

Why we deployed troops to Nigeria... US General, Dagvin Anderson

The United States has deployed a small team of military specialists to Nigeria to strengthen ongoing counter-terrorism efforts, the Commander of US Africa Command (AFRICOM), General Dagvin R.M. Anderson, has disclosed. Speaking during an on-the-record virtual media briefing, General Anderson said the deployment followed high-level discussions with President Bola Tinubu late last year aimed at deepening security cooperation between the two countries. "I was able to meet President Tinubu at the Aqaba Process meeting in Rome," Anderson said. "We shared thoughts and agreed that we needed to work together on a way forward in the region." "That has led to increased collaboration between our nations, to include a small US team that brings some unique capabilities from the United States in order to augment what Nigeria has been doing for several years," he added. According to the AFRICOM commander, the initiative is part of a broader US strategy to assist willing African partners in confronting the growing threat of terrorism, particularly in West Africa. General Anderson explained that the deployed team is providing specialized support in areas such as intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR), as well as intelligence fusion and operational planning. He stressed that the support is designed to complement Nigeria's existing military operations rather than replace them. "Nigeria is a very willing and capable partner," he noted. "When we fuse the unique capabilities that the US can bring with Nigeria's own efforts, we are much more effective in countering these threats." Anderson revealed that his deputy commander recently visited Nigeria alongside a senior U.S. State Department delegation led by Alison Hooker to review progress and explore additional areas of cooperation. "I think we've had some really good, positive movement there," he said. The AFRICOM chief warned that extremist groups affiliated with ISIS and Al-Qaeda continue to expand their activities across West Africa, posing serious threats to regional stability. "We clearly see a growing terrorist threat in the Sahel and surrounding regions," he stated, adding that international cooperation is essential to reversing the trend. He described the Nigeria partnership as a model for how the United States intends to work with African nations facing similar challenges. "When we can find a capable and willing partner to work with, and bring our unique capabilities to bear, we see real success in addressing these threats," Anderson said. Sergeant Major Derek Banfield, AFRICOM's Command Senior Enlisted Leader, reinforced the command's commitment to supporting African partners. "We are ready and willing to work with partners to address shared security concerns," Banfield said. "A secure environment leads to stability, and stability creates room for investment and prosperity." General Anderson concluded that US engagement in Nigeria and across Africa is aimed at helping partner nations achieve long-term security and operational independence. "Our

goal is to help degrade the threat and create opportunities for development that allow all of us to prosper together," he said. The deployment signals renewed US commitment to Nigeria's fight against insurgency and terrorism at a time when extremist violence continues to challenge several countries across West Africa.

FG approves ₦1trn metropolitan rail project for Kano

The Federal Government has approved a ₦1 trillion Metropolitan Rail Service for Kano State to enhance urban transportation, stimulate economic activities and reduce traffic congestion in the state capital. Kano State Governor, Abba Yusuf, disclosed the approval while addressing members of the state contingent that participated in the 2025 National Qur'anic Recitation Competition held in Borno State. The development was confirmed in a statement issued on Thursday by the governor's spokesperson, Sunusi Bature Dawakin Tofa. According to the statement, the rail project is designed to provide a modern, efficient and affordable mass transit system that will connect major districts within the Kano metropolis and improve mobility for residents. Governor Yusuf said the metropolitan rail service would significantly transform public transportation in the state by offering a safe and reliable means of movement, while also boosting trade, investment and overall economic growth. He explained that his administration's decision to realign politically with the Federal Government was informed by the need to attract major infrastructure projects capable of accelerating development in Kano. "Our decision to work closely with the Federal Government is guided by the interest of the Kano people and the urgent need to attract critical infrastructure that will drive growth and development," the governor said. Describing the project as a landmark intervention, Yusuf noted that the rail service would improve the quality of life of residents and reposition Kano as a key transportation hub in Northern Nigeria. He assured that the state government would collaborate with relevant federal agencies to ensure transparent execution, smooth implementation and maximum benefits for the people. The governor also expressed gratitude to the Federal Government for approving the project and pledged the state's commitment to supporting federal initiatives through complementary policies and infrastructure development.

