

FG calls for International Support to scale up fight against banditry, insecurity

The Federal Government has called on the European Union to increase its assistance to the nation's battle against insecurity. It noted that should a percent of assistance going to Ukraine to ward off the aggression from Russian be given to Nigeria, the country would be free of the threats of terrorism and banditry. Minister of Defence, Mohammed Badaru Abubakar made the statement at the Road to Schuman Security Conference jointly organized by the European Union Delegation to Nigeria and ECOWAS and the National Counter Terrorism Centre (NCTC), Office of the National Security Adviser (ONSA) and the ECOWAS Commission. The Minister who was represented by the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Defence, Dr. Ibrahim Kana noted that it is the time for the world to come together to fight terrorism, insisting that what affects one part of the world affect the others. He said no one would have thought 25 years ago that Nigeria would ever be bedeviled by this level of insecurity, adding that suicide bombing was never thought of in Nigeria decades ago. He said: "If Nigeria gets one percent of the support given to Ukraine to fight back Russia, we would be free of terrorism." He decried the recent military coups in some West African countries, particularly in Niger which is currently under a military junta, and called for the support of all to address the situation. He noted that Nigeria had no better or bigger neighbor than Niger, and as such there was need for the forum to discuss how to put an end to coup in Africa. He never ruled out the believe that Nigeria was planning to storm Niger to push out the military junta, stating that Nigeria has the capacity to do that but on second thought decided against it. He said: "We have the capacity to send troop to Niger but we looked critically at the issues and followed the path of Schuman, the path of peace." According to him, Nigeria would continue to work with the EU and the Schuman Forum to end insecurity in West Africa, particularly those nations that are under the military junta, while also calling for good governance and job creation for the youth in Africa. He said: "This forum is an avenue to find out the causes of coup in Africa and proffer possible solutions." The National Coordinator, National Counter Terrorism Centre (NCTC), Office of the National Security Adviser (ONSA) Major General Adamu Laka called for concerted efforts of all stakeholders and partners to address



the current and emerging security threats so as to enhance national development, he said not only in Nigeria but in the ECOWAS region as a whole. The National Coordinator, who said that the event was aimed at enhancing effective partnership in the changing security dynamics of the world, added that the crucial situation of the country in the multi-faceted security situation informed the deployment of whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches towards enhancing national responses to emerging security threats in the country. He thanked the EU for its commitment to ensuring peace and security is maintained in Nigeria and the ECOWAS region. Also, the leader of the European Union Delegation to Nigeria and ECOWAS, Amb. Samuela Isopi said the meeting was to aggregate views and assessment on the main peace, security and defense challenges threatening Nigeria as a nation and its regional environment. Isopi stressed that in view of the evolving global security landscape, the meeting would discuss how to nourish and shape a tailored security and defense partnership between Nigeria and the EU. 'No one can afford to work in isolation,' she said. In the afternoon session between EU and ECOWAS, titled Reducing Vulnerabilities through Partnerships- a Stakeholders' Engagement on Regional Defense and Security Perspectives, the ECOWAS Commissioner, Political

Affairs, Peace and Security, Amb. Abdel-Fatau Musah said that the coups detat and subsequent withdrawal of three countries from the sub regional body has complicated the fight against terrorism in West Africa. He noted that \$2.4 billion is planned to put in place an anti-terrorism outfit in West Africa, noting that the whole region would be in trouble if terrorism is allowed to fester. He said the three countries would have announced their exit from the regional bloc, is still not seen as non-members, stating that "they are still considered as members of ECOWAS until January next year." He said we want the countries back for they are important to the Community. Musah said ECOWAS was ready to work with EU to ensure peace return to the region. The meeting held in Abuja, Nigeria was a prelude to the Schuman Security and Defence Forum coming up on 28 and 29 May, 2024 in Brussels, Belgium where Nigeria is expected to participate alongside 27 EU member States, 60 partner countries and international organizations.