

## THE CRIMINALISATION OF PAYMENT OF RANSOM TO KIDNAPPERS IN NIGERIA: A STEP IN THE WRONG DIRECTION\*

### Abstract

*Section 14 (2b) of 1999 Nigeria Constitution stipulates that the welfare and security of the citizens shall be the primary purpose of the government. This provision imposes a constitutional obligation on the Nigerian government at all levels to protect the lives and properties of its citizens, irrespective of their ethnic, religious, and political affiliations. This piece finds that the recent amendment to the Terrorism (Prevention) Act by the Nigerian Senate which prohibits the payment of ransom to kidnappers and prescribes 15 years imprisonment for families and friends of kidnapped victims who contribute money to free loved ones is antithetical to Section 14(2) of the Constitution and is a disproportionate response to the security challenges in the country. In fact, this amendment endangers the lives of those kidnapped. This paper, therefore, urges the National Assembly to have a rethink and offer a more proportionate response to the kidnappings and general insecurity in the Country.*

**Keywords:** Payment of Ransom, Kidnappers, Criminalisation, Nigeria

### 1. Introduction

In the words of Stewart, ‘the law does not only reflect the community it serves but it also mirrors the community’s values and structure and should serve the interests of the community in resolving disputes among its members in accordance with their expressed values. Law provides only one way of defining and dealing with communal problems, but without clear legal principles and effective legal processes, the community lacks a critical stabilizing force.’<sup>1</sup> This assertion is reflective of recent events in Nigeria where the Senate (the upper House of the National Assembly) recently passed the Terrorism (Prevention) Act 2013 (Amendment) Bill 2022, into law. One of the most significant changes to the Terrorism Act passed by the Senate is the criminalisation of payment of ransom to kidnappers. It prescribes 15 years imprisonment for families and friends of kidnapped victims who contribute money to free loved ones and made the crime of abduction punishable by death in cases where victims die. The bill amended Section 14 of the Act to read thus: ‘Anyone who transfers funds, makes payment or colludes with an abductor, kidnapper or terrorist to receive any ransom for the release of any person who has been wrongfully confined, imprisoned or kidnapped is guilty of a felony and is liable on conviction to a term of imprisonment of not less than 15 years.’ The implication of this is that it would become an offence for Nigerians to pay ransom to secure the release of their kidnapped family members, friends, or colleagues. In other words, after being forced to pay ransom to secure the release of kidnapped victims, their families and friends will face trial and end up in jail for 15 years for saving a life.

### 2. Discussion

According to Senator Ezenwa Onyewuchi who proposed the bill, kidnapping had become ‘the most virulent form of banditry in Nigeria and the most pervasive and intractable violent crime in the country’.<sup>2</sup> Onyewuchi explained that Families of kidnapped victims often sell their property, take loans from banks and crowdfund to raise the ransom. Those who do not pay are sometimes killed, and there have been reported cases of kidnappers removing human organs from their victims to sell.<sup>3</sup> Onyewuchi also argued further that the amendment essentially seeks to substitute for section 14 of the Principal Act a new section and anyone who transfers funds, makes payment, or colludes with an abductor, kidnapper or terrorist to receive any ransom for the release of any person who has been wrongfully confined, imprisoned or kidnapped is guilty of a felony and is liable on conviction to a term of imprisonment of not less than 15 years. Similarly, Senator Opeyemi Bamidele (the Chair of the Senate Committee on Judiciary, Human Rights and Legal Matters) argued that this bill would discourage the rising spate of kidnapping and abduction for ransom in Nigeria, which is fast spreading across the country. He argues further that the amendment to the Terrorism Act would set standards and regulatory systems intended to prevent terrorist groups from laundering money through the banking system and other financial networks. The Senate President Ahmad Lawan, while commenting on the bill, posits that the proposed amendment would complement the Federal Government’s efforts in stemming insecurity, after concurrence by the House of Representatives and when signed into law by President Muhammadu Buhari.<sup>4</sup> One of the main limitations with the arguments put forward by the Senate in support of the bill is that the amendment does not provide a viable alternative for Nigerians who’s loved

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<sup>1</sup> David Stewart, *Terrorism and Human Rights; The Perspective of International Law* (Middle East Institute, 2018) pg. 1

