

# Boko Haram Gives Reason For Release Of Dapchi Girls, Denies Ceasefire Talks With FG

A Boko Haram faction, Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP), has given the reason it released the girls kidnapped from the Government Girls' Technical College, Dapchi in Yobe State. The group, in an audio recording exclusively obtained by SaharaReporters, said the girls were freed because of its allegiance to the leadership of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). In the recording, the faction's head of Shura (highest decision body), Abu Bashir, urged its members to remain loyal to ISIL.

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BY SAHARA REPORTERS, NEW YORK APR 09, 2018

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The Federal Government, on 25 March, announced a five-day ceasefire for the return of the girls. Information Minister, Mr. Lai Mohammed, in a statement, said: "The week-long ceasefire is besides ongoing broader negotiations for a permanent ceasefire with the insurgents."



Boko Haram Terrorists

The minister said the insurgents were compelled to release the students and others because their capture was against government's negotiations with the group.

The claim was affirmed by the Director- General of the Department of State Security Service (DSS), Mr. Lawal Daura.

Bashir, in the audio obtained by SaharaReporters, said the group abducted the Dapchi school girls to force the release of some of its members in detention and get paid ransom.

However, added Bashir, as soon as it consulted ISIL leaders, it responded that the abduction, especially of Muslim girls "cast the group in bad light", especially at a time it is struggling to win over Muslims in West Africa, including in Niger Republic, after it drifted from the Abubakar Shekau

faction, which still holds some of the Chibok girls after four years of abduction.

Apostates, those that may be doing so knowingly or unknowingly, but are not fighting or helping those fighting the Islamic State, and the apostates that are fighting or helping those that are fighting Muslims. The Dapchi schoolgirls, according to ISIL, fall under the first category, "so we preached to them to repent and released them." But those that fight us, like the Civilian JTF, "we will kill them, both men and women, wherever we find them because they took up arms against us," said Bashir.

ISWAP said after it preached to some of the Dapchi girls, they promised to embrace its brand of Islam. The group added that the girls even asked for directions on their back home on how to return, explaining that it had no control over whether or not the girls would accept what it preached.

Bashir stated that other than the compliance with ISIL's strict instructions issued by the Caliph Abu Bakr-al-Baghdadi, there was no other reason for the release of the school girls.

A source knowledgeable about ISWAP said there was no way the faction would have been involved in negotiations for an end to the insurgency because Abu Musab Albarnawi is only a Wali (governor), in the Lake Chad Basin area. He explained that there is a chain of command and the final decision is made by the leader of ISIL.

"Anyone who believes any individual or group of people on the issue of a ceasefire and peace settlement is being scammed. I doubt even Shekau will accept any deal that does not recognize his authority" he said.

The Information Minister had claimed that the recent release of the police officers' wives and University of Maiduguri lecturers from captivity by the insurgents were part of the broader talks, fuelling speculations of another round of ransom payments by the government, something the source described as emanating from ignorance.

"The only ceasefire that existed between Boko Haram and security forces was a chance to return the school girls unharmed and it was in the best interest of the government to accept the offer but as usual, politicians in Abuja began to lie," said the source.

At the end of the audio recording, Bashir welcomed a group of deserters, who left the faction recently, an indication of deep divisions within the group and a sign that confidence tricksters may have ample opportunity to dupe the Federal Government, which is desperate to bring a protracted war to an end.