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NATIONWIDE PROTESTS: NHRC ISSUES ADVISORY TO FG, URGES CITIZENS & SECURITY OPERATIVES TO ESCHEW VIOLENCE

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has issued an Advisory Opinion to the Federal Government urging it to ensure that the August 1, 2024 planned nationwide protests enjoys a

peaceful atmosphere devoid of any form of human rights violations.

The Executive Secretary of the Commission, Dr. Tony Ojukwu OFR, SAN who made this disclosure on Wednesday evening also charged the law



Executive Secretary Dr. Tony Ojukwu, OFR, SAN addressing a press conference on the NHRC's Advisory Opinion to the Government Security Agencies and Citizens on the eve of the Endbagovernance protests

enforcement agencies to comply with the practices that guarantee the right to relevant human rights principles and freedom of association and assembly.

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NHRC PRESENTS JUNE 2024 HUMAN RIGHTS DASHBOARD, RAISES ALARM ON MOB ACTIONS, EXTRA-JUDICIAL KILLINGS - As complaints hit 106,604

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has expressed dissatisfaction about the disheartening trend in the level of mob justice and extra-judicial killings and other forms of human rights violations in many parts of the Country totalling 106,604 in the month of June, 2024.

The Commission urged the relevant authorities to rise up to these challenges and improve on citizens protection.

The Executive Secretary of the Commission, Dr. Tony Ojukwu OFR, SAN, who made this observation in his speech at the presentation of the June edition of the monthly Human Rights Dashboard in Abuja expressed concern about the attacks on Police stations in FCT and Ebonyi State, adding that a situation where Police stations are targeted for attacks is unacceptable and tantamount to throwing spanners in the wheels of human rights protection.

The Chief Human Rights Officer of Nigeria stated that the dashboard has



Executive Secretary Dr. Tony Ojukwu, OFR, SAN and Management Staff during the presentation of June 2024 Human Rights Dashboard

also revealed areas that require immediate attention such as freedom of expression and targeted abductions. He also noted that the situation is not different from the defilement of minors with attendant ugly human rights implications.

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NHRC URGES BORDER OFFICIALS TO PRIORITIZE HUMAN RIGHTS IN MIGRATION MANAGEMENT

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has urged border officials to integrate human rights principles into their operations, advocating for a professional and respectful approach to migration management.

During a three-day workshop titled "Training of Border Officials on Human Rights at International Borders," the Executive Secretary of the Commission, Dr. Tony Ojukwu, OFR, SAN, underscored the necessity of prioritizing human rights in the context of migration. The workshop was organized in partnership with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) as part of the PROMIS Project.

Dr. Ojukwu emphasized the importance of safeguarding the rights, dignity, and worth of all migrants, regardless of their status. He noted that human rights are fundamental to migration and encompass other core rights, including dignity, education, freedom of movement, and



Executive Secretary Dr. Tony Ojukwu, OFR, SAN with participants during a three day training of Boarder officials on human rights at International Boarders.

shelter.

Representing the Comptroller General of the Nigerian Immigration Service (NIS), Kemi Nanna Nandap, Deputy Comptroller on Migration, Alkasim Inuwa, reaffirmed the agency's commitment to promoting and protecting the rights and dignity of migrants.

The Senior Human Rights Adviser to the UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator, Adjuwa Kuffour, highlighted the critical

need to uphold human rights and the rule of law in border governance. Additionally, Laurent M.J. De Boeck, Chief of Mission at the International Organization for Migration (IOM), reiterated the IOM's dedication to providing technical support for migration-related programs and projects in Nigeria.

The workshop aimed to enhance the capacity of border officials to effectively manage borders, combat trans-border crimes, and protect human rights. ●

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NHRC PRESENTS JUNE 2024 HUMAN RIGHTS DASHBOARD, RAISES ALARM ON MOB ACTIONS, EXTRA-JUDICIAL KILLINGS

Speaking about other human rights issues of concern, Ojukwu stated "We are presenting this June Dashboard at a time when Cholera is ravaging parts of the country with over 60 deaths recorded. We are also faced with the impact of flooding in Lagos and other parts of Nigeria. These incidents have huge implications for the enjoyment of human rights".

The Executive Secretary who acknowledged the various efforts made by the federal and state governments towards addressing these human rights challenges, urged them to do more in this regard, and ensure that securing the rights of Citizens in these emergencies become the ultimate goal of every intervention.

He said that the June edition of the Dashboard will once again offer a comprehensive overview of the current state of human rights in Nigeria by providing an in-depth analysis of the human rights situation in the country over the past six months, as well as highlighting key trends, progress and areas needing further attention.