<sup>2</sup> ‘Senate proposes 15 years imprisonment for anyone who pays ransom to kidnappers’ Vanguard Newspaper May 19, 2021 <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2021/05/senate-proposes-15-years-imprisonment-for-anyone-who-pays-ransom-to-kidnappers/> accessed 7<sup>th</sup> July 2022

<sup>3</sup> Ibid

<sup>4</sup> A.Ajibola ‘Senate Passes Amended Terrorism Act, Criminalises Payment Of Kidnap Ransom’ channels TV April 27, 2022 <https://www.channelstv.com/2022/04/27/senate-criminalises-payment-of-kidnap-ransom/> accessed 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2022

ones have been kidnapped and ransom is being demanded. Since most Nigerians lack trust and confidence in the Police and other security agencies, the question that needs to be asked is what are families meant to do when ransom is demanded by kidnappers? By this Amendment, the Senate wants Nigerians to sit back, do nothing, and ignore the demand for ransom and watch their families killed. This article therefore argues that arguments by the Senators in support of criminalising the payment of ransom to kidnappers are not only flawed but it is also repugnant to natural justice, equity, and good conscience.

The situation in Nigeria as it relates to poverty, unemployment, corruption, political violence, and religious intolerance has created a fertile ground for insecurity and kidnapping for ransom in the country. The worsening spate of kidnappings across the country cannot be divorced from the declining economic fortunes of the country. The Senate's assertion that the amendment to the Terrorism legislation would turn around not only the security situation in Nigeria, but even the economic fortune of our country is flawed, misplaced, unreasonable, not well thought through and is in fact counterproductive. In the writer's opinion, criminalising the payment of ransom for kidnap victims would only create additional problems for Nigerians. The primary duty of the government is to ensure that the security of lives of the citizens are protected and guaranteed under the law. Since the Federal Government of Nigeria has failed in its primary task of protecting its citizens and their possessions, families who take it upon themselves to save their loved ones by paying ransom for their release should not have to face another legal hurdle by the state that has failed them in the first place. Rather than compound the problem facing Nigerians, the Senate should proffer solutions to the root cause of kidnappings in the country. To put things into perspective, Nigeria ranks among the kidnapping hotspots of the world. Statistics show that mass abductions have increased dramatically in recent years and the burden of kidnapping, which used to be borne by the Northeast and South-south, has shifted to the Northwest, North-central regions and in fact the entire country. For example, there were 484 kidnapped victims in 2017; the figure grew to 987 the following year, then 1,386 in 2019, and 2,860 in 2020. This figure rose to Over 3,000 in the first half of 2021 alone.<sup>5</sup> This practice has evolved among the bandits and terrorists of northern Nigeria, militants and cultists in the Niger Delta as well as the ritual-killers of the western and eastern parts of the country.<sup>6</sup>

According to a report by a Lagos-based risk analysis firm, SB Morgen Intelligence, at least \$18.3 million in ransom was paid to Nigerian kidnappers between 2011 and 2020<sup>7</sup> Within this period alone, about 1,331 fatalities during kidnap attempts was recorded with Borno State accounting for 489 fatalities. The high fatality rate of kidnap attempts in Borno and Adamawa states can be directly linked with the activities of the Boko Haram terrorist group, which is responsible for most of the attempts and a few others linked to Fulani herdsmen militia.<sup>8</sup> According to the report, one reason why kidnap for ransom has come to stay in Nigeria is the economics surrounding it. Huge amount of money is often paid to kidnappers for release of their victims. The data available to SBM indicates that between the \$545,000 paid to secure the freedom of Ernest Ohunyon in Edo state in November 2011, and the \$6868 paid to free Ojo Ekundayo and Benjamin Iluyomade in Ondo state at the end of March 2020, at least \$18,343,067 changed hands between victims and kidnappers<sup>9</sup>. The report suggests that kidnappers demand between \$1,000 and \$150,000 as ransom, depending on the financial resources of the victims which makes it a very lucrative business. Sadly, a lot of kidnapped victims have eventually been killed by their captors even after ransom has been paid. The SBM report cited the example of kidnapping in Takum on 16 February 2019 of a petrol dealer Usman Garba. The Wadume gang demanded N200 million ransom. Even though the relatives of the victim were able to hand over N106.3 million, he was killed in late April 2019. <sup>10</sup> The SBM Report cited the rising levels of youth unemployment in Nigeria as a major factor responsible for the growth of kidnap cases. Coupled with this is the failure of the security agencies to detect and deter crime.<sup>11</sup> In most instances, the police and the state security operatives fail to respond to occasions of kidnapping promptly and rapidly. As

