

*Report*

**Summary of the  
Security Webinar  
for Priest, Religious and  
Administrator of Catholic  
Schools**

*2nd July, 2021*

[www.thekukahcentre.org](http://www.thekukahcentre.org)

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## **Summary of the Security Webinar for Priest, Religious and Administrator of Catholic Schools**

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# Introduction

In recent times, crime rate and levels of insecurity have been on the rise in Nigeria. Notable examples of these security threats range include kidnapping, banditry, robbery, terrorism and violent extremism. These challenges impact all regions of the country with their implications having specific adverse effects on human security and national development.

Incidences of kidnappings have also become rampant and geometrically increased in most parts of the country,<sup>1</sup> with the sharpest rise recorded in Kaduna State, where criminal gangs have been behind a surge of kidnappings for ransom targeting schools, institutions and places of worship.

In recent times, the attention of kidnappers has moved towards priests and religious.

These priests and religious have been targeted and abducted either in their parish houses and/or place of assignment. These abductions are usually made for ransom demands and when these demands are not heeded early enough, oftentimes result in the murder of these priests; no fewer than 20 clergymen including at least eight Catholic Priests/Seminarians have been hacked to death in the past 5 years, with at least 50 abducted.

Despite efforts of security agencies to protect citizens' lives, this menace has posed a great challenge to the national security of the country. To help promote the safety and security of these priests and religious, it is significant to provide them with essential security tips as they carry out their day-to-day assignment.

## Goal and Objectives

The goal of this activity is to provide security tips for Priests and Religious to take measures to protect themselves and that of their various institutions.

### Objectives

1. Enlighten Priests and Religious on the security challenge(s) prevalent in the country.
2. Discuss the issue of insecurity and how it affects Priests, Religious and managers of Catholic schools.
3. Provide safety tips for Priests, Religious and administrators of Catholic schools while operating in their various jurisdictions.
4. Proffer policy recommendations on how criminality, banditry and kidnapping and other forms of insecurity can be addressed.

With these goal and objectives in mind, Capt. Umar Babatunde Aliyu (rtd)<sup>2</sup> presented a seminar on crucial security tips to employ while operating in their respective jurisdictions. This seminar was delivered via Zoom on Friday, 2nd July 2021 and had 196 participants – comprising priests, Religious and Administrators of Catholic schools - in attendance.

<sup>1</sup> Melisa Santos (2021). *Implication of Kidnapping on National Security in Nigeria*. Retrieved on 2, July 2021 from <https://www.projecttopic.org/implications-of-kidnapping-on-national-security-in-nigeria.html/amp>

<sup>2</sup> Captain Umar Aliyu (Rtd) is a National Security Resource and Solution-Options Consultant, a former Military Intelligence Officer, and member of the 40<sup>th</sup> Regular Course.

Priests' vocation entails travelling to any location at any given time irrespective of the distance and challenge(s) prevalent in the area. Nowadays, priests are considered 'endangered species' operating in a volatile environment. However, the activity was conducted as follows:

 **Key Takeaways:**

**Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)** - designing buildings, facilities and environments in a manner that becomes difficult for strangers to gain entrance. In other words, it is crime protection through environmental design. The Catholic Church being universal, should use her network to come up with a form of security.



Going forward, religious communities need to put in more effort to protect their lives. Crime is dangerous and criminals hate delay. Your defensible space is your environment so until you are able to see through the eyes of a criminal, you will not be inclined to properly protect yourself. Borrow the eyes of a criminal. To act like a Monkey, you need to adopt the mind of a Monkey.

Capt. Umar Aliyu (rtd)

**Formidable Intelligence** - formidable intelligence deals with thinking faster than your adversaries/opponent i.e., doing certain things in certain ways. It is important to have proper knowledge of your environment and people living within your vicinity. Having formidable intelligence reduces crime and gives you edge over your abductors.



Your adversaries will fear you once you are able to preempt how they think and what they will do in the next second. Have a skeletal template of your environment (security intelligence). This will enable you stay ahead of them. Bandits have superior reasoning; so only superior reasoning can scare them away.

