

NGO Distributes Educational Supplies to Over 150 Pupils in Ojo, Lagos

Over the years it has become extremely difficult for many parents to meet up with the responsibility of meeting up with their children educational needs as a result of the harsh economic realities which to a great extent has affected a great number of household who find it difficult to afford to put three square meals on the table for their families. The situation has become so pathetic that we now have a great number of out of school children across the nation. But as part of its initiative to raise awareness of



Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for Quality Education and Clean Water and Sanitation, while providing educational materials to support students in need, a non-governmental organization Water Empowerment Foundation (WEFound) organized a Back-to-School Project for disadvantaged pupils at Military Primary School in Ojo, Lagos.

The NGO distributed educational resources to over 150 indigent pupils, out of which 40 of the pupils received branded school bags. The event, which held on Thursday the 3rd of October 2024, saw participation from seven WEFound team members, nine volunteers, and the school's teaching staff, with approximately 150 pupils attending. The initiative was led by WEFound's project leader Ambassador Elizabeth Adepoju, and supported by Ambassador Funmi Ademola-Aliu and NGO Coordinator Ambassador Obasi John.

Speaking on the initiative, project leader Ambassador Elizabeth Adepoju said, "By providing these resources, we aim to support students who lack basic educational supplies, thereby helping them stay focused and motivated throughout the academic year. The project's goal is to reduce school dropouts by ensuring that pupils have the learning materials they need. We are aware of the challenges faced by many parents to meet up with the

educational needs of their children because of the present economic situation in the country and so in our own little way we have decided to support them so as to help reduce the rate of school dropout.

The outreach focused on empowering children through education and creating awareness of clean water and sanitation. Pupils were educated on the SDGs, and the event featured interactive sessions aimed at inspiring the children to pursue education as a path to a better future.

WEFound promised to maintain continuous communication with the school while helping to seek additional resources to support disadvantaged students, emphasizing the importance of education and sustainable development. While appreciating the laudable initiative, a staff member and teacher at Military Nursery and Primary School Ojo, Oladimeji Jamiu, said, "We have about seven different schools here, and they tried to cover all of them today. This is what we have been looking for—people and organizations from outside coming to contribute to our educational system, which is currently deteriorating." "The support in the form of books, bags, and other learning materials is crucial, especially given the tough economic situation in the country." Emphasizing the challenges faced, Jamiu said many parents who

struggle to afford basic needs cannot afford educational materials for their children. Initiatives like these play a vital role in bridging the gap for underprivileged families. Commending the foundation's contributions, the head teacher of the Brigade Primary School Ojo Mrs Ojoare Abiodun Jaurat said: "In a time when Nigeria is facing economic hardship, gathering yourselves to help children from poor homes by providing books, bags, and writing materials is truly commendable. You have done a great job, and we encourage other NGOs to emulate your efforts." It is on record that WEFound over the years has been visible in the area of advocacy for Clean Water and Sanitation especially in Communities where there is poor sanitation and lack of adequate facilities for pipe borne water as well as areas and neighborhoods affected by flooding and natural disasters across the country.

Police and Government Officials join me to negotiate with Bandits (Terrorist)...Sheikh Gumi

Popular Kaduna-based Islamic cleric, Sheikh Ahmad Gumi, has confirmed that he collaborates with police and government officials to negotiate with bandits in their territories. In an interview, Gumi stated that his involvement in negotiations stems from his commitment as a Nigerian to fostering peace and tranquility in the

region, emphasizing that he cannot afford to wait for the official narrative on the situation. Sheikh Gumi disclosed that his interactions with bandits aim to broker peace, highlighting the open doors he receives when meeting them. He noted that these discussions are vital for addressing the underlying issues contributing to the rise in banditry and violence in the country. The cleric's approach has drawn both support and criticism, as he seeks to bridge the gap between the government and the bandit groups. Gumi said, "I am in the eye of the storm, and I am a full-fledged Nigerian. I also have an interest in peace and tranquility. I cannot wait for the official narrative because I have been in the army and I know how things go. "Today, 90 per cent of our intelligence is garbage. What we have left is just about 10 per cent. That is why we have coups because intelligence does not have a way to identify these people. "They also killed their leaders because no intelligence picked them up. Can we wait until we get a government that understands, then, we can make plans to intervene and see if it can calm nerves to achieve peace. No, as individuals, we have to do our best. Then I can advise the government on what we have seen. "One thing Nigerians should understand is that I have never been to any den of these people without officials of the government. I go with the police because one cannot go alone; you must go with them. "Only that they will tell you there is a perimeter—don't come with some of them. Sometimes, I also go with traditional institutions and state government officials. My plan is only to broker peace with them. They open their doors for us to sit and discuss issues."