The NHRC Chief Executive Officer

attributed the sharp increase in human rights violations in the month of June to the awareness on human rights raised across the country by the 36 states offices and FCT.

"Renewed dissemination of the dashboard to the nooks and crannies of the Country by the Media, Civil Society Organisations and Partners, and partnership with community, traditional and religious organisations to raise awareness on human rights and NHRC complaints mechanism", have also accounted for the upsurge in complaints of human rights violations, he added.

Similarly, in his Presentation the Senior Human Rights Adviser to the Commission, Mr. Hilary Ogbonna observed that in the month of June 2024, the Dashboard recorded high level of Killings in five States in Nigeria including, Kaduna, Katsina, Benue, Borno, and Plateau.

The senior lawyer noted that the South East geopolitical zone recorded the lowest level of human rights violations in the month of June unlike the South South geopolitical zone which now had an

upsurge in the month under review.

According to Mr. Ogbonna, child abandonment has continued to be a major issue in the Country, saying that violation of a particular right of a child has a connected effect on the other layers of child violation since an abandoned child may face poor nutrition, education challenge, and health care issues among others.

Besides, he disclosed through the Dashboard that the North Central geopolitical zone in the month of June, 2024 led on the issue of human rights violations following the Niger State kidnapping cases at the eve of this year's Sallah celebration and for the fact that the zone houses the headquarters of the Commission and has an additional Office, Abuja Metropolitan Office, which received many complaints.

Lastly, he raised concern about the increased cases of cultism in Edo State even as he observed a general reduction in cases of kidnapping in the Country, adding that more efforts are being made to improve on the monthly Dashboard. ●

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NATIONWIDE PROTESTS: NHRC ISSUES ADVISORY TO FG, URGES CITIZENS & SECURITY OPERATIVES TO ESCHEW VIOLENCE

The Advisory Opinion was issued by the Commission pursuant to the legal and inherent powers of the National Human Rights Commission in section 5(l)(m)(o) of the National Human Rights Commission (Amendment) Act, 2010.

The Executive Secretary reminded the law enforcement agents and Citizens that Article 21 of the ICCPR and the ACHPR guarantee the right to peaceful Assembly without restrictions.

The learned Silk emphasized that Citizens do not require police permits to hold peaceful protests, notification to law enforcement about planned assemblies does not equate to seeking permission but serves as an avenue for ensuring safety

and orderly conduct of protests and assemblies.

He urged the law enforcement agencies to respect Citizens' rights while maintaining public order without infringing upon the constitutional freedoms.

Similarly, the Chief Custodian of Human Rights in Nigeria reminded the Citizens including protesters of their constitutional obligations to ensure orderly conduct, respect for law, security of other Citizens as well as public and private properties.

Buttressing the above position, the Executive Secretary cited other relevant national, regional and international laws protecting the rights of Citizens

particularly as they relate to the right to freedom of association and assembly to drive home his point that protests do not amount to crime or criminality.

The NHRC Boss further urged Citizens, the security operatives and other stakeholders to desist from any act that will bring violence in the planned protest but rather report any criminal behaviour to the Police in the interest of peace and security of the Country.

The ES said the Commission will operate a 24 hour situation room to monitor the protest while advising the public to call its toll-free number 6472 to make any complaint of human rights violations associated with the protest. ◉

OJUKWU HARPS ON COLLABORATION WITH UNHCR-- RECEIVES COUNTRY REPRESENTATIVE

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has emphasized the importance of its partnership with the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) in addressing human rights and humanitarian challenges in Nigeria, particularly in response to the insurgency in the North East.

During a visit by UNHCR Representative Arjun Jain to the Commission, NHRC Executive Secretary Dr. Tony Ojukwu OFR, SAN, highlighted that the NHRC has worked closely with UNHCR since the escalation of the insurgency around 2012 to 2015, launching humanitarian projects in Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe States.

According to him, these initiatives successfully addressed issues such as sanitation, health, education, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV), and access to justice among others. He described the partnership with UNHCR as "most consistent and trusted" and expressed NHRC's willingness to continue supporting UNHCR's efforts.

Special Adviser to the Executive Secretary and Head of Monitoring, Benedict Agu, expressed concerns about funding constraints that have impacted the human rights monitoring project in the insurgency-affected states. "Due to financial limitations, the number of monitors has been reduced from 40 to 25,



Executive Secretary Tony Ojukwu, OFR, SAN hands over a pack of human rights documents & publications to UNHCR representative, Arjun Jain when the latter paid a working visit to the NHRC

and human rights training programmes for law enforcement agents have also been affected" he said. Agu also stressed the importance of these trainings in ensuring that human rights are upheld by military and security forces in the region.