El-Rufai calls for Tinubu's impeachment over alleged N100bn monthly deductions

Former Kaduna State Governor, Nasir El-Rufai, has accused President Bola Tinubu of unlawfully deducting N100 billion every month from the Federation Account without legislative approval, describing the action as an impeachable offence. El-Rufai

made the allegation during an interview on a programme aired on Television and monitored by Rapidospace News online. According to him, the alleged unauthorized deductions have been ongoing for over 15 months, amounting to approximately N1.5 trillion. He said the deductions were carried out without appropriation by the National Assembly or the various state assemblies, despite the fact that part of the funds constitutionally belongs to the states. El-Rufai stated that this is government data and not speculation, adding that each state assembly is required by law to approve expenditures related to its share of the Federation Account. The entire deduction and expenditure process is unconstitutional. It is an impeachable offence, yet it has been happening for more than 15 months," he said. The former governor questioned the use of the funds, asking why insecurity continues to worsen across the country despite the huge sums allegedly withdrawn monthly. So where has the N1.5 trillion gone? What is it being used for? Why is the security situation deteriorating? Why is the government now asking communities to protect themselves?" he queried. El-Rufai further expressed disappointment with the current state of affairs, noting that he would not have believed the situation could deteriorate to its present level if told during the 2022 or 2023 election campaigns. If anyone had told me during the campaigns that things would become this bad, I would have dismissed it," he said.

NDIC, EFCC boost Partnership on prosecution, Asset recovery

The Nigeria Deposit Insurance Corporation (NDIC) has pledged robust partnership with the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) to recover failed banks' assets and debilitating debts within the nation's banking sector. Additionally, the Corporation also reaffirmed its stance at reinforced cooperation with the anti-graft agency in the investigation and prosecution of individuals who contribute to the banks' failure in the country. According to the Managing Director and Chief Executive of the NDIC, Mr. Thompson Oludare Sunday, effective and strong collaboration with the EFCC is critical to the successful liquidation of failed banks, especially in asset realization and debt recovery, with the proceeds utilized to pay off uninsured deposits. Mr Sunday, who spoke when the NDIC Management visited the EFCC's Executive Chairman, Olanipekun Olukoyede, at the Commission's Headquarters in Abuja, explained that addressing cases of asset stripping and concealment of assets requires close partnership with the anti-corruption agency through enhanced asset tracing, recovery and enforcement actions. He said collaborative efforts would make tackling of banking fraud and financial crimes in the banking system more successful, stressing that NDIC contributes significantly to ensuring the stability of the financial system through the effective implementation of its four core mandates of Deposit Guarantee, Bank Supervision, Distress Resolution and Bank Liquidation.

Further explaining that the NDIC's ultimate objective is the protection of depositors' funds, prompt payment of depositors in the event of bank failure and strengthening public confidence in the financial system, Mr Sunday said the Corporation and EFCC share core values of integrity, professionalism and collaboration. For him, the courtesy visit is a formal engagement towards strengthening institutional partnership, particularly in areas where EFCC's investigative and prosecutorial capabilities are crucial to the achievement of NDIC's mandates of keeping the depositors' funds safe and secured in the banking sector.

In his remarks, the EFCC Executive Chairman, Mr. Olanipekun Olukoyede, restated the Commission's healthy working relationship with the NDIC in addressing financial crimes in the nation's banking sector. While acknowledging the enduring cooperation between both institutions, especially in investigations and capacity building on the intricacies of banking operations, Mr. Olukoyede highlighted key departments within the anti-corruption Commission, including the Bank Fraud Section, which handles NDIC-related cases. The EFCC boss, who tasked the Corporation to bring forward any pending cases for prompt review to ensure better traction and effective monitoring of progress, also emphasized the role of EFCC's Fraud Risk Assessment and Control Department, which focuses on proactive monitoring of compliance, promotion of sound risk management processes, and internal controls within public and private sector institutions. Describing this as part of the anti-graft agency's broader efforts to support and safeguard the Nigerian economy, Olukoyede guaranteed EFCC's sustained resolve to deepening collaboration and strengthening synergy with the NDIC in combating financial crimes, enhancing asset recovery, and prosecuting individuals and groups whose actions undermine the stability and integrity of Nigeria's banking sector. A statement by Hawwau Gambo, Head, Communication and Public Affairs of NDIC disclosed that the Corporation's delegation to the EFCC included Executive Director, Corporate Services, Mrs. Emily Osuji, and Executive Director, Operations, Dr. Kabir Katata, as well as other key directors of the Corporation

NDDC to fully automate procurement processes by April – MD

The Managing Director of the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC), Dr Samuel Ogbuku, says the commission will fully automate its procurement processes on or before April. This is contained in a statement issued by the NDDC Director of Corporate Affairs, Mrs Seledi Thompson-Wakama, in Port Harcourt. According to the statement, Ogbuku spoke at the Mandatory Continuous Procurement Capacity Development Training Programme organised by the