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<sup>5</sup>Al Chukwuma Okoli, 'Who's at risk of being kidnapped in Nigeria? The Conversation – June 17, 2022 <https://theconversation.com/whos-at-risk-of-being-kidnapped-in-nigeria-184217#:~:text=Nigeria%20ranks%20among%20the%20kidnapping,has%20been%20reported%20as%20571>. Accessed 7<sup>th</sup> July 2022

<sup>6</sup> T. Obiezu, 'Families of Kidnap Victims Reject Nigerian Bill Punishing Ransom Payments, VOA April 28, 2022 <https://www.voanews.com/a/families-of-kidnap-victims-reject-nigerian-bill-punishing-ransom-payments-/6549048.html> Accessed 7<sup>th</sup> July 2022

<sup>7</sup>SB Morgen, Nigeria's kidnap Problem – The Economic of Kidnap industry in Nigeria' May 2020 [https://www.sbmintel.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/202005\\_Nigeria-Kidnap.pdf](https://www.sbmintel.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/202005_Nigeria-Kidnap.pdf) pg 1

<sup>8</sup> Ibid ph 7

<sup>9</sup> Ibid pg 9

<sup>10</sup> Ibid pg 9

<sup>11</sup> Ibid

Okoli rightly asserts the Nigerian Police and other security agencies also lack the technical ability to track kidnappers and their movements<sup>12</sup>

Interestingly, the passage of the bill by the Senate comes six weeks after a Kaduna-bound train from Abuja was attacked by terrorists. The terrorists on March 28 blew up rail tracks on the Abuja-Kaduna route, killing eight passengers. No fewer than 41 persons were injured while almost 100 passengers were kidnapped and are awaiting government intervention for their freedom.<sup>13</sup> It is also important to mention that President Muhammadu Buhari's government has already classified the armed kidnapping gangs, known locally as 'bandits', as terrorists this year – but that has not stemmed the kidnappings, which has now become almost a daily occurrence. Going back to the problems presented by the senate amendment to the Terrorism Act, it is further argued that the bill does not address the root cause of Nigeria's security problems; rather it endangers the lives of those kidnapped. It is unsurprising that many stakeholders including the security agencies have opposed criminalising the payment of ransom to kidnap victims. citing the country's overwhelming security situation. The Nigerian Navy and the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) rejected the bill. According to a representative of the Chief of Naval Staff, Rear Admiral KO Egbuchulam, who spoke at the National Assembly, Abuja during a public hearing on Terrorism Prevention Act (Amendment) Bill 202, subjecting such payment of ransom to security vetting and tracking is preferable to outright criminalization. On his part, the Director of Legal and Prosecution Department for the Economic and financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Chile Okoroma argued that instead of prosecuting somebody that paid ransom saying it should be narrowed down to those who received the ransom, not those that paid.<sup>14</sup> The latter argument brings to fore the contentious part of this amendment. Several critics, scholars, and lawyers have also criticised the bill. For instance, Onanuga queried the interest such a bill is meant to serve because many people have remained in captivity of kidnappers for weeks, months and years simply because their families and friends could not raise the huge amount being demanded as ransom by kidnappers.<sup>15</sup>

The Nigerian Bar Association, the umbrella professional association of all lawyers admitted to the Bar in Nigeria, have also condemned the attempt by the law makers to criminalise payment by victims of kidnapping without first tackling the root cause of kidnapping. According to the NBA Chairman on Section on Public Interest and Development Law (SPIDEL), Monday Ubani, a society's laws ought to reflect its reality.<sup>16</sup> Ubani maintained that victims of kidnapping pay ransoms out of desperation and abject helplessness, knowing fully well that the state has failed and is unable to protect lives and property or secure the release of their loved ones from the kidnapper's den. Ubani contended that; 'It is very appalling therefore that the same country that has failed to provide security to the people it governs is embarking on a 'suicide mission' of criminalizing ransom payment by the very victims that are helpless and desperate to save the lives of their loved ones. This piece of legislation under contemplation lacks logic and wisdom and the House of Representatives is hereby advised to jettison the Bill without any further consideration. It does not make any sense at all. Instead, the Legislature is strongly advised to focus on laws that will strengthen national security and protection of lives and property, assuming there is a lacuna'<sup>17</sup>