Additionally, Mr. Agu noted that the lack of project vehicles has hampered the ability to conduct human rights monitoring effectively in the North East. He underscored the need for better resources to carry out these essential activities. Meanwhile, the Director of Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights at NHRC, Mr. Harry Obe, emphasized the

distinct role of the NHRC compared to Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), noting its direct link to government policy and quasi-judicial functions.

In response, UNHCR Representative Arjun Jain acknowledged the challenges of funding but stressed that proper planning and coordination are key to executing humanitarian projects in Nigeria. He also highlighted the importance of focusing on other regions in Nigeria, such as Benue and Cross River States, where humanitarian crises involving refugees and displaced persons are prevalent. ◉

NASS, NHRC DECRY SPATE OF ATTACKS ON SCHOOLS, HAIL SAFE SCHOOL DECLARATION

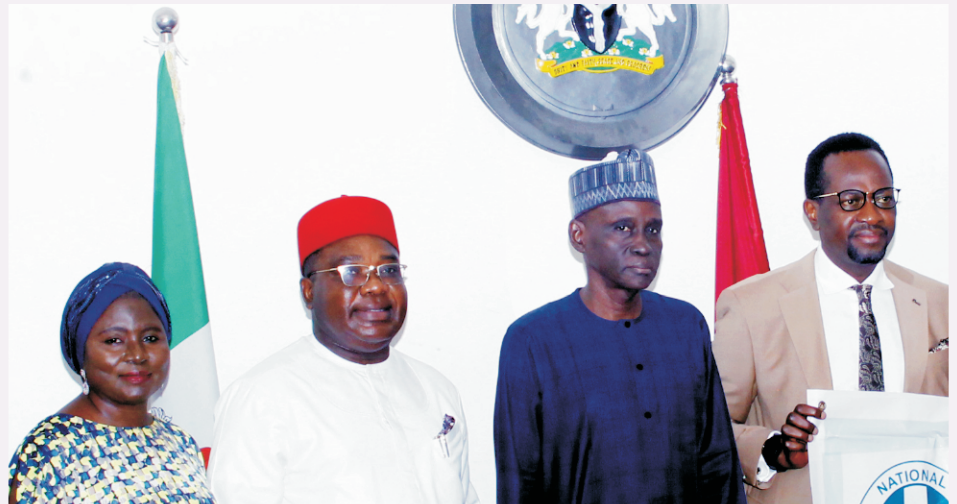
The National Human Rights Commission has lamented that Nigeria has experienced numerous attacks on Schools particularly in regions affected by insurgency, saying that in 2024 alone, the Country recorded nothing less than five various attacks on different Schools and in different States.

The Commission also decried the kidnapping of hundreds of students in Kuriga in Kaduna State and the recent kidnapping of students of Confluence University of Science and Technology (CUSTECH), Osara, Okene in Kogi State.

The Executive Secretary of the Commission, Dr. Tony Ojukwu OFR, SAN stated this during the advocacy visit to the Chairman, Senate Committee on Judiciary, Human Rights and Legal Matters on Safe Schools Declaration (SSD) Legal Framework.

The SSD is an international initiative aimed at promoting and protecting the right education during conflict, it also ensures that educational institutions remain sanctuaries of learning and growth, free from the threats of violence and conflict.

According to the learned Silk, it is within our Schools that the leaders, innovators,



Executive Secretary Dr. Tony Ojukwu, OFR, SAN and some management staff during the advocacy visit to the chairman, senate committee on Judiciary, Human Rights and Legal Matters on Safe Schools Declaration (SSD) legal framework

and Citizens of tomorrow are nurtured, therefore ensuring students access to safe education is crucial particularly now when bandits/kidnappers simply walk into Schools, abducts students without resistance from School authorities or security operatives.

"These abductions usually disrupt education and also have a long-term impact on student's educational outcome and socio-economic development of the Country. Therefore, it is our collective duty to ensure that every child has access to a safe and conducive learning", the

Executive Secretary said.

In his response, the Chairman Senate Committee on Judiciary, Human Rights and Legal Matters, Senator Mohammed Monguno said that the Legislature would at all-time listen to the yearnings of the people to ensure their wellbeing and protection.

The lawmaker noted that with the issue of insecurity in the Country, the legislature would work round the clock together with the Commission to ensure that the issues of kidnappings and attacks are addressed head on, and pupils and students would study under a safe environment. ◉

STATE OFFICES AT A GLANCE

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