: Terrorism, Direct Negotiation, Governor Seyi Makinde, Oyo State, Kidnapping, Amotekun, National Security, Federalism, Sovereignty, No-Ransom Doctrine.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background: The Oyo School Abduction and Demand for Direct Talks

A public statement dated 29 May 2026 alleges that terrorists who abducted “young students and teachers of schools in Oyo State” are seeking direct negotiation with Governor Seyi Makinde, bypassing the Police and Army. This tactic mirrors trends in North-West Nigeria where bandits have negotiated directly with state officials in Zamfara and Katsina since 2019. The demand transforms a criminal act into a political bargaining process and tests the limits of subnational authority under a unitary security architecture.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Three dimensions emerge:

1. Security dimension: Kidnapping of schoolchildren violates international humanitarian law and creates mass trauma. UNICEF 2021 reports over 1,400 schoolchildren abducted in Nigeria since 2014.
2. Constitutional dimension: Governors lack command authority over Army, Police, and DSS under Sections 217 and 214 of the 1999 Constitution, yet bear political responsibility as “Chief Security Officers.”
3. Sovereignty dimension: Direct negotiation fragments the state’s monopoly of violence. Weber 1919 argues that when non-state actors gain recognition, state legitimacy erodes.

1.3 Aim and Research Questions

Aim: To analyze the legal, security, and political implications of terrorist demands for direct negotiation with Governor Seyi Makinde and propose a state response consistent with law and national security doctrine.

Research Questions:

1. Why do terrorists seek direct negotiation with governors?
2. What demands are likely based on national patterns?
3. What constitutional and operational constraints limit Governor Makinde’s response options?
4. What security and legal strategy should be adopted under Nigerian and international law?

1.4 Methodology and Scope

Doctrinal analysis of the 1999 Constitution, Terrorism Prevention Act 2011, and relevant case law. Policy analysis using Akinade 2008b social coercion theory and Akinade 2017b crime prevention models. Comparative review of negotiation outcomes in Kaduna, Katsina, and Zamfara. Inclusion of foreign scholarship by Forrest 2012 on insurgent negotiation and Hoffman 2017 on terrorism tactics provides balancing perspectives.

1.5 Significance of Study

This paper provides evidence-based justification for a “No-Ransom, No-Negotiation” policy while acknowledging counterarguments on hostage survival. It addresses constitutional federalism deficits and ethno-regional security demands.

2.0 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Monopoly of Violence and State Sovereignty

Max Weber 1919 defines the state by its monopoly of legitimate force. When terrorists negotiate directly with governors, that monopoly fragments. Akinade 2017c links governance legitimacy to the state’s

exclusive control of coercion. Forrest 2012, in *The Road to Damascus*, argues that insurgents use negotiation to transition from criminal to political actors.

2.2 Social Coercion and Community Alienation

Akinade 2008b defines social coercion as economic and security exclusion that pushes citizens to margins. Yoruba citizens' appeal to Chief Sunday Igboho and Amotekun reflects alienation caused by perceived federal security gaps. Onuoha 2013 notes that communities abandoned by the state mobilize ethnic militias for self-protection.

2.3 Crime Prevention Models and Early Warning

Akinade 2017b contends that reactive negotiation indicates failed prevention. Kidnapping of schoolchildren signals intelligence and surveillance failures in rural Oyo. Clarke 1995 "situational crime prevention" theory supports target hardening of schools.

2.4 Community Policing and Local Security Architecture

Akinade 2018a emphasizes Amotekun and local hunters as first responders. Bayley 2006, in comparative policing studies, shows community policing reduces violent crime when integrated with formal forces. Disarming local outfits as demanded by terrorists increases vulnerability.

2.5 Terrorism Tactics and Negotiation Strategy

Hoffman 2017, *Inside Terrorism*, documents that hostage-taking aims to extract concessions and media attention. Terrorists demand direct talks with high-profile officials to gain legitimacy. This aligns with Muhammed's assertion that negotiation makes criminals into "stakeholders."