Many other Nigerians have expressed serious concerns about the bill. According to Akintayo Balogun, this legislative Act annihilates the kidnapped victims. Balogun argues that this bill 'has now placed kidnapped victims and their families/friends between the devil and the deep blue sea in the face of a struggling security system in Nigeria.'<sup>18</sup> Balogun recounted an incident of one his family friends who was kidnapped along the Lokoja-Okene expressway in Kogi State, Nigeria, along with several other persons. His wife who was with him at the scene rushed to the nearest Police Unit to report the abduction. According to him, the Officers at the Police Unit did not even bulge a bit. They simply told her to be patient, 'the kidnappers will call you.' No further action was taken by

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<sup>12</sup> Al Chukwuma Okoli, *The Conversation* 2022

<sup>13</sup>BBC News – 'Abuja-Kaduna train attack: Passengers killed after Nigeria gang hits rail link' 29<sup>th</sup> March 2022 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-60914481> accessed 9<sup>th</sup> July 2022

<sup>14</sup>H. Umoru, 'Senate amends Terrorism Act, prohibits payments of ransom to kidnappers' *Vanguard News* April 27, 2022 <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2022/04/senate-amends-terrorism-act-prohibits-payments-of-ransom-to-kidnappers/> accessed 30<sup>th</sup> June 2022

15A. Onanuga, Ransom payment: Jail or death? *The Nation Newspaper* 10<sup>th</sup> May 2022 <https://thenationonline.net/ransom-payment-jail-or-death/> accessed 7<sup>th</sup> July 2022

<sup>16</sup> L. Olabiyi, 'Kidnapping: NBA condemns Senate's criminalisation of ransom payment' *The SunNewsOnline* 9<sup>th</sup> May 2022 <https://www.sunnewsonline.com/kidnapping-nba-condemns-senates-criminalisation-of-ransom-payment/> 9<sup>th</sup> may 2022 accessed 7<sup>th</sup> July 2022

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid*

18 A. Balogun, *Fate of Kidnap Victims Vis A Vis The Terrorism (Prevention) Act 201 (Amendment) Bill, 2022*. *The Nigerian lawyer Journal TNL* 4<sup>th</sup> May 2022 <https://thenigerianlawyer.com/fate-of-kidnap-victims-vis-a-vis-the-terrorism-prevention-act-2013-amendment-bill-2022/> accessed 8<sup>th</sup> July 2022

the Police until the family was forced to raise the sum required by the kidnappers.<sup>19</sup> Sadly this is the reality that many Nigerians have to face on their own. According to Damilola Olawuyi, enacting a new law is one thing, but putting in place the much-needed institutional requirements needed for its effective implementation is the most fundamental and decisive next step.<sup>20</sup> Some of the questions that comes to mind is how security agencies would find out whether or not ransom has been paid? Who will report these offences? Olawuyi argues that before the proposed legislation can be effective, urgent steps must be taken to improve the working conditions and state-of-the-art intelligence gathering tools for the police and other security authorities across the country; providing them adequate technology and training needed to rapidly apprehend criminal elements; as well as sanitizing the security apparatus to ensure greater operational efficiency and transparency.<sup>21</sup> Wahab Shittu on his part expressed concerns whether the legislation can provide an effective antidote against the menace of kidnappings in the Country. Shittu argued that the ‘growing culture of payment of ransoms is illustrative of the failure of government that shirks its primary responsibility of prioritising the security and welfare of the people which is the primary purpose of governance. Rather than legislate against payment of ransom, Shittu advised the government to prioritise security and welfare by ensuring that there are consequences for criminal infractions including punishing terrorism.<sup>22</sup> Shittu concluded that Legislating against payment of ransom will only succeed in making the government a ‘laughingstock since those who offer such ransoms to kidnappers do so outside the knowledge of the existing legal order.’<sup>23</sup> Critics like Debo Adeleke have even gone as far as questioning the effectiveness of the entire Terrorism Act. According to Adeleke, since its enactment in 2011, the Terrorism Act has achieved nothing and has been a successful failure. Adeleke noted that instead terrorism in Nigeria has been increasing and escalating at a geometrical progression. He also questioned the practicability of the amended bill which he described as ‘ludicrous, non-achievable and it is glaringly not in the interest of the kidnapped victims as well as the nation in general.’<sup>24</sup> Adeleke argued that ‘If the law and Criminal Code Act have been grossly ineffective in preventing kidnapping or apprehending kidnappers, to the extent that the act of kidnapping is daily on the increase without apprehending the culprits, how will the amended bill seeking to prevent terrorism find out anybody who had paid ransom to the kidnappers for the release of their people in the custody of the kidnappers?’,<sup>25</sup>

