

2023 Storm! Governors Hit Buhari

— you're cause of poverty, banditry and kidnapping in Nigeria

Governors, under the aegis of the Nigeria Governors' Forum, said the Federal Government is to be blame for the rising level of poverty among Nigerians. The NGF stated this, in a statement signed by its Director of Media and Public Affairs, AbdulRazaque Bello-Barkindo. According to the NGF, the rising level of poverty in the country was a consequence of the biting effect of insecurity on commercial and agricultural activities. It said the FG has abandoned its duty of addressing the security challenges crippling economic activities in the country. The NGF also alleged that the Federal Government's inaction had allowed "bandits, insurgents, and kidnappers to turn the country into a killing field". The NGF accusations come on the heels of the claim by the Minister of State for Budget and National Planning, Clement Agba, that the 36 governors were responsible for the rising poverty index in the country.

But the forum argued that the governors had made tremendous progress in their respective states through relevant projects. The NGF stated, "It is important to put on record the progress made by state governors in the administration of their states, which have witnessed tremendous progress in recent times. Governors have undertaken projects where they, in conjunction with their people, deem them fit for purpose.

"This dereliction of duty from the center is the main reason why people have been unable to engage in regular agrarian activity and commerce. Today, rural areas are insecure, markets are unsafe, travel surety is improbable and life for the common people generally is harsh and brutish. "The opinion, therefore, of one minister, based on a survey of 56,000 households in a country of 200 million people can never diminish the good work that 36 pro-poor-minded governors are doing for this country."

The NGF further accused the minister of attempting to defray the notion that rising levels of hunger and lack were peculiar to Nigeria, instead of responding to a question demanding to know what he and his colleague,

the Minister of Finance, Budget and National Planning, Zainab Ahmed, were doing to ameliorate the hardship Nigerians were facing.

The statement said, "Mr Agba explained that their government, through many of its social security programs, has been dedicating resources to alleviating hardship, and then goes further to accuse state governors of misdirecting resources to projects that have no impact on the people. "While rightly pointing out that 72 per cent of the poverty in Nigeria is found in the rural areas, the minister said that the rural populace had been abandoned by governors."

The NGF also described the Federal Government's claim as "Mr Agba's veiled and deliberate effort, as a minister, to protect his paymasters and politicise very critical issues of national importance." It stated, "The primary duty of any government is to ensure the security of lives and property, without which no sensible human activity takes place. But



the Federal Government, which is responsible for the security of lives and property, has been unable to fulfil this covenant with the people, thus allowing bandits, insurgents, and kidnappers to turn the country into a killing field, maiming and abducting people, in schools market squares and even on their farmlands. "How can a defenceless rural population maintain a sustainable lifestyle of peace and harmony when their lives are cut prematurely, and they wallow permanently in danger? How does a minister whose government has been unable to ensure security, law, and order have the temerity to blame governors?" the NGF said.