132 Communities in 24 LGs of Katsina and Zamfara are still under the firm Bandits Control.

Despite the ongoing military offensive in Katsina and Zamfara States against criminal elements, bandits still have a firm grip on several communities in 24 local government areas of the two states. The activities of the bandits are more pronounced in Zamfara where unofficial sources put the communities where the bandits hold the people to ransom at over 100 in 14 local government areas. In Katsina State, LEADERSHIP Sunday gathered that no council is currently under the control of the bandits, but they still hold sway in several communities in 10 councils. A source in Faskari council of Katsina State alleged that about 32 communities have been abandoned due to relentless attacks by the bandits. He named the communities as Ungwan Dorowa, Ungwan Bika, Gidan Wakili, Kogon Kura, Gidan Saidu, Migyadali and Shuwaki, among others.

President Bola Tinubu had recently directed the minister of defence, the chief of defence staff (CDS) and other security chiefs to relocate to Sokoto to flush out bandits from Zamfara, Sokoto, Katsina and Zamfara states. Since then, the military and police have killed top bandits' leaders and

arrested several others. But investigations by [LEADERSHIP Sunday in Katsina and Zamfara states](#) showed that several communities were yet to be free from banditry. Findings in Zamfara showed that majority of the communities from across 14 local government areas of the state are still under the control of bandits despite military onslaught where scores of them including one of the wanted notorious kingpins, Halilu Sububu, was killed. Some residents said the military onslaught has led to a drastic reduction in attacks, but in some parts of the state, the bandits had defied the presence of the troops as they resort to guerilla warfare. The locals said it was disheartening that over 100 communities from across the 14 local government areas were not free from bandits' attacks and exploitation. They said that while some of the villagers had been forced to flee to urban areas for fear of continuous attacks, others who chose to stay behind were forced to live under the dictates of the criminals. Our correspondent gathered that the most harassed villages were in Maru, Anka, Shinkafi, Maradun, Zurmi, Gusau and Bungudu local government areas. In Zurmi council, the villages allegedly under control of the bandits are Gidan Kabbo, Tsakauna, Dogon-hako, Gidan duwan, Jididi, Asako, Gidan-Oho, Dunnu, Gwamawa, Gidan Labbobuzu, Marmaro, Takalmawa, Tukurawa, Sangamawa, Tataka, Gidan-Galadima, Gidan-Zago, Kadamutsa, Holuwa, Makosa, Judidi, Geza, Rinni and Dadan. In Tsafe local government area, the affected villages are Munhaye, Dustin Kura, Kekawa, Yarzaiga, Sabon Birnin Nakak, Unguwar Gyauro, Matso-Matso, Magazawa, Kawasaki, Bare-Bari, Turba-Kuceheri, Marne, Maidagalo, Yar-tsakuwa, Garkuwan, Kofar Fasa, Sansami and Dankutau.

In Maru LGA, the villages under bandits' control are Madada, Bingi, Dandalla, Babbar Doka, Kabaro, Sangeku, Danmani, Kunjemi, Karauci, Gajeran Kauye, Saulawa, Randa, Kango, Balge, Gobirawan Cali, Gidan Ardo, Bulakke and Kilin. In Anka council, the embattled villages are Rafin Sanya, Barayar Zaki, Rafin Gero, Karfa, Bawar Daji, Sunka, Tungar Kudaku, Matseri, Dankalgo, Matsafa, Nassarawa and Kawaye. In Maradun LGA, the communities are Aljimma, Gwargawo, Kuzi, Ruwan Bado, Magamin Diddi, Gareka, Saurar Kade, Damage, Asarara, Burmi Gidan Adamu, Gidan Maidawa, Gidan Baushi, and Wari.

In Talata Mafara council, Ruwan Jema, Ruwan Gora, Dankalgo, and Ruwan Gizi suffer the same fate. In Gusau LGA, the villages under the control of bandits include Madaro, Kungurmi, Dandindin, Burwaye, Burnai, Fankarfe, Dadin Zama, Bakin Dutse, Tungar Kudi, Ruwan Mesa, Koli, Buzaye, Lilo, Tungar Rakumi, Rijjiya, and Kwarya Tsugune. In Birnin Magaji council, the villages are Madomawa, Nasarawa Mailayi, Dan'Ali, Birnin Tsaba, among others.

