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General News

Voter registration violence shows that we have to sit up for 2024 elections – Peace Council

The National Peace Council has underscored the importance of addressing the isolated incidents of violence occurring at some registration centres during the current limited voter registration exercise.

They emphasise that if these incidents are not contained, they could escalate and affect the integrity of the upcoming December 7 elections.

In an interview with Citi News, George Amoh, the Executive Secretary of the Peace Council said “For us at the peace council, whenever an issue like that comes up, like the one that happened, unfortunately, at some part of the Ashanti Region, are early warning signs, you do not downgrade them.

“You have to carefully assess the potential they have to affect the elections in December. They are signs that we have to sit up but they are not signs to discourage

us,” he stated.

Mr. Amoh also urged the Electoral Commission to make the most of the available opportunities to ensure that a greater number of eligible individuals get registered.

This follows the Electoral Commission (EC) stating that the violence witnessed during the limited voter registration period justifies its proposal to exclusively use the Ghana Card for registration.

The commission noted that it had witnessed violence at some centres linked to challenges regarding the age and citizenship status of some registrants.

However, the commission believes that such incidents could have been avoided if the Ghana Card had been the sole document required for registration.

The Executive Secretary of the council, George Amoh, speaking to

Citi News, stressed the importance of utilising existing opportunities to include as many eligible voters as possible who are not yet registered

“What we should be concerned about is how we can contain, how we can allow for spillover or not spread in order that we cannot contain it. So, I would like to encourage the Electoral Commission to continue with the processes that it has laid down for all these years to ensure that

they get the right people, I mean those who are supposed to be on the register. None should be disenfranchised because of somebody’s issue.

“So, we must maximise the opportunities that we have to get as many people who are yet to be on the register to be on the register. I think that should be the approach of the EC,” he stated.

Source: The Independent Ghana / Sebastian Akaho-Tay



Peace Council Members

Gov’t set to launch phase two of \$150m Ketu South sea defence project

Efforts are underway to begin Phase II of the Agavedzi-Blekusu Sea Defence Project in Ketu South, aimed at safeguarding coastal communities from recurrent tidal wave threats.

The Parliamentary Select Committee on Works and Housing, acting on a directive from the Speaker of Parliament, visited the area on May 13, 2024. The visit was a response to the urgent appeals from the Members of Parliament for Ketu South, Keta, and Anlo, who are determined to prevent further coastal erosion.

The most recent tidal wave event occurred on March 4, 2022, inundating 85 homes and displacing over 300 residents in Agavedzi and Salakope.

Isaac Asiamah, the Committee Chairman, announced the government’s allocation of \$150 million for the defence project

in Ketu South and neighbouring areas. He confirmed that the initiation of phase II is on the horizon.

Asiamah highlighted the project’s urgency, which includes an 8-kilometre extension and the construction of a cold store, fishing market, and clinic, totaling \$83 million.

He lamented the stalled progress since the Committee’s last visit and underscored the importance of protecting this region, which holds great promise for tourism and transport.

“We will not allow this critical part of Ghana to go to waste,” Asiamah declared.

Committee Member Emmanuel Kwasi Bedzrah voiced his concerns about the steep cost of continuing the defence project and called for judicious resource management to safeguard a broader coastal area effectively.

The sea defence initiative began in October 2010 and concluded four years later, costing approximately 41 million Euros.

The initial phase, known as the Blekuso Project, was completed in 2015, with plans to extend the defence line by 8 kilometres.

The region has faced severe challenges due to tidal waves, with

significant damage to property and livelihoods.

Notably, in June 2015, tidal waves destroyed 56 houses in Dzita and Fuveme, leaving many homeless. The crisis worsened in November 2021, when waves displaced around 3,000 people in the Keta and Ketu Municipalities.

Source: The Independent Ghana / Abigail Twaumwaa Ampofo



File Photo

General News

Newly imported train from Poland to be commissioned in June - Peter Amewu

The Minister of Railways Development, John Peter Amewu, has revealed that the train imported from Poland, which was involved in an accident during a self-acceptance test, is set to be operational by the second week of June. The government anticipates receiving new parts for repairs shortly.

