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Happening Now: Honorable Minister of Information & Culture, Alh. Lai Mohammed and Honorable Minister of @MinOfInteriorNG, @raufaregbesola addressing a joint Press Conference on security. You can follow the Press Conference live on @NTANewsNow @ARISEtv and on Radio Nigeria.



The interactive session of the joint Press Conference on security addressed by HMIC, Alh. Lai Mohammed and HM @MinOfInteriorNG, @raufaregbesola at the National Press Centre, Abuja now underway



FG MAKES PROGRESS IN WAR AGAINST TERROR, BANDITRY

Being The Text of the Press Conference Addressed by The Hon. Minister of Information and Culture, Alhaji Lai Mohammed, in Abuja on Monday, January 25th 2021.

Gentlemen of the press, good afternoon.Since this is our first meeting this year,it is appropriate to wish you all a happy and prosperous new year. We thank you for always honouring our invitation,and we look forward to a more mutually-rewarding working relationship in this 2021.

2.■As you may recollect, Mr. President - in his new year address to the nation - promised that the security apparatus and personnel of the armed forces and the police will be re-energized and reorganized, with a view to enhancing their capacity to engage, push back and...

...dismantle the operations of both internal and external extremist and criminal groups waging war against our communities in some parts of the country.

3.■ Noting that the Administration is fully aware of its responsibility to protect the lives and property of all Nigerians, Mr. President also said the government will not relent in learning and adapting to changing threats to our national security and civic wellbeing.

4.■We have decided to kick start our regular media briefings this year with the issue of security, which is one of the three major priority areas of this administration - the others being the economy and the fight against corruption.

In the words of Mr. President, insecurity as a challenge has direct repercussions on our national economic stability, growth, and development.

5.■Gentlemen, I can tell you today that the armed forces, the police and other security and intelligence agencies are ramping up their efforts to enhance security of lives and property across the country, and the results are beginning to show.

Therefore, we will be highlighting, at this press conference, the recent successes recorded by the Armed forces and other security and intelligence agencies in the fight against terrorists, bandits and other criminals.

Since the security agencies take the bashing at the slightest occasional security reversals, they also deserve our commendation and support when they live up to their billing, as they are doing presently.

6.■Since the beginning of this year, which is barely three weeks old, the Armed Forces of Nigeria have neutralized 158 criminal elements across the country. This is in addition to scores of other terrorists and armed bandits killed during air strikes.

Some 52 criminal elements were arrested, with scores of arms, ammunition and equipment recovered. Troops have also rescued a total of 17 kidnapped victims across the country.

In addition, a total of 684,856 barrels of stolen crude oil, 1,724,000 litres of stolen Automotive Gas Oil (AGO) and 500,000 litres of Dual Purpose Kerosene (DPK) have been recovered.

Furthermore, a total of 1,184 of 25kg bags of Yaraliva Nitrabor Fertilizer were impounded by the troops of the Armed Forces of Nigeria.

Please note that in addition to the numbers of neutralized criminal elements quoted above, many others were incapacitated and their camps destroyed.

7.■Gentlemen, the successes being recorded by the security and intelligence agencies in fighting insecurity did not come cheap.

They have come as a result of the unrelenting efforts and sacrifices of the gallant officers and men of the military as well as other security and intelligence agencies that conduct operations across the country.

Even though some of the troops paid the supreme price in the course of the operations, the security and intelligence forces have consistently exhibited gallantry and resilience in the various operations. We owe them a debt of gratitude.

8.■Let us now look at the successes achieved by the security and intelligence agencies according to the different geo-political zones.

9.■In the North-West, 118 armed bandits were killed in action and a total of 11 kidnapped victims were rescued since the beginning of the year.

During the same period, a cumulative total of 358 livestock and 5 assorted rifles were recovered from the armed bandits by the gallant troops in the zone.

In the same vein, a total of 11 arrests were made, and those arrested include high profile armed bandits, gun runners and bandits' collaborators.

10.■ In the North-East, within the period under review, 30 terrorists, including some of their commanders, were killed by troops, apart from the scores who were killed by air raids/attacks.

Several gun trucks were captured in addition to the 13 recently captured at Marte in Borno State, while some others were destroyed by the gallant troops.

Also, a total of 13 assorted rifles and 2 Anti-Aircraft guns were recovered from Boko Haram/ISWAP terrorists, in addition, several arrests were made - including high value targets - within the period.

Now, during the past week alone, five Boko Haram/ISWAP terrorists were eliminated by troops as they attempted to overrun Abbagajiri and Dusula towns in Damboa Local Government Area of Borno.

The troops, from the 402 Special Forces Task Force Brigade, had on Wednesday encircled some terrorists' enclaves at Abbagajiri and inflicted heavy casualties on them.

Apart from the 5 who were killed, many other terrorists escaped with gunshot wounds, while the troops also captured several guns and some Improvised Explosive Device (IED)-making materials, among others.

11.■ In the North-Central, within the period, troops of Operations SAFE HAVEN, WHIRL STROKE and THUNDER STRIKE have also achieved appreciable successes.

A total of 6 kidnapped victims were rescued, while 5 armed bandits, including militia gang leaders, were killed in action.

Equally, 11 armed bandits were arrested in the zone. Only on Saturday, the Air Component of Operation THUNDER STRIKE neutralized several armed bandits at Chikwale Forest in the Mangoro area of Chikun Local Government Area of Kaduna State.

The operation followed credible intelligence reports indicating the significant presence of armed bandits in the area, which is about 20Km West of the Kaduna-Abuja Highway.

12.■ In the South-South, troops of Operation DELTA SAFE conducted anti-crude-oil theft and illegal-oil-bunkering operations, in addition to anti-illegal-maritime activities.

In the course of their operational activities, 24 illegal refining sites, 11 wooden boats, 142 metal tanks, 17 dugout pits and 45 ovens were destroyed. Also, 30 suspects were arrested while 14 pumping machines, 13 speed boats and 13 outboard engines were recovered.

Additionally, a total of 684,856 barrels of stolen crude oil and 1,724,000 litres of illegally refined Automotive Gas Oil (AGO) as well as 500,000 litres of Dual Purpose Kerosene (DPK) were recovered.

Furthermore, a total of 1,184 of 25kg bags of Yaraliva Nitrabor Fertilizer suspected to have been smuggled from the Republic of Cameroon were impounded.

13. Similarly, in the South-West, troops of Operation AWATSE destroyed several illegal refining sites and arrested 8 boats engaged in illegal activities.

14.■ Gentlemen, please note that in addition to the kinetic military operations, which led to the successes enumerated above, the Armed Forces of Nigeria routinely carry out non-kinetic operations in form of Civil Military Cooperation Activities (CIMIC)...

... fostering several stakeholders and reconciliation meetings between hostile communities and carrying out medical outreaches in host communities.

15.■ Finally, there is no denying the successes achieved by the Armed Forces of Nigeria and other security and intelligence agencies within the period in focus, which is from Jan. 1st 2021 to the present, which is just a little over three weeks.

There is no doubt that,with this renewed determination and vigour,the security agencies are set to sustain their onslaught against terrorists,bandits and criminal elements in our country, and will not relent until peace has been restored to every troubled part of our dear nation.

Mr. President has continued to provide the security agencies with the wherewithal to successfully prosecute their various operations.

The security agencies have been discharging their responsibilities creditably. It is now up to us, as citizens, to give our undiluted support to the security agencies, who daily sacrifice to keep us safe.

16.■ I thank you for your kind attention. I will now take your questions, which must be restricted to the issue of security that we are here to address.