

FG engages 130,000 armed guards to flush out bandits and kidnappers from forests -NSA

The Federal Government has deployed a new line of defence against insecurity with the rollout of the Forest Guards Initiative aimed at flushing out bandits, kidnappers and other criminal gangs from Nigeria's forests. Mr Ribadu made this known in Abuja on Thursday at the opening of the Federal and States Security Administrators' Meeting, FSSAM. The meeting was held at the National Counter-Terrorism Centre, NCTC, Office of the National Security Adviser. Mr Ribadu said the initiative, approved by President Bola Tinubu, marked a decisive shift in the nation's internal security strategy — targeting the forests that had long served as safe havens for violent criminals. “We are taking the fight to where the criminals hide. “The Forest Guards Initiative is a bold step to secure our forests, restore peace to rural communities, and deny bandits and kidnappers freedom of action,” he said. The NSA disclosed that more than 130,000 armed forest guards would be deployed across the country's 1,129 forest and game reserves, starting with pilot operations in Adamawa, Borno, Niger, Kebbi, Kwara, Sokoto and Yobe States. He added that the move aligns with the administration's broader goal of strengthening national security for peace and prosperity. Earlier, the Permanent Secretary, Special Services Office, Mr Muhammed Danjuma, said the initiative was being jointly coordinated by ONSA and the Federal Ministry of Environment in collaboration with state governments. Danjuma described the project as a “security game-changer” designed to reclaim forest spaces from criminal gangs, safeguard critical natural assets, and protect vulnerable rural communities. He, however, stressed that success would depend on strong political will, adequate resourcing, and collective commitment at both national and subnational levels. The three-day meeting brings together security administrators from the 36 states and the FCT to review the nation's internal security architecture and recommend practical solutions to emerging threats.

Group tasks PENGASSAN, NUPENG to build private refinery with accrued check-off dues

The Stand-Up South- South Security Group has advised the leadership of Petroleum and Natural Gas Senior Association of Nigeria (PENGASSAN) and National Union of Petroleum and Natural Gas Workers (NUPENG) to utilize the accrued members check-off dues to build a private Refinery for both unions. In a statement by Comrade Endurance Ukutegbere, National Secretary, the group gave the advice in view of the recent dispute between management

of Dangote Refinery and leadership of Petroleum and Natural Gas Senior Staff Association of Nigeria (PENGASSAN) and National Union of Petroleum and Natural Gas Workers (NUPENG) over unionization of workers in Dangote Refinery and payment of check-off dues.

According to the group: “Going forward, it has become imperative for PENGASSAN and NUPENG to start planning to build a private Refinery with the check-off dues being paid by members” “The Petroleum and Natural Gas Senior Staff Association of Nigeria (PENGASSAN), and National Union of Petroleum and Natural Gas Workers NUPENG were established the same time in 1977 and 1978 respectively, both unions can pull resources together to build a private Refinery.’ The group also alleged that some members of PENGASSAN were handling operation and maintenance in all the NNPC Refineries, and yet the NNPC Refineries are not working, who should be blamed? The FG and NNPC must stop those sabotaging the NNPC Refineries ““Both PENGASSAN and NUPENG have been collecting these check-off dues from members since inception till now, and the accrued dues if properly harnessed may as well be enough to have built or build a Refinery solely belonging to the two unions. This suggestion to PENGASSAN and NUPENG to consider building their own Refinery, it is because there is almost no hope for when the government owned moribund Refineries would come back to life” It stated: “Therefore, the PENGASSAN and NUPENG can start thinking in the direction of obtaining a Refinery license from the Federal Government. The check-off dues from all members of PENGASSAN and NUPENG can be adequately channeled to building a private Refinery in any part of the Country, preferably, in the oil rich South-South region (Niger Delta).” The group expressed appreciation to patriotic Nigerians who have built modular Refineries in the country, including Alhaji Aliko Dangote for building the World's largest single train Dangote Petroleum Refinery in Lagos State, Nigeria. “We strongly believe that PENGASSAN and NUPENG can put resources together from check-off dues to build a private modular Refinery, which will be of help to its members, create employment, and support the economy. The Nigerians who had the courage and taken the risk to invest in building Refineries in Nigeria, actually did so with a singular aim to free Nigeria from importation of refined products” “ It is possible that PENGASSAN and NUPENG can also follow this path to build a private Refinery, and we urge the Federal Government and regulatory agencies to consider issuing Refinery license to PENGASSAN and NUPENG” “ Instead of having a fight with management of Dangote Refinery, the leadership of PENGASSAN and NUPENG should rather compel the Federal Government to revive PH, Warri and Kaduna Refineries” “ Nigeria is the only Country we have, all citizens irrespective of religion, tribes and political affiliations must contribute and join hands together to build a better Nation for ourselves and unborn generations.”