Similarly, Olakunle Moroundiya posits that criminalising payment of ransom is tantamount to a death sentence to all victims who are kidnapped if the people adhere to it. Moroundiya argued further that this section of the Terrorism Act engages Section 33 of the constitution which guarantees right to life. It is also against sections 34, 35, & 37 which guarantee rights to dignity of human person, right to personal liberty and right to private and family life. Moroundiya questioned who in his right mind would not pay ransom if his loved one is kidnapped. Most Nigerians are of the view that the bill will not reduce incidents of kidnapping in any way as it will not be adhered to.<sup>26</sup> An incident which exemplifies how this bill put Nigerians in a precarious position is the kidnapping of a former commissioner in Bayelsa State and cousin to former Nigerian President, Goodluck Jonathan, Mr Mike Ogiasa. On the 9th of July 2022, a viral video of the former commissioner was shared online. In that Video, a half-naked Ogiasa is seen in a flooded grave, his hands tied, as he cries out for urgent help. Ogiasa pleaded with his family members to do everything possible to release him. ‘*Any money that is available...any money you can make. Do everything possible. Please any money that is available. Is the money more important than my life? Please do everything that is possible to secure my release.*’<sup>27</sup> There have been instances where kidnapped victims have been killed simply because their families and friends could not raise the huge amount being demanded as ransom by kidnappers. Many others die or are killed while waiting for ransom to be raised to secure their freedom. For instance, five students and some staff of the Greenfield University in Kaduna State, who were kidnapped, were shot dead because their families could not meet the immediate demands of the N800 Million naira to secure their release.<sup>28</sup> Usman Mbaekwe, who spent five days in a forest in southern Nigeria after a bus he was travelling in was attacked, said the security forces made no attempt to rescue him. He was freed after his wife raised 1m

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid

<sup>20</sup> Adebisi Onanuga, Ransom payment: Jail or death? Op cit

<sup>21</sup> Ibid

<sup>22</sup> Ibid

<sup>23</sup> Ibid

<sup>24</sup> Ibid

<sup>25</sup> Ibid

<sup>26</sup> Ibid

<sup>27</sup> W. Odunsi, ‘Kidnapped ex-president Jonathan’s cousin, Mike Ogiasa begs for life [Video] Dailypostnews July 9 2022 <https://dailypost.ng/2022/07/09/kidnapped-ex-president-jonathans-cousin-mike-ogiasa-begs-for-life-video/> accessed 10 July 2022

<sup>28</sup> I. Hassan Wuyo, ‘Two more Greenfield University Student killed in Abuja’ Vanguard News Paper April 26 2022, <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2021/04/breaking-two-more-greenfield-university-students-killed-in-kaduna/> accessed 11<sup>th</sup> July 2022

naira (£2,000, \$2,400).<sup>29</sup> Nduka Orjinmo explained that the families of kidnapped victims often sell their property, take loans from banks and crowdfund to raise the ransom<sup>30</sup> Orjinmo compared the prohibition of payment of ransom in Nigeria with other developed countries. He explained that globally, countries like the US and UK rule out ransom payments to kidnappers, arguing that the best way to stop abductions is to remove the incentive.<sup>31</sup> However we need to understand that the US and the UK have very few incidents of kidnapping for ransom. More importantly the security agencies in these Countries are well equipped, well- trained, and they have the resources to deal with these sorts of vices. Orjinmo however added that developed countries like France, Germany, Spain and Italy have reportedly paid millions of dollars to free their citizens held hostage by armed gangs in Africa, and elsewhere.<sup>32</sup> This suggests that payment of ransom is about weighing up the risks and balancing this with the lives of the citizens that have been kidnapped. Even the Nigerian federal government is said to have paid huge sums to kidnappers in the past - including to Boko Haram militants to secure the release of some of the Chibok schoolgirls who were kidnapped in 2014, while the Katsina state government reportedly paid for the release of schoolboys seized by armed men in 2020.<sup>33</sup> The other side of the argument is that if Nigerians continue to pay ransom, kidnapping incidents in the country will keep growing. Whilst this is fundamentally true, the writer however argues that the central issue that needs to be addressed first by the National Assembly is not banning payments of ransom but instead the root cause of kidnapping in the country. Besides, we can only talk about criminalising payment of ransom where there is adequate security and lives are being protected by the State. The socio-economic situation and the security system in the country needs to be urgently improved to prevent kidnappings in the country. The effort directed into passing this bill into law should have been channelled into acquiring and building modern and standard intelligence networks that can fish out these hoodlums from their hideouts.