During a test run on the Tema-Mpakadan railway line, the train collided with a stationary track, raising concerns about its readiness for service.

As a result of the incident, the driver of the Hyundai truck involved in the collision was arrested and subsequently sentenced to six months in jail.

In an exclusive interview with Asaase Radio's Nana Oye Ankrah, Amewu shared that engineers are diligently working on repairing the damaged train. He assured

that efforts are underway to ensure the train's functionality and safety before commissioning it for service.

"The train will bridge very soon. It was quite unfortunate that we had that nasty scene where the train had to run into a stationary vehicle. I think you were all there to see it," Amewu stated.

"So what we have done now is order the parts. The parts will be brought in in the next three, or four weeks. The area or the part that got damaged," he continued.

The minister also projected that the commissioning of the line could take place anywhere from the first to the second week of June, stressing the importance of the timely arrival of the parts for the restoration process.

"We still estimate that commissioning of the line will be coming in any time from the first

week to the second week in June. So the arrival of the parts is what we are waiting for. Immediately we get the parts in, the train will be pulled back too," Amewu said.

The Tema-Mpakadan railway line aims to enhance the smooth transportation of goods and travellers, fostering economic growth and regional integration.

Despite recognizing the setback triggered by the accident, Amewu expressed faith in the repair team's expertise to fix the train.

He guaranteed the public of the government's dedication to promptly finishing the repairs and putting the train into operation.

Source: The Independent Ghana / Amanda Cartey



New imported train

GJA mounts pressure on A-G to reveal investigative report on Ahmed Suale's murder

President of the Ghana Journalists Association (GJA), Albert Kwabena Dwumfour, has urged the Attorney-General to disclose the investigative report on the murder of investigative journalist Ahmed Suale.

The Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Godfred Yeboah Dame, recently stated that no prosecutable docket has been submitted to his office regarding Suale's murder, which occurred on January 16, 2019.

The Minister explained that while the investigation is ongoing, four suspects initially detained were later released on police enquiry bail due to a lack of eyewitness identification.

President Dwumfour criticized the Attorney-General's reluctance to release the investigative report, especially after stating that the docket is not suitable for prosecution.

He also expressed disappointment in the security agencies for what he perceives as a lack of

seriousness in addressing attacks on journalists.

The GJA continues to advocate for justice for Suale and other journalists who have faced violence or intimidation in the course of their work.

"As we speak today, we still haven't gotten anywhere with investigations. The Attorney-General will come out and tell you that he has still not received any docket fit for prosecution. If you have not received a docket fit for prosecution, why don't you make the docket you have received known to the public? It means that there's still a docket, if it's not fit for prosecution, give us the state of the investigative report on the matter.

"So that at least we can all go to sleep and say that this is what the police have gotten to. We are in this country where police officers were shot dead and in a matter of 24/48 hours, police have arrested [suspects]. Without any lead, they have been arrested

and prosecuted, and some are on remand. So, that should tell you the unseriousness the security agencies or companies attach to the attacks on the media. This very real," he pointed out.

He also questioned the last time a politician was arrested for assaulting a journalist.

"When was the last time you heard that a politician or a preparator of an attack on the media has been

placed behind bars? They don't take issues concerning the media very seriously."

Suale was tragically killed by two unidentified individuals on a motorbike with a concealed license plate in Madina.

His murder, a lustrum ago, sparked outrage and raised concerns about press freedom and journalist safety in Ghana.

Source: The Independent Ghana / Andy Ogbarmey-Tetty



Godfred Yeboah Dame, Attorney-General and Minister for Justice

General News

Artisans at Suame Magazine petition Otumfuo, Bawumia over eviction threats

Thousands of artisans at Suame Magazine Zone 13 in the Ashanti Region are on the brink of eviction due to claims by a private developer, 'The Gosie Group', asserting ownership of parts of the industrial hub.

The artisans, with decades-long operations in the area, are urgently appealing to Vice-President Mahamudu Bawumia for intervention to halt their potential displacement.

Their occupation of the land is safeguarded by Executive Instrument (E.I. 36), necessitating a parliamentary amendment for any eviction, yet a recent court ruling in favour of the Gosie Group has escalated tensions in the

enclave.

