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# PRESS RELEASE

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## YOUTHUBAFRICA DEMANDS IMMEDIATE MULTI-STAKEHOLDER ACTION TO SAFEGUARD EDUCATION FROM ESCALATING INSECURITY

YouthHubAfrica expresses grave concern over the recent kidnappings of **25** students from Government Girls Comprehensive Secondary School, Kebbi State and about **303** children from St. Mary's School, Niger State, which has forced the indefinite closure of several schools, including **47** Federal Unity Colleges, affecting an estimated **1.5 million** students. These unsettling developments reinforce a disturbing truth: insecurity is no longer just a national challenge - it is an existential threat to Nigeria's education system and a direct assault on the future of our children, especially girls who continue to be disproportionately targeted.

In response to escalating security threats, the Federal Ministry of Education ordered the immediate closure of Unity Schools, directing principals to suspend academic activities and send students home. While these actions may be necessary for immediate safety, they are not viable long-term solutions, especially as prolonged educational disruption disproportionately disadvantages marginalized groups, including girls.

The impact on girls' education is especially alarming. When schools close or the threat of abduction intensifies, families are far more likely to withdraw girls from school altogether. This deepens the already troubling number of out-of-school girls across the country. Years of progress toward education risk being undone, as school closures interrupt not just academic learning but also essential support systems such as peer networks, safe spaces, and protective environments that many girls rely on.



The psychological toll is equally severe. Kidnappings leave students, families, and teachers traumatized, creating lasting fear that undermines students' confidence and aspirations. For girls in particular, the threat of violence can diminish their sense of safety and limit their access to future opportunities. These recurring attacks reflect deeper systemic weaknesses.

YouthHubAfrica calls on the government and security agencies to act urgently. The government must prioritize and fully implement the Safe Schools Declaration to enhance protections for students, particularly in high-risk areas. We call on the Federal Ministry of Education to conduct comprehensive audits of schools in states that are at high risk to determine a range of options to keep schools safe for our children. These options include an early warning system implemented with communities to prevent large-scale abductions, training and situational awareness for students and schools Management on reasonable actions and response during crisis among other options.

It is critical to maintain access to education even in times of insecurity. School closures should be a last resort, and where they occur, alternative arrangements such as relocation, conversion to day-school models, or blended learning options should be explored to ensure continuity. Protecting girl-child education must remain a national priority to prevent girls from being forced out of school.

## **ABOUT YOUTHHUBAFRICA**

YouthHubAfrica is a youth-led nonprofit organization committed to advancing social change, good governance, gender equality, and youth development across Africa. YHA is a youth advocacy and policy-oriented organization based in Abuja, Nigeria, but programming into Africa and beyond.

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