Bureau of Public Procurement (BPP) in Port Harcourt. “We will soon automate our procurement processes to ensure compliance, transparency and improved service delivery,” Ogbuku said. He said the commission had reformed its corporate governance structure and internal processes to strengthen accountability. According to him, the NDDC has commenced the implementation of a new Governance Advisory Service to promote transparency in service delivery. Ogbuku said the commission had transitioned from transaction-based operations to transformational processes, with noticeable improvements in its public procurement system. “In the NDDC, we take public procurement very seriously. Training and retraining are essential in every organisation,” he said. He added that the NDDC collaborated with the BPP in 2024 to train its staff and currently has 35 BPP-certified professionals in its procurement unit. Highlighting the commission's achievements, the managing director said the Operation Light Up the Niger Delta programme had recorded significant success across the region. “We undertake projects based on proper needs assessment to ensure meaningful impact. “President Bola Tinubu loves the Niger Delta, and we are committed to bringing his programmes closer to the people,” he said. The Director-General of the BPP, Dr Adebowale Adedokun, commended President Tinubu for advancing procurement reforms. Adedokun said the reforms had strengthened transparency and elevated professionalism, positioning procurement as a key driver of the Renewed Hope Agenda. He said the capacity-building programme was aimed at institutionalizing trained, certified and accountable procurement professionals in the public service. “The training aligns with the Procurement Act and is designed to enhance participants' capacity for effective project delivery,” he said. He urged participants to fully engage in the programme and consistently uphold due process and ethical standards. On his part, the Chairman of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Civil Service Commission, Mr Emeka Ezech, described procurement as a vital tool for good governance. Ezech said procurement also served as a mechanism for fighting corruption in the public sector. “You must internalize the eight priority areas of the Renewed Hope Agenda of President Tinubu's administration,” he told the train

Nigeria faces fresh borrowing pressure as 2026 budget deficit hits N25.27 Trillion

Nigeria may resort to additional borrowing to finance its 2026 budget as lawmakers and fiscal experts raise concerns over a widening deficit and weak revenue performance. At a public hearing on the 2026 Appropriation Bill in Abuja, the Senate disclosed that the proposed budget of N58.47 trillion is set against projected revenue of N33.19 trillion, leaving a deficit of about N25.27 trillion. Chairman of the Senate Committee on Appropriations, Solomon Adeola, said borrowing remains unavoidable given the country's development

needs and uncertain revenue inflows, but stressed that fiscal discipline and responsible debt management would be prioritized. He added that debt servicing alone is expected to gulp about N15.90 trillion, underscoring the growing pressure on public finances. Adeola warned that the National Assembly would intensify scrutiny of government spending, particularly service-wide votes, and insisted that future budgets would no longer be extended beyond December of any fiscal year due to poor implementation and abandoned projects. He also emphasized the need for ministries, departments and agencies to improve cooperation with oversight bodies to ensure transparency, accountability and efficient use of public funds. Meanwhile, concerns over poor budget implementation resurfaced as the Minister of Health, Prof. Mohammed Ali Pate, revealed that his ministry received only N36 million out of the N218 billion appropriated for its 2025 capital expenditure. According to him, the limited release of funds severely affected the execution of capital projects, despite the full utilization of personnel allocations. Pate attributed the funding gaps to cash planning constraints and delays in releasing counterpart funds, which prevented access to donor-supported projects. He explained that the health sector's planning framework aligns with national development strategies and prioritizes Universal Health Coverage, particularly through the strengthening of primary healthcare services. The minister said the 2026 health budget proposal was prepared in line with the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework and processed through the Government Integrated Financial Management Information System to ensure needs-based allocation.

Lawmakers also highlighted concerns about inefficiencies in public spending, pointing to the electricity sector as a major financial burden that requires urgent structural reforms. The House Committee on Healthcare Services, led by Amos Magaji, directed the health ministry to provide detailed records of donor funds received and how they were utilized as part of ongoing oversight efforts.