Having established their businesses since 1989, the artisans fear the jeopardy of their entire livelihoods if forced to vacate.

"I plead with Nana Addo and Bawumia to honour their promises. They pledged to support us, but they have forgotten about the promises they made to us. For us, the illiterate, they don't regard us anymore. They should provide us with employment opportunities and put a stop to the digitalisation conversation because it does not include us. If Bawumia wants to win the 2024 elections, he must help us, or we vote against him," said one artisan.

Chairman of Suame Magazine

Zone 13, Eric Arhin emphasised the need for authorities, including the Asantehene and VP Bawumia, to prevent what could spiral into a humanitarian and economic crisis.

"We are urging the authorities to intervene so we can continue our work."

Former Vice Chairman New Patriotic Party (NPP) Ash/

Reg Regional Director of the National Disaster Management Organisation, Kwabena Nsenkyire has visited to assuage tensions, pledging governmental efforts toward resolution but stressing the necessity of VP Bawumia's direct engagement with the affected artisans.

Source: The Independent Ghana / Sebastian Akaho-Tay



File Photo

Bright Simons submits RTI request for information on KMA's 'missing' GHC3.6m

Lawyers representing Vice President of IMANI Africa, Bright Simons, have submitted a Right to Information (RTI) request under Act 989, seeking detailed information on the use of GH¢3.6 million belonging to the Kumasi Metropolitan Assembly (KMA).

The funds, reportedly held by Fidelity Bank Ghana, have sparked controversy amid allegations of the bank's inability to account for the money.

According to reports, KMA raised concerns regarding the GH¢3.6 million, which is said to be part of an GH¢8 million loan obtained from Fidelity Bank for the redevelopment of the KMA-Krofrom Market Project.

The report indicates that only GH¢5 million was disbursed for the project, leaving the whereabouts of the remaining amount unknown.

Fidelity Bank came out in a statement to deny any foul play and clarified that: "there is no missing or unaccounted for amount of GH¢3.6 million as indicated in

KMA's release. The entire amount of GH¢ 8.6 million disbursed for Phase 1 of the project comprised GH¢4 million disbursed from Fidelity Bank's approved facility of GH¢5 million and the KMA's own funds of GH¢4.6 million disbursed from their contribution of GH¢5 million towards the project."

But lawyers for Bright Simons, Gratia Law Consult, in their request indicated that the applicant demands "a detailed and

thorough understanding of these arrangements [between Fidelity Bank and KMA] to assist his further factual deductions and to pursue his public interest objectives."

The lawyers added that they expect the KMA to fully cooperate and grant the request devoid of supposed delays because "for the avoidance of doubt, we believe, on careful consideration of the statute and the circumstances at hand, that Fidelity Bank, because of its dealings with KMA and other

state-owned institutions, qualifies to be listed as a "relevant private body" within the meaning of the term in Act 989 and, at any rate, is a quasi-public institution in view of its receipt of public resources through KMA and others.

"There are, therefore, ample statutory and public policy grounds for the requested information to be disclosed in full, without exception or exemption, and without any regard to commercial secrecy."

Source: The Independent Ghana



Bright Simons, Vice President, IMANI Africa

General News

Pollution, power outages to blame for prolonged water shortages in Nsawam - GWCL

The Ghana Water Company Limited (GWCL) has announced proactive measures to address water supply challenges in the Nsawam township, prompted by widespread concerns among residents about prolonged water shortages.

The Communications Manager for GWCL, Stanley Martey, expressed apprehension about the difficulties encountered at the Nsawam treatment plant, which not only caters to Nsawam but also neighbouring areas like Pokuase and Amasaman.

In an interview with the media, Mr. Martey pinpointed two main factors contributing to the water supply issues in Nsawam and nearby towns: pollution of the Densu River and recent power supply disruptions.

“We have a very serious challenge with the Nsawam treatment plant that serves the entire Nsawam

area, Pokuase, Amasaman and all that. That plant is less than 10 years old but unfortunately, all the pumps broke down at the same time so we are replacing them.

Mr. Martey revealed ongoing efforts to install new pumps, anticipating an improvement in water supply once the installation

is completed.