Speaking with LEADERSHIP Sunday, the senior special assistant (SSA) to the governor on media and publicity, Mustapha Jafaru, said Governor Dauda Lawal has assured the people that his administration would do everything humanly possible to ensure that total peace is restored in

the state. The aide said the governor had made adequate arrangements with security agents to check the excesses of the bandits and to rescue the villagers from their control. He said the administration of Governor Lawal had no plan to reconcile with the bandits or negotiate with them irrespective of their activities. "The state government will squarely face them and deal with them so that security will be restored by the grace of Allah," Kaura said. When contacted, the spokesperson of the state police command, ASP Yazeed Abubakar, said the police in collaboration with other security agents were doing everything humanly possible to ensure those areas suspected to be under bandits' control are liberated. The spokesperson of 1 Brigade Command of the Nigerian Army (OPHD), Gusau, Lieutenant Sulaiman Omale, said he would not comment on any issue with regard to security because he was not directed to speak. In Katsina State, the areas under bandits' activities are Faskari, Sabuwa, Safana, Kankara, Dutsinma, Danmusa, Jibia, Batsari, Kurfi, and Dandume. In Faskari, some communities such as Kadisau, Fankama, and Sabon Layin Galadima have resorted to negotiating with the bandits and paying levies to access their farms. However, others such as Jarkuka, Ungwan Sakkai and Kampani remain under constant threats. In Batsari LGA, communities such as Batsari Anabi, Garin Yara and Dan Kwalso face similar challenges. In Kankara council, Fanwa and Mabai are high-risk areas while Marke, Domawa, Maidabino and Dan Ali in Danmusa local government are identified as dangerous communities under bandit attacks. A senior government official who sought anonymity asserted that the crime rate had significantly decreased following the deployment of additional security personnel in the region. The Katsina State Police Command spokesman, Sadiq Abubakar, said significant progress was being made in combating banditry in the state, particularly after President Tinubu's directive for an offensive against the criminals in the North West zone. Abubakar added that the command had neutralised several bandits, rescued many victims and recovered weapons and ammunition. He also mentioned that numerous suspects had been arrested.

Court bars VIO from impounding vehicles, imposing fines on motorists

A Federal High Court in Abuja has prohibited Vehicle Inspection Office (VIO), from stopping vehicles on the road, impounding or confiscating them, and imposing fines on motorists. The prohibition was via a judgement delivered by Justice Evelyn Maha on October 2. It was premised on a fundamental rights enforcement suit (FHC/ABJ/CS/1695/2023) filed by human rights activist and public interest attorney, Abubakar Marshal. The presiding judge, Justice Maha, affirmed Marshal's averment, noting that there was no legal basis for VIO and its officials to stop, impound, or confiscate vehicles or to levy fines against motorists. The order also extended to

Director of Road Transport, Area Commander in Jabi, and Team Leader in Jabi, with Minister of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) listed as a respondent. The judge ruled, "The actions of the first to fourth respondents, under the control of the fifth respondent, are not empowered by any law or statute to stop, impound, or confiscate the vehicles of motorists or impose fines on them." The court also issued a restraining order against the respondents, preventing them and their agents from impounding or confiscating vehicles or imposing fines, labeling such actions as wrongful, oppressive, and unlawful. Justice Maha further granted a perpetual injunction to protect the rights of Nigerians, ensuring their freedom of movement, presumption of innocence, and right to own property without lawful justification.

Falana urges probe into \$2.9bn P'Harcourt, Warri, Kaduna refinery repair contracts

A Senior Advocate of Nigeria and human rights lawyer, Femi Falana, has stated that the Federal Government must indict the Italian firm Maire Tecnimont SPA and Saipem Nigeria Limited for breaching a US\$2.9 billion contract for the repairs of the Port Harcourt, Warri, and Kaduna refineries. Falana claimed that both contracting companies, particularly Saipem Nigeria Limited, had caused a "colossal embarrassment" to the government by stating that they had not received a \$1.4 billion contract in August 2021 to rebuild the refinery. The senior lawyer made this assertion on Channels TV's Politics Today. He alleged fraud against both companies, noting that President Bola Tinubu announced in December that both refineries would resume production, but this has yet to occur. "In this case, I am alleging fraud and the government has a duty to the Nigerian people to indict any contracting firm that has messed up the country regarding the repairs of the refineries. If Saipem is saying, to the colossal embarrassment of the government, that you never awarded this contract to us, then you are deceiving the Nigerian people by claiming these contracts were awarded to us. We are going to ask the Federal Executive Council: if you approved the award of this contract in 2021, how can the company you approved it for now say they know nothing about it? It is a very serious embarrassment for any modern state. "The situation at Port Harcourt has become a huge embarrassment. Even last December, the President announced that those two refineries would resume production; I mean business. And that was the information given to the President. I expect that by now, those who embarrassed the President to that extent have been fired. That has to be done now," he stated. Falana had, in September, submitted requests under the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act to both companies for details of the contracts, which totalled US\$1.5 billion awarded to Maire Tecnimont SPA for the Port Harcourt refineries and US\$1.4 billion awarded to Saipem Nigeria Limited for the rehabilitation of the Warri and Kaduna refineries in April

and August 2021, respectively. However, Maire Tecnimont refused to acknowledge the FOI request, arguing that they were private companies and not bound by the FOI Act (2021) to respond to the request. In response, the senior lawyer noted that the request concerned public funds paid to the contractors.