Forum raises alarm over non-release of ₦218bn National Health Budget for 2025

The North East Health Awareness Forum (NEHCAF), has demanded immediate action from relevant authorities to address the funding issues associated with the health sector in the country. NEHCAF which made the demand, particularly expressed serious concerns over the inability of the Federal Ministry of Health to draw the 218 billion Naira 2025 capital budgetary expenditure from which only ₦36 million was released. These were contained in a statement by Abdullahi Ahmad and Ummu Kulsum Rabi, Chairman and Secretary of the Forum respectively, in which they expressed shock and astonishment at the revelation by the Coordinating Minister of Health. NEHCAF particularly said that it was alarming to learn that only N36 million was

released to the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare out of the budgeted N218 billion earmarked for the critical sector. It further said; “This disclosure raises serious concerns about transparency and the effective management of healthcare resources in Nigeria. The health sector is pivotal to the well-being of our citizens, and such discrepancies in funding allocation cast a shadow over our commitment to providing quality healthcare services. “We are particularly troubled by the implications this may have for ongoing and future health projects that are vital for improving health outcomes nationwide.” “The Minister's statement highlights the urgent need for a thorough investigation into the funding processes and to ensure that allocated resources are utilized efficiently and transparently. “Under a democratic dispensation, our citizens deserve a health system that is adequately funded and well-equipped to meet their needs. We remain committed to advocating for the necessary reforms to ensure that financial resources are not only allocated, but also effectively utilized for the benefit of all Nigerians.” “We urge all stakeholders, including government officials, civil society, and the media, to collaborate in addressing these concerns and to work towards a more accountable and responsive health financing system. “Together, we can ensure that the promise of quality healthcare is fulfilled for every Nigerian,” the Forum stated.

ICPC, EFCC Blame Budget Gaps for Delayed Probes

Nigeria's two leading anti-corruption agencies have warned that inadequate funding is slowing investigations, stalling prosecutions and weakening the country's fight against graft, raising fresh concerns over the government's commitment to accountability reforms. The Chairman of the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC), Musa Aliyu (SAN), told lawmakers that financial constraints have forced the commission to prioritize cases, leaving several petitions unresolved. Appearing before the Senate Committee on Anti-Corruption and Financial Crimes alongside the Chairman of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Olu Olukoyede, Mr Aliyu said limited releases for overheads and capital projects have significantly hampered operations. “Some cases take two to five years to conclude. Funding affects travel, document retrieval, forensic analysis and manpower. We have to prioritize cases based on available resources,” he said. In a revelation that underscored the depth of the crisis, Mr Aliyu disclosed that some ICPC prosecutors pay litigation-related expenses from their personal funds when pursuing corruption cases. “Our prosecutors sometimes use their personal money to go to court. Several investigations cannot proceed because we cannot pay service providers,” he said, adding that staff morale remains low amid welfare concerns and rising operational risks. He further revealed that an ICPC staff member was recently kidnapped,

highlighting the growing dangers faced by anti-graft operatives. According to him, inadequate funding affects not only investigations but also Nigeria's international image, particularly as the country seeks to strengthen its anti-corruption credentials. The funding complaints come amid growing criticism from civil society groups over unresolved petitions submitted to anti-corruption agencies. Over the years, several high-profile petitions — including those against public officials — have lingered without visible prosecutorial outcomes. In 2023, a media investigation exposed allegations that some federal lawmakers extorted government agencies while probing job racketeering. A petition submitted to the ICPC over the matter was acknowledged, but no prosecution has followed to date. Such cases have fueled public skepticism about the effectiveness of anti-corruption institutions, even as the agencies insist that investigations are ongoing. Despite the funding limitations, Mr Aliyu said the ICPC recovered ₦33.1 billion and \$1.98 million in cash last year, alongside landed properties, vehicles and business assets. He said the commission filed 72 cases, secured 36 convictions and handled 453 ongoing matters, while processing over 1,100 petitions. However, budget releases tell a different story. Out of ₦7.82 billion allocated for overhead in 2025, only ₦2.2 billion — 28 per cent — was released. For capital expenditure, only ₦449 million of the ₦7.3 billion approved was disbursed, and that came late in November. “These shortfalls directly affect operational efficiency,” Mr Aliyu noted. The EFCC chairman raised similar concerns, revealing that only 74 per cent of the commission's total 2025 appropriation was released, while capital funding stood at 50 per cent. Mr Olukoyede warned that unpaid contractors and license providers could disrupt ongoing investigations, particularly in cybercrime and forensic analysis, which depend on specialized software and operational licenses. “Outstanding liabilities from 2025 may stall projects in 2026,” he said, adding that the EFCC still owes about ₦3 billion in severance benefits to 32 retired officers. The commission has proposed a ₦88 billion budget for 2026, including ₦22.8 billion for capital projects. Members of the Senate committee acknowledged the agencies' concerns and pledged improved allocations in the 2026 budget. Committee Chairman Emmanuel Udende described funding for Nigeria's anti-corruption agencies as low compared to global standards. “It is sad that funding for anti-corruption agencies is very poor compared to other countries. We will see what we can do to improve it,” he said.