“The pumps broke down as a result of the pollution of the water in the Densu River around the Nsamam area. And then there are the numerous power outages that we have been experiencing. So we have had to change all the pumps in that area. And you know, pumps

are quite expensive.

“We needed to import them into the system. So we are almost done with the installation of the pumps and when we are done, at least water flow to the Nsawam municipality will improve.”

Source: The Independent Ghana / Phoebe Martekie Doku



File Photo

Politicians own about 70% of Ghana’s media - GJA president reveals

President of the Ghana Journalists Association (GJA), Albert Kwabena Dwumfour, has disclosed that around 60% to 70% of media outlets in Ghana are owned by politicians.

Dwumfour expressed his concern about the dominance of politicians in the media sector and the potential consequences of such ownership on the transparency of media funding.

“...But we at the helm of affairs, we know that as we speak to you, about 60% to 70% of the ownership of media houses are all politicians,” Mr. Dwumfour disclosed.

He warned of the dangers of political influence going unchecked within the media, which could lead to significant control over public discourse by politicians.

In his statement, Dwumfour called

on the National Communication Authority (NCA) to make public the list of media financiers to clear any doubts and confirm his claims.

“I have always said that the NCA must sit up, they are working for the public. And for that matter, it is important that at least we know the brains, financiers, or

faces behind most of the media houses.

Regardless, of whether they like it or not, we know. If they want to put it on record they want to make it an official document.

“For us not to be guessing or maybe silence some of these rumours, or guess that will help,”

he asserted.

Furthermore, Dwumfour revealed that some non-politicians are acting as proxies for politicians in the media industry.

“Some of them, non-politicians are actually fronting for politicians,” he said.

Source: The Independent Ghana / Abigail Twaumwaa Ampofo



Albert Kwabena Dwumfour, President, GJA

General News

Nursing trainees may receive their allowances by next week - Bawumia

The Vice President and flag bearer of the New Patriotic Party (NPP), Dr. Mahamudu Bawumia, has declared that the outstanding nursing trainee allowances for 2024 will be disbursed this Thursday, May 16, 2024, to nursing and teacher trainees across the nation.

These allowances, reinstated by the Akufo-Addo government after being cancelled by the previous Mahama administration, have been delayed for several months.

During a significant gathering with the youth in Nalerigu, situated in the North East Region, where numerous nursing and teacher trainees were present, Dr. Bawumia announced this latest development to a chorus of cheers.

"On the nursing training allowance, we have been able to agree on what to do come this Thursday," Dr. Bawumia said, as the crowd

cheered.

"The Minister of Finance has sent me a message which says that on Thursday, the Controller and Accountant General is going to transfer 177 million Ghana Cedis to the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Health will transfer it to the Nursing trainees," he said.

"The NPP has demonstrated clearly that it is the party which cares for the youth and have you at heart, through many of our policies, which support you," he said.

"My opponent in December and his party, the NDC, cancelled the nursing and teacher trainee allowances. But we came in and restored it. We are committed to it and I am very committed to it that is why I have been following up on it," he added.

The NPP Flagbearer's announcement sparked excitement during his interaction

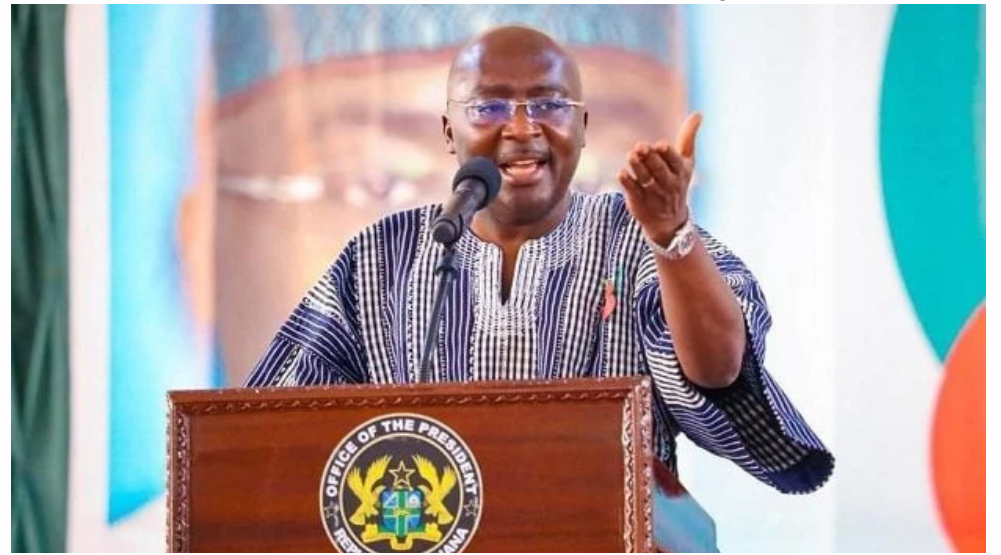
with the youth, especially among the nurses, who openly celebrated and chanted Dr. Bawumia's name in appreciation.

