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Boko Haram: UN seeks support for Nigerian security forces, IDPs

February 8, 2020 Samuel Ogundipe



Berlin, Germany - November 04: Antonio Guterres, High Commissioner for Refugees of UNHCR, attends a press conference in German foreign office on November 04, 2015 in Berlin, Germany. (Photo by Michael Gottschalk/Photothek via Getty Images)

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Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has appealed to members of the United Nations to channel additional resources to support Nigerian security forces and displaced victims of the raging Boko Haram violence.

Mr Guterres' call came at a press briefing held at the African Union headquarters in Addis Ababa on Saturday afternoon. The UN chief has been meeting with African leaders as part of the ongoing African Union Summit in the Ethiopian capital.

"Our agencies will continue to provide humanitarian efforts to Boko Haram victims," Mr Guterres said while responding to a question from PREMIUM TIMES on palliatives for thousands of internally-displaced Nigerians. "We are appealing for support from UN member countries towards the crisis."

Several countries have offered support to Nigeria since the country started appealing for international support to ameliorate the pains inflicted by Boko Haram on civilians.

But redeeming the promises has proved difficult for many countries, leaving not only Nigeria but other multi-national bodies like the UN and African Union frustrated.

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The sect began its deadly campaign in July 2009, following a controversial execution of its fundamentalist leader Mohammed Yusuf. Ten years on, the insurgency has lingered, with its tactics and dynamics also becoming increasingly complex for security agencies to contain.

Although the sect began its campaign by targeting civilians, its focus since 2018 has dwelt largely on military assets and humanitarian workers.

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In March 2018, four UN aid workers were killed in a Boko Haram attack on Rann, a village in Nigeria's northeastern state of Borno, where the insurgency has been largely concentrated.

The attacks had forced the UN and other humanitarian agencies to temporarily pull their staff members from the region. It sometimes took months for some of the aid workers to be returned, further compounding the humanitarian crisis.

Security forces have also not been spared of Boko Haram ruthlessness, with Nigerian Army alone recording over 2,000 deaths of soldiers in less than three years.

The military has since instituted a new counter-terrorism strategy to reduce exposure of personnel to insurgents, with a sense of relative calm prevailing since October 2019.

Assurances

Mr Guterres reaffirmed his position that journalists and humanitarian workers are becoming increasingly targeted in armed conflicts across the world.

He also said supporting security agencies engaged in combat against deadly non-state actors should take priority amongst global issues.

Security agencies across sub-Saharan Africa should be supported in order to have the "capacity to respond better" to violent attacks on civilians, including humanitarian workers, the secretary-general said.

African Union member countries are in Addis Ababa for a week-long summit of the union's 33rd assembly.

Leaders would seek consensus solutions to the continent's challenges under this year's theme: 'Silencing the Guns: Creating Conducive Conditions for Africa's Development'.

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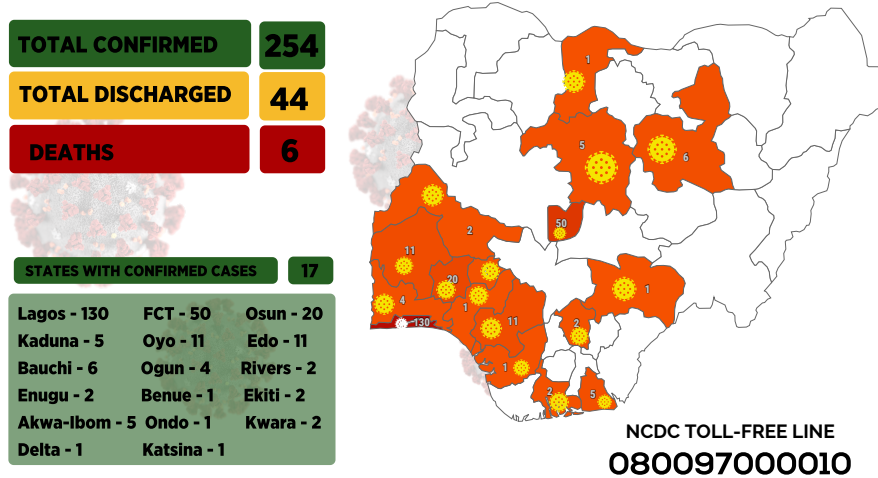
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Sorry folks, we do not need your help. Boko haram have been 'technically defeated' and 'decimated'. You shouldn't cry more than the bereaved, should you?

Our president is (was) in charge.

Anyway, thanks for the suggestions.

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