Nigeria Poverty Level alarming despite Economic reforms says World Bank

Despite recent economic reforms that have boosted government revenues, about 139 million Nigerians are still living in poverty, the World Bank has said. Country Director of the Bank in Nigeria, Mathew Verghis, disclosed this at the launch of the Nigeria Development Update (NDU) in Abuja. Verghis said although the economy has recorded significant stabilization gains, including improved revenues, rising reserves and easing inflation, most households are yet to feel the impact. "Nigeria's economic growth has picked up, revenues are rising, debt indicators are improving, the foreign exchange market is stabilizing, reserves are rising, and inflation is beginning to ease. "These are big achievements. However, despite these stabilization gains, many Nigerians are still struggling. In 2025, we estimate that 139 million Nigerians live in poverty," he said. He noted that poverty levels, which began to rise in 2019 due to policy missteps and external shocks such as COVID-19, have continued to increase even after the recent reforms. Verghis stressed that to improve living standards, Nigeria must reduce inflation, especially food inflation, ensure efficient use of public resources, and expand social safety nets to cushion the poor and vulnerable. "Food inflation affects everybody but particularly the poor and has the potential to undermine political support for the reforms," he added. Presenting an overview of the report titled "From Policy to People: Bringing the Reform Gains Home," the World Bank's Lead Economist for Nigeria, Samer Matta, said gross revenues from federation allocations have risen sharply in the last eight months. However, he decried the huge deductions made by revenue-collecting agencies, noting that such outflows reduce the developmental impact of government spending. Matta described the economic outlook as cautiously optimistic, driven by steady growth, easing inflation, fiscal stability, and a stronger external position despite ongoing risks. According to the report, Nigeria's GDP growth is projected to rise modestly to 4.4 percent by 2027, supported by stronger services, a rebound in agriculture, and improved industrial activity. Inflation is expected to ease to 15.8 percent by 2027, while the fiscal deficit is forecast to average 2.7 percent of GDP between 2026 and 2027, aided by higher tax revenues and lower interest payments. The report also showed that both federal and subnational governments have increased spending, with state-level capital expenditure rising from about 1 percent of GDP in 2022 to 2.7 percent projected in 2025. However, it noted that wages and salaries account for about 70 percent of federal government spending, leaving limited room for infrastructure investment. It cautioned that the economic outlook remains exposed to risks, including oil price volatility, reform fatigue, election uncertainties, and climate shocks.

World News Day: NGE raises concerns over govt. intimidation of Journalists

The Nigerian Guild of Editors (NGE) has expressed serious concerns over the intimidation of journalists with repressive laws by government at all levels. It therefore vowed that it would always stand firm to defend the rights of journalists, promote high ethical standards in the noble profession, and resist any move, in whatever means, to harass and intimidate journalists as well as impede journalism. This was as it demanded of the government to always respect the Freedom of Information Act by freely providing journalists with requested information. The NGE which stated these in a statement marking World News Day, noted the challenges journalism as a profession faces in Nigeria, most especially the growing attempt to suppress press freedom and freedom of expression. It therefore urged the government to align itself with the United Nations Universal Day for Access to Information, just as it called on journalists to shun fake news, misinformation, disinformation, and propaganda, but should uphold the canons of journalism, including accuracy, fairness, objectivity, and facts.

The statement which was signed by Eze Anaba, and Onuohe Ukeh, President and Secretary respectively. Specifically tasked the government at all levels and individuals to stop using repressive laws, including the Cybercrime (Prohibition and Prevention, etc) Act, to harass and intimidate journalists. The NGE said; "We use this opportunity to urge the government at all levels and individuals to stop using repressive laws, to intimidate journalists. While describing the World News Day, celebrated on September 28, as a global initiative aimed at highlighting the vital role of fact-based journalism in our societies, the NGE reaffirmed its commitment to promoting high standards of editorial leadership and protecting press freedom.

The NGE commended journalists in Nigeria and worldwide who work tirelessly to bring Nigerians the truth as they recommit to the mission of promoting quality journalism and protecting the rights of journalists to operate freely. It urged Nigerians to choose truth, facts, and journalism, bearing in mind that fact-based journalism is the foundation of a healthy democracy. According to the NGE; "Fact-based journalism provides citizens with accurate and reliable information, enabling them to make informed decisions. "We also urge Nigerians to stand with journalists who face challenges in their pursuit of truth, as any success in gagging the media would put in jeopardy democracy and freedom of expression," it stated.