After the announcement, Dr. Bawumia reminded the youth and the trainees that the NPP, with its demonstrated commitment to pro-poor policies, cares for nursing and teacher trainees as

well as the youth, contrasting this with the approach of Mahama and the NDC.

"So I believe that, in shaa Allah, by next week, all of you should be receiving the nursing trainee allowances, and they will be in your accounts."

Source: The Independent Ghana / Amanda Cartey



Dr. Mahamudu Bawumia, Vice President of Ghana and Flagbearer of NPP

Some political parties using guarantor system to register minors, foreigners - EC

Deputy Chair of the EC in charge of Corporate Services, Dr. Bossman Eric Asare, has noted that the guarantor system continues to dominate the forms of identification, posing a threat to the validity of the voter register.

He explained that "this is something the Commission is not proud of because it is used by political parties and certain persons to facilitate the registration of unqualified persons such as minors and foreigners."

Dr. Asare expressed the Commission's hope that in future registration exercises, the guarantor system would not be the sole identity document, aiming to reduce chaos in registration centres regarding the ages and nationalities of applicants.

The Commission also appealed to political parties to refrain from using violence to challenge the eligibility of applicants,

urging them to use appropriate procedures to resolve such cases.

Furthermore, the Commission appealed to parents to ensure that their children under 18 years old do not attempt to register.

As of the close of business on Sunday, May 12, 2024, the Electoral Commission (EC) registered a total of 251,149 new voters, averaging 45,000 registrations per day.

Of this total, 135,898 (54.11 per cent) are female, and 115,251 (45.89 per cent) are male. The EC also registered 400 persons with disabilities nationwide.

In terms of regional breakdown, the Greater Accra region registered 33,899 voters (13.5 per cent); North East, 6,928 (2.8 per cent); Upper East, 10,646 (4.2 per cent); Northern, 19,491 (7.8 per cent); Bono, 8,972 (3.6 per cent); Bono East, 9,681 (3.9 per cent); Volta, 12,190 (4.9 per cent); Upper West, 8,474 (3.4 per cent); Eastern,

25,625 (10.2 per cent); Central, 27,984 (11.1 per cent); and Ahafo, 6,273 (2.5 per cent).

The remaining registrations are Ashanti, 44,232 (17.6 per cent); Western North, 9,134 (3.6 per cent); Oti, 7,259 (2.9 per cent); Savannah, 5,261 (2.1 per cent); and Western Region, 15,100 (6.0 per cent).

Dr. Bossman Eric Asare noted that first-time voters, aged 18 to 21, constituted the majority of registered voters, with 221,066 registrations within the first six days.

During the first five days of the registration exercise, 98,926 applicants (39.39 per cent) used the Ghana Card, while 622 applicants (0.25 per cent) used a passport. The guarantor system was used by 151,601 applicants (60.36 per cent).

Regarding challenges, out of a total of 2,935 cases, the Greater Accra Region recorded the highest number with 524 challenged cases.

Source: The Independent Ghana / Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey



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Business

Adopting dollar as Ghana's currency won't stabilise the economy - ASEPA

The Alliance for Social Equity and Public Accountability (ASEPA) has dismissed proposals from Dr. John Kwabena Kwakye, the Director of Research at the Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA), who suggested adopting the US Dollar as Ghana's currency to stabilise the economy.