Capt. Umar Aliyu (rtd)

**Defendable Space** - ensuring that your environment is safe and unexposed for strangers to majestically walk in and out. Territorial defense begins by placing certain restrictions and avoiding certain people from entering your territory. As Religious people, we tend to trust all who come into our facility and many are taking advantage of it. Henceforth, we are to TRUST and VERIFY not **TRUST** and **UNVERIFY**. It is important to create cordial relationship with community key stakeholders and traditional leaders to keep you informed.

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Security is key to everything we do. Until there is ample security, nothing will work. Ensure you are circumspect both in your parish and on transit. Know those locations that people are constantly attacked or kidnapped and avoid those areas. The moment you begin to notice the frequency of attacks within your environment, leave that vicinity. There is nothing wrong in employing security personnel for your protection. Employ a machinery that sees everything, hears everything and says nothing. You can equally adopt parishioners who are security personnel for your security.

Capt. Umar Aliyu (rtd)

Therefore, to stay safe in a conflict infested environment, there has to be a personal relationship with the environment. Know your community and establish a relationship with the Traditional and Youth leaders. Attackers will always when they know you are lonely and exposed. To avoid this, leverage their intelligence and network and let them know you are not lonely and isolated. With this intelligence, no matter how isolated you are, you become invincible to your attackers and scare them away. It is also important not to overly rely on the Government. What you need to do is to depend on a responder; one who always initiates the first response when something happens. A responder is your Security Machinery and he/she can be anyone.

# Policy Recommendations

From the summary of the webinar above, The Kukah Centre proposes the following recommendations:



## Government

- 1. Improved Border Security** - the federal and state government should work unanimously to address the challenge of border penetrability. Efforts should be made to recruit, train and equip more security agents, immigration and custom officers to boost security and prevent the movement of migrants and arms across the border.
- 2. Improving Citizenry Security** - more security personnel should be deployed to communities for the safety of citizens. Such personnel should be properly equipped with sophisticated weapons to enable them repel attacks when needed.
- 3. Security Surveillance Cameras** - security surveillance cameras should be installed in strategic locations across the country for proper monitoring of individuals and ward off strangers from penetration.

## Security Agencies

- 1. High Security Technology** – security operatives should constantly update and invent new technology for their security patrols both in communities and LGAs. The usage of outdated security gadgets should be discontinued, and efforts should be made to update all personnel in order to meet up with the current advance criminal intelligence.
- 2. Community and Joint Task Force (JTF) Liaison Services** – security agencies should work closely with JTF and community members to protect lives and arrest perpetrators of crimes in community and LGAs.



## Local Communities

1. **Joint Task Force** - community leaders should encourage more youths and able-bodied men and women to join the task force and protect the lives of their people. There should be budgetary allocations for the purchase of guns and other local equipment for their patrol.
2. **Intercommunal Engagement** - communities should organize social activities that bring together members of different communities for dialogue and social functions. This will go a long way in establishing intercommunal trust and relationship.
3. **Security Intelligence** - for security purposes, communities should be conscious of their environment. Some community members should be saddled with the responsibility of identifying strangers who enters and exit a community at will.



## Religious Organisations

1. **Security Know-how** - religious institutions should organize trainings for their priests/pastors to enable them acquire security intelligence for the protection of their lives and property. Information and extracts from such trainings should be kept top secret to avoid slipping into the hands of criminals.
2. **Organize Security Seminars for their Pastors** - development cannot thrive in the midst of insecurity, hence the need of security awareness for citizens (including pastors/priests). Knowledge acquired can be applied and imparted on trusted and verified people.
3. **Roundtable Dialogue** - to address the security challenge in the country, government and Religious leaders should be on constant roundtable dialogue on the way forward.

## Report

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This report was produced by The Kukah Centre, a Nigeria-based non-profit, non-governmental and public policy organisation that offers alternative approaches to the challenges of leadership and the impact of conflict on national development. Interfaith dialogue is at the core of the Centre's work and involves actively promoting conversations among Nigeria's faith communities, as well as between leaders in faith and public policy. The Kukah Centre's core programme areas include: Interfaith Dialogue, Peace and Conflict Resolution, Leadership Training and Development, Good governance, Public Policy Research, Memory and Knowledge Preservation.

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