2.6 Agrosecurity and Targeting of Rural Education

Akinade 2019a positions attacks on rural schools as assaults on human capital and food security. Terrorism against education disrupts long-term development and increases dependency on criminal economies.

3.0 LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Section 14(2)(b) and Section 33: Right to Life and Security

The Constitution mandates security and welfare as the primary purpose of government. Kidnapping violates the right to life. The state's duty is protection, not concession to perpetrators.

3.2 Section 217 and Section 214: Control of Armed Forces and Police

The Governor is "Chief Security Officer" nominally but exercises no command over the Army, Police, or DSS. Orders emanate from Abuja. This creates the "responsibility without authority" dilemma identified in Muhammed's statement. Awojobi 2014 critiques this structural imbalance as a driver of insecurity.

3.3 Terrorism Prevention Act 2011 as Amended

Section 1 defines terrorism to include kidnapping for coercion. Section 18 criminalizes ransom payment. Section 27 mandates investigation and prosecution. Negotiation for concessions violates statutory command.

3.4 International Law and Legitimization Risk

UN Security Council Resolution 1373 of 2001 prohibits concessions to terrorists. Direct negotiation risks conferring “belligerent status” and violates Nigeria’s counterterrorism obligations. However, scholars such as Malešević 2017 argue that limited back-channel talks have been used globally to secure hostage release without political concessions.

4.0 ANALYSIS OF LIKELY TERRORIST DEMANDS: THE EMPIRICAL PLAYBOOK

Based on Muhammed’s statement and documented cases from Katsina, Zamfara, Kaduna, and Niger:

4.1 Cash Ransom: N500 Million to N1 Billion

Proceeds fund acquisition of RPGs, motorcycles, and recruitment. Ransom functions as “fertilizer for terrorism” per Akinade 2017b. Yet, empirical studies by Tishler and Durlauf 2007 show that governments face a hostage welfare dilemma when refusing payment leads to executions.

4.2 Release of Commanders from Agodi and Kuje Prisons

Prisoner exchange empties correctional facilities and replenishes criminal camps. This creates cycles of impunity as documented by Onuoha 2013 in North-East insurgency.

4.3 Amnesty, Forest Reserves, Political Appointments

Demands to “recognize settlements” and grant political office seek territorial and political integration. Akinade 2008a warns that internal territorial concessions embolden separatist claims and weaken state control.

4.4 Demobilization of Amotekun and Local Security Outfits

The demand to disband Amotekun and Chief Sunday Igboho’s outfit seeks to remove community defense. This contradicts Akinade 2018a and Bayley 2006, which affirm that community security structures reduce crime when properly regulated.

4.5 Media Silence and Narrative Control

The instruction to “call us businessmen, not terrorists” reflects narrative warfare. Hoffman 2017 identifies propaganda as a core terrorist objective. Akinade 2008c argues that strategic communication is a security tool and the state must retain narrative control.

5.0 THE GOVERNOR’S DILEMMA: RESPONSIBILITY WITHOUT AUTHORITY

5.1 The Trilemma of Response

Muhammed identifies three options:

1. Pay ransom → More kidnappings, fiscal depletion, criminal empowerment.
2. Refuse → Risk of victim execution and political blame.
3. Refer to Abuja → Delayed response as witnessed since Chibok 2014.

5.2 Structural Deficit of Nigerian Federalism

Governors bear political costs of insecurity but control no troops. Awojobi 2014 describes this as “decentralized responsibility, centralized authority.” The imbalance fuels agitation for state police and regional outfits like Amotekun.

5.3 Political Cost vs Constitutional Duty

The Governor's oath is to the people and Constitution. The Constitution prohibits ransom and negotiation. While political costs of refusal are high, conceding sovereignty carries greater long-term security consequences per Akinade 2017c.