Us Accuses China Of Fueling Banditry And Terrorism By Arming Bandits To Protect Illegal Mining Activities

US Bill On Nigeria Targets Chinese Illegal Mining Operations, Claims Miners Pay Fulani Militias for 'Protection' The United States proposed bill has sought to counter Chinese mining operations in Nigeria as

part of targeted measures to address religious freedom violations and extremism by terrorist groups. SaharaReporters earlier reported that the proposal is contained in the Nigeria Religious Freedom and Accountability Act of 2026, co-sponsored by Rep. Riley Moore (R-West Virginia) and Rep. Chris Smith (R-New Jersey). In an announcement via X by US Congressmen, Rep. Riley Moore (R-West Virginia), the lawmakers had outlined concerns over the security implications of certain mining activities. Meanwhile, the lawmakers identified illegal mining operations as a primary revenue source for violent extremism, noting the widespread practice of paying 'protection money' to insurgent groups to ensure operational security. The legislation directs the US Secretary of State to determine whether certain "Fulani militias" qualify as foreign terrorist organizations under US law. It also calls for humanitarian aid delivery in Nigeria's Middle Belt through trusted faith-based and non-governmental organizations. According to the bill, the lawmakers proposed that individuals and networks, domestic or foreign that provide support to these Fulani-ethnic militias should be investigated and held accountable. The bill reads, "the Secretary of State should consider technical support to the Government of Nigeria to reduce and then eliminate violence from armed Fulani militias, including disarmament programs and comprehensive counter-terrorism cooperation to rid the region of Foreign Terrorist Organizations that pose a direct threat to the American homeland." It further states, "The Secretary of State should work with the Government of Nigeria to counteract the hostile foreign exploitation of Chinese illegal mining operations and their destabilizing practice of paying protection money to Fulani militias." It has been previously reported that the United States has proposed targeted measures, including visa bans and asset freezes, against individuals and groups linked to the alleged involvement in religious freedom violations and extremism in Nigeria.

The bill, if passed, would require further determinations and actions by the US Secretary of State in line with its provisions. The United States proposed bill has sought to counter Chinese mining operations in Nigeria as part of targeted measures to address religious freedom violations and extremism by terrorist groups. According to the bill, the lawmakers proposed that individuals and networks, domestic or foreign that provide support to these Fulani-ethnic militias should be investigated and held accountable. The bill reads, "the Secretary of State should consider technical support to the Government of Nigeria to reduce and then eliminate violence from armed Fulani militias, including disarmament programs and comprehensive counter-terrorism cooperation to rid the region of Foreign Terrorist Organizations that pose a direct threat to the American homeland."

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Stuck At The Bottom: Nigeria Slips Further On 2025 Corruption Index

Nigeria's anti-corruption battle lost momentum again in 2025 as the country scored just 26 out of 100 on Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI), dropping from 140th to 142nd among 180 countries worldwide. The Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre (CISLAC), Transparency International's Nigerian chapter, said the stagnant score reflects entrenched public perceptions of widespread corruption and weak governance reforms. Presenting the 2025 CPI report on Tuesday, February 10, 2026, in Abuja, CISLAC Executive Director, Comrade Auwal Musa Rafsanjani, stressed that the index measures perception rather than individual cases, warning that Nigeria's continued stagnation points to deep structural failures. He called for urgent reforms, insisting that anti-corruption agencies such as the EFCC, ICPC, and NFIU must operate independently, free from political interference, and be adequately funded to ensure swift and fair trials. Rafsanjani acknowledged notable gains in asset recovery, revealing that the EFCC recovered over N566 billion, \$411 million, and 1,502 properties between October 2023 and September 2025, while the ICPC recovered N37.44 billion and \$2.353 million in 2025 alone. He also cited improved international cooperation, including the January 2026 agreement by the UK Crown Dependency of Jersey to repatriate over \$9.5 million in corruption-linked assets for projects such as the Abuja-Kano road. Despite these gains, CISLAC warned that corruption within the security sector continues to fuel insecurity, calling for impartial investigations and an end to the politicization of security agencies. The organization also urged robust tracking of oil production and sales, demanding full accountability from the NNPC over funds allegedly missing in the Auditor-General's 2022 report published in 2025. CISLAC further pressed for full digitization of public procurement, open access to government contracts and budgets, and publicly accessible databases of recovered assets in line with the Proceeds of Crime Act and the Freedom of Information Act. Rafsanjani also charged the National Assembly to urgently pass the Whistleblower Protection Bill, describing investigative journalism, civil society, and active citizens as "indispensable to exposing corruption and defending democracy."