



Marlborough House ● Pall Mall ● London SW1Y 5HX ● United Kingdom ● secretariat@cwealthstudents.org

Amplifying student voices throughout the Commonwealth

May 21, 2026

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

THE COMMONWEALTH STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION CONDEMNS IN THE STRONGEST TERMS THE TERRORIST ABDUCTION OF STUDENTS AND TEACHERS IN ORIIRE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, OYO STATE, NIGERIA

The Commonwealth Students' Association, the single official representative body for over 1.2 billion students across the Commonwealth's 56 nations, rises with one voice in outrage, grief, and unequivocal condemnation of the barbaric terrorist attack that took place in the early hours of Friday, 15th May, 2026, in the Esiele/Ahoro-Esinele community of Oriire Local Government Area, Oyo State, Federal Republic of Nigeria.

On that morning, armed gunmen, approximately twelve in number, riding motorcycles and dressed in military camouflage, descended without warning upon three schools: Baptist Nursery and Primary School, Yawota; Community Grammar School, Esiele; and L.A. Primary School. These schools were not battlegrounds. They were classrooms. They were places where children gathered in the expectation of safety, knowledge, and a better future. That expectation was violently shattered.

No fewer than 46 persons were abducted, among them 39 students (including a child as young as two years of age), seven teachers, and a school principal. A motorcyclist and a security operative subsequently lost their lives. In a particularly horrifying act of deliberate cruelty, Mr. Michael Oyedokun, a mathematics teacher, was executed in captivity by his abductors. A video of his killing circulated widely online, inflicting profound and compounded trauma upon his family, colleagues, and the broader public.

Our Condemnation

The Commonwealth Students' Association condemns this attack in the most absolute and unqualified terms. We are appalled by the targeting of educational institutions; spaces that international law and basic human decency declare inviolable. Attacks on schools are not merely crimes against individuals; they are crimes against the future. They are an assault on knowledge, on aspiration, and on the fundamental right of every child to learn in safety.

We are profoundly troubled that such attacks, once associated predominantly with the far north of Nigeria, are now penetrating south-western states. The abduction of students and teachers from Oyo State is a dangerous and alarming escalation. It signals a widening of the theatre of terror that demands immediate and decisive attention from the Nigerian state and the broader international community.

We equally condemn, in the strongest possible language, the execution of Mr. Michael Oyedokun. He was an educator, a man who dedicated his life to the nurturing of young minds. His killing is an act of inexcusable savagery. We extend our deepest and most heartfelt condolences to his family, his students, and the entire Oriire community.

Our Demands

The Commonwealth Students' Association calls upon the following parties to act with the urgency this crisis demands:

1. **The Federal Government of Nigeria** – to deploy all necessary resources to secure the immediate and unconditional release of every hostage; to bring the perpetrators of this attack to justice without delay; and to develop and implement a credible, long-term national strategy for the protection of schools and students across all geopolitical zones.
2. **The Oyo State Government** – to ensure that the families of all victims receive adequate psychosocial & financial support; particularly the family of the late Mr. Michael Oyedokun; that school communities in Oriire LGA and beyond are secured; and that no effort is spared in the ongoing rescue operation.
3. **The United Nations and African Union** – to formally recognise and respond to the systemic pattern of attacks on educational institutions in Nigeria, and to work with the Nigerian government to implement the UN's Safe Schools Declaration with full political will and adequate resourcing.
4. **The Commonwealth Secretariat** – to immediately place on its agenda the urgent matter of school safety in Commonwealth member states and to facilitate technical assistance, intelligence sharing, and diplomatic pressure in support of Nigeria's efforts to protect its students.
5. **The Global Media** – to give these events the sustained international attention they deserve, and to exercise sensitivity and responsibility in the reporting of graphic materials that cause further harm to the families of victims. We invite the Government of Nigeria and other member states of the Commonwealth to fully adopt and implement the provisions in the Commonwealth Student Safety and Security Agreement; the formal consensus among students across the Commonwealth on cross-cutting issues bordering around safety of students and security of schools. It is available [here](#)

Our Solidarity

To the students and teachers still in captivity, you are not forgotten. The Commonwealth Students' Association stands with you, prays for your safe return, and will not rest in advocating for your freedom. To the families enduring the unbearable anguish of waiting, our hearts are with you. To the government and security forces engaged in active rescue operations, we urge you to persevere, to maintain the highest regard for the lives of the hostages, and to resist the temptation to allow political convenience to outlast the urgency of this crisis.

Education is not a luxury. It is a right affirmed by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the constitutions of every Commonwealth nation. When a child is prevented from going to school through fear, abduction, or violence, we have failed in one of our most fundamental obligations as a global community. The Commonwealth Students' Association calls on the world to treat this failure with the seriousness it demands.

Schools must be sanctuaries. That is non-negotiable.

ENDS.

Issued by:

The Commonwealth Students' Association
On behalf of students across the Commonwealth.



Notes to Editors

1. The Commonwealth Students' Association (CSA) is the single, official representative body for student organisations across the 56 independent and equal Commonwealth countries. Its headquarters is located at the Commonwealth Secretariat, Marlborough House, London, United Kingdom.
2. The CSA defends, represents, and advocates for the interests of approximately 1.4 billion students and young people across the Commonwealth, representing more than 60 per cent of the Commonwealth population aged 29 or under.
3. The CSA is the first established youth network in the Commonwealth and one of 13 youth networks supported by the Commonwealth Youth Programme.
4. Established in 2012 at the 18th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers (CCEM) in Mauritius, the CSA's scope of representation spans from early childhood education through to postgraduate level.
5. The CSA Executive Committee comprises elected student leaders, including the President, who chairs the Committee; three Vice Presidents; a Special Interest Groups Representative; and five Regional Representatives for Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and Americas, Europe and Canada, and the Pacific. These officers are further supported by Country Representatives serving within their respective Regional Committees and Working Groups.
6. Visit: www.cwealthstudents.org for more information