6.0 RECOMMENDED STATE RESPONSE STRATEGY

6.1 No Ransom, No Political Concession Doctrine

Adopt an official policy rejecting cash, prisoner exchange, amnesty, or political office. Ransom payment violates the Terrorism Prevention Act and funds future attacks. This position aligns with UK and US policy, though Israel has engaged in selective prisoner exchanges.

6.2 Kinetic and Intelligence-Led Rescue Operations

1. Federal Government must deploy special forces, air surveillance, and signal intelligence to Oyo forest reserves.
2. Apply Akinade 2017b predictive crime mapping to identify bandit routes and safe houses.
3. Coordinate cross-border intelligence per Akinade 2008a if operations extend to contiguous states.

6.3 Mobilize and Integrate Amotekun and Community Security Structures

Implement Akinade 2018a community policing model. Governor should coordinate Amotekun Corps, licensed hunters, and vigilantes under Police supervision for intelligence gathering and area domination. Reject terrorist demands for demobilization.

6.4 Legal Prosecution and Forensic Evidence

Akinade 2018b requires strict chain of custody for weapons, digital devices, and victim testimonies. Prosecute captured terrorists under the Terrorism Prevention Act to deter future abductions and to shift the conflict from negotiation to criminal justice.

6.5 Strategic Communication

Akinade 2008c and Hoffman 2017 agree that controlling the narrative is critical. Government must deny terrorists media legitimacy, consistently label them "terrorists," and brief domestic and international media on state resolve and operational progress.

6.6 International Engagement

If kidnapping systematically targets Yoruba schoolchildren, the act may meet the threshold of crimes against humanity. Nigeria should document evidence for referral to ECOWAS Court and the International Criminal Court. Simultaneously, engage international partners for technical support in hostage rescue.

6.7 Constitutional Reform on Policing

Long-term solution requires amendment of Sections 214 and 217 to grant states operational control of police or establish constitutional state police. Without authority, governors cannot discharge security responsibility.

7.0 ETHNO-REGIONAL DIMENSION AND NATIONAL UNITY

7.1 “One Nigeria” and Selective State Failure

Muhammed’s assertion that “One Nigeria is an impossible sovereign state” reflects public perception of federal incapacity. If the Federal Government cannot secure Oyo but continues to collect VAT, legitimacy deficits deepen. Awojobi 2014 argues that fiscal federalism must match security federalism.

7.2 Yoruba Security Consciousness and Self-Determination

The demand for Amotekun and rejection of negotiation demonstrate ethno-regional security consciousness. Akinade 2017c contends that statecraft must balance national unity with local security autonomy to prevent secessionist drift.

7.3 Community Defense Leaders and State Relations

Raids on Chief Sunday Igboho’s residence after calls to “arm communities” created perceptions of federal hostility to local defense. The state must reconcile with legitimate community security actors while enforcing legal oversight to prevent abuses.

8.0 CONCLUSION

Terrorists demanding direct negotiation with Governor Seyi Makinde seek political legitimacy, financial resources, and territorial concessions. Their likely demands - cash, prisoner release, amnesty, and disarmament of Amotekun - must be rejected under Nigerian law and international counterterrorism norms. Governor Makinde operates under a constitutional structure that assigns responsibility without authority, but his duty under Section 14(2)(b) is to protect lives without conceding sovereignty.

The public call to “say no to ransom” and “demand offensive action” aligns with Akinade 2008b, 2017b, 2018a security doctrine and with comparative best practice that rejects concessions to terrorists. Ransom is fertilizer for terrorism. Negotiation without force is conquest by telephone. Sovereignty is non-negotiable.

Nigeria must answer with law, intelligence, and force, while reforming the constitutional structure that disables subnational security leadership. The lives of schoolchildren and the integrity of the Nigerian state are at stake.

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APPENDICES

- Appendix A: Relevant Sections of Terrorism Prevention Act 2011 on Prohibition of Ransom and Concessions
- Appendix B: Proposed Operational Framework for Coordination Between Amotekun Corps and Federal Security Agencies
- Appendix C: Checklist for Evidence Preservation in Terrorism Prosecutions

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