Furthermore, more personnel should be recruited into the Nigerian Police force to bolster their manpower capacity. A report by Temitayo Lawal suggests that the Nigeria Police Force has 370,000 men and women. This roughly means that one police officer is available to safeguard the lives and property of 500 Nigerians. Unfortunately, the Assistant Inspector General of Police, Zone 5, Mr. Rasheed Akintunde, revealed that 80% of these officers are assigned to secure VIPs rather than the general public which means that Nigeria's effective police officer to population ratio is 1 to 2,514.<sup>34</sup> This figure ranks among the lowest police-population ratios in the world, comparable to Niger, the world's second poorest country (1-2,439), and Mali, one of the most insecure countries in the world (1-2,632).<sup>35</sup> Lawal argued that the extremely low police-to-population ratio seriously compromises the Nigeria Police Force's ability to deter crime in the country.<sup>36</sup> Lawal's argument was corroborated by the Commissioner of Police for Osun State, Wale Olokode, Commissioner of Police for Osun State, Wale Olokode, who complained of lack of adequate tools and technological resources, saying it is not enough to draft men across the state.<sup>37</sup> This admissions clearly undermines the rights to liberty and security of Nigerians under both the domestic, regional, and international law. Article 3 of the Universal Declaration on Human Right states that everyone has a right to life, liberty and security.<sup>38</sup> Equally, the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (the Charter) stipulates that 'every individual shall have the right to liberty and to the security of his person.' This right is also amply provided for under the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria (as amended) in Sec 33, and 35 which clearly states that every person has a right to life, and no one shall be deprived intentionally of his life, except in execution of the sentence of a court in respect of a criminal offence of which he has been found guilty in Nigeria. Section 35 guarantees the right to personal liberty of every citizen in the country. Likewise, Section 14 (2b) states that the welfare and security of the citizens shall be the primary purpose of the government.

### 3. Conclusion

Going by the above provisions, the Nigerian State (including the Senate which is the Second arm of government) has the responsibility to develop measures that would promote, protect, and fulfil the right to life of its citizens

<sup>29</sup>Nduka Orjinmo Nigeria's kidnapping crisis: Should ransom payments be banned? , BBC News; 26<sup>th</sup> May 2022  
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-61554325> accessed 14th July 2022

<sup>30</sup> Ibid

<sup>31</sup> Ibid

<sup>32</sup> Ibid

<sup>33</sup> Ibid

<sup>34</sup>T. Lawal, Capacity failure of the police: privatisation as a solution, The Cable 18<sup>th</sup> February, 2022  
<https://www.thecable.ng/capacity-failures-nigerian-police-force-privatization-solution> accessed 14th July 2022

<sup>35</sup> Ibid

<sup>36</sup> Ibid

<sup>37</sup> Nicholas Ibekwe, Mojeed Alabi, Special Report: Inside Nigeria's worsening kidnap-for-ransom scourge (1); A study of reported cases of Kidnap-for-ransom in the media reveals that the crime has become perhaps the biggest security threat in Nigeria. 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2021 <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/487509-special-report-inside-nigerias-worsening-kidnap-for-ransom-scourge-1.html> accessed 14th July 2022

<sup>38</sup> Art 3, Universal Declaration on Human Right

and must be seen to take practical steps to prevent arbitrary deprivations of life. These provisions place an obligation on the Nigerian State to conduct prompt, thorough and transparent investigations into any such deprivations that may have occurred, holding perpetrators accountable and providing effective remedy for the victims. Unfortunately, the recent amendment to the Terrorism Act puts families who have taken the role and responsibility of the state by saving a life that the security agents could not save in a precarious situation. It is travesty of justice. It is hoped that the Nigerian Senate (National Assembly) and the Nigerian government at all levels would take decisive action now and secure the lives and properties of her citizens, bearing in mind that failure to do so constitutes a violation of the human rights to her citizens and such violation remains subject to litigation. Otherwise, the recent amendment to the Terrorism Act would amount to nothing but another paper tiger.