He added that the country must invite the relevant anti-corruption agency to investigate what he described as "monumental corruption" amounting to \$2.9 billion, noting that the Federal Executive Council had not yet revoked the contracts of either company. "With profound respect to all the lawyers and their clients, the Court of Appeal has decided that if you are a private company and public funds are entrusted to you, you are bound by the provisions of the Act. So, we are going to pursue this elsewhere; of course, we are going to take it up in court." "Concerning the more embarrassing situation, in fact, where Saipem is threatening to sue me for causing reputational harm by alleging that this contract was awarded to them to fix the Warri and Kaduna refineries, my colleagues at the law firm of Ajumogobia and Okeke have also written to me, stating that these contracts were not awarded to them. Why are you still demanding information on the completion date of the contract?" "I have replied that this announcement was made by the Federal Executive Council in August 2021. After three years, you have just denied to me; you have never denied the fact that this contract was awarded to you. Up until now, the Federal Executive Council has not revoked the contracts and awarded them to another company. Our country must get to the root of what can be described as a case of monumental corruption. We are talking about \$2.9 billion for a country that is said to be broke. We must escalate this matter by inviting the relevant anti-corruption agency to assist the country in tracing these funds," he added.

Nigeria's inflation rate rises to 32.7%

The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) has declared that Nigeria's inflation rate increased to 32.7 per cent in September 2024. The NBS disclosed this in its Consumer Price Index (CPI) report for September which was released on Tuesday, October 15, 2024. The bureau stated that the CPI increased by 0.55 per cent (month-on month) compared to the August headline inflation rate. The NBS said: "On a year-on-year basis, the Headline inflation rate was 5.98% points higher compared to the rate recorded in September 2023 (26.72%) "This shows that the Headline inflation rate (year-on year basis) increased in September 2024 when compared to the same month in the preceding year (September 2023). "Furthermore, on a month-on-month basis, the Headline inflation rate in September 2024 was 2.52%, which was 0.30% higher than the rate recorded in August 2024 (2.22%)."This means that in September 2024, the rate of increase in the average price level is higher than the rate of increase in the average price level in August 2024."

NFIU RAISES ALARM OVER INFLUX OF ARMS AND AMMUNITION FROM LIBYA INTO NIGERIA

The Nigerian Financial Intelligence Unit (NFIU) has expressed concern over the inflow of weapons in the country from Libya following the yet-abated security challenges facing the country. It stressed that Nigeria is at the receiving end of terrorist activities in the Sahel and must adjust its Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Financing of Terrorism and Proliferation (AML/CFT/CPEF) strategy to include the private sector.

The Chief Executive Officer of the NFIU, Hafsat Abubakar Bakari, raised these concerns when she led a delegation to participate in a Roundtable organised by the Centre for International Private Enterprise in Washington D.C. In a statement by the NFIU Head, Strategic Communication, Sani Tukur, Bakari was quoted to have attributed the development to the escalation of Nigeria's internal security crisis. The intelligence unit boss, who said Nigeria does not need a stopgap measure in fighting terrorism, called for a sustainable measure. "Nigeria faces a significant internal crisis of banditry and kidnapping linked to terrorism and that the flow of weapons from Libya are a source of concern and is also directly associated with the escalation of Nigeria's internal security crisis," Bakari was quoted to have said. She also drew the attention of the audience to the progress made by Nigeria to strengthen its AML/CFT/CPF framework and highlighted the steps taken by the NFIU and other stakeholders to improve national measures. This, Bakari said, was to ensure the integrity of the financial system and prevent abuse by money launderers and other criminals. The CEO also highlighted that the NFIU has the political will and support to do its job but needs institutional support to achieve its mandate. She added that Nigeria needs the help of the international community in the fight against terrorism and proliferation finance in the Sahel and the Lake Chad region.

According to her, the unit was able to revive the Joint Task Force on tackling terrorism finance in the Sahel, and later this month, member states will meet in Abuja to sign an MOU to that effect. Bakari told the audience, "Nigeria does not need a stopgap measure in fighting terrorism. We need a sustainable measure, and we need your help getting there." In the same vein, the NFIU delegation was hosted by the Director of the Africa Program at the Wilson Center, Ms. Oge Onubogu on October 1.

During the meeting, the CEO and Ms. Onubogu agreed on a number of joint efforts to ensure that there is a wider recognition of Nigeria's ground-breaking reforms within the highest levels of the US public and private sectors.