The Executive Director of ASEPA, Mensah Thompson, argued that Ghana's economic instability is mainly due to prolonged fiscal irresponsibility and excessive borrowing, rather than switching to the US Dollar.

Speaking to the media, Mr Thompson attributed Ghana's economic challenges to the fiscal mismanagement of former Finance Minister Ken Ofori-Atta, the actions of the Bank of Ghana's governor, and President Akufo-

Addo.

He emphasized, "We are here not because our currency is not held in dollars, we are here because of the recklessness of Ken Ofori-Atta, the governor of the Central Bank and President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo. The root cause of our problem is recklessness, borrowing and people who just don't understand simple economic management who implemented faze economic restructuring that has thrown the economy into a cyclic spiral now going back into a debt hole and the solution is not dollarisation.

"I have always asked myself, why did the government, after all the recklessness of Ken Ofori-Atta, still decide that if they were going under a debt restructuring programme, Ken Ofori-Atta was the person they

were going to allow to oversee that debt restructuring, I was surprised when he decided to restructure our domestic debt."

Mr Thompson criticized the decision to entrust Ken Ofori-Atta with overseeing debt restructuring, given the previous

fiscal mismanagement.

Moreover, he condemned the restructuring of Ghana's domestic debt, labelling it detrimental to the stability of the Cedi.

Source: The Independent Ghana / Phoebe Martekie Doku



File Photo

Fuel prices to begin to fall from May 16 – IES projects

The Institute for Energy Security has predicted a slight decrease in fuel prices starting May 16, 2024.

This reduction has been attributed to the decline in prices of refined petroleum products on the international market, which outweighs the impact of cedi depreciation.

"Following the changes recorded on the international market for refined petroleum product, Gasoline [petrol], Gasoil [diesel] and Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) recorded a fall of about 5.68%, 4.51% and 4.72% respectively".

"In the second pricing-window for May 2024, ex-pump is expected to fall given the reductions recorded for refined petroleum products on the international market, which is wider than Ghana cedi depreciation", IES stated.

The Global Standard & Poor (S&P) Platts tracking of petroleum products performance on the world fuels market has shown a significant fall in prices for petrol, diesel, and LPG.

Specifically, the price of petrol

has decreased by 5.68%, diesel by 4.51%, and Liquefied Petroleum Gas by 4.72%.

Comparative analysis of the data indicates a notable decline in the prices of all petroleum products on the world fuel market.

In the local fuel market, the first pricing window for May 2024 saw marginal increments in the price of some petroleum products.

The Institute for Energy Security (IES) computation of petroleum products for May 2024 showed

petrol and diesel selling at GH¢14.22 and GH¢14.00 per litre respectively, while LPG was priced at GH¢15.05 per kilogramme.

Source: The Independent Ghana



File Photo

International

SA universal health bill to face legal challenges

South Africa's main opposition party, alongside a number of labour and business groups, have said they will take legal action against a bill aimed at providing universal health coverage.

Earlier, we reported that South African President Cyril Ramaphosa was due to sign the contentious proposal into law on Wednesday.

The National Health Insurance (NHI) bill seeks to give South Africans "of all races, rich or poor and legal long-term residents" access to quality healthcare. Its implementation would cost billions of dollars.

On Tuesday, the Democratic Alliance (DA) party leader said his party would challenge the law

"all the way to the Constitutional Court".

"Our legal team was briefed months ago already and will file our legal challenge against this devastating legislation without delay," John Steenhuisen added.

Elsewhere, trade union Solidariteit said it had warned Mr Ramaphosa that it would take legal action against the bill "within an hour" of it being signed on Wednesday.

The South African Health Professionals Collaboration (SAHPC), which represents 25,000 healthcare workers in the public and private sectors, is quoted by news agency Reuters as saying it was also exploring a legal challenge.

According to the Reuters news agency, the group said the bill would "reverse, rather than progress, equitable, quality healthcare in South Africa".

Supporters of the bill hail it as a generational change that will reverse persistent inequality.

The South African Medical

Association Trade Union, which represents most public sector doctors, called it "a monumental shift towards achieving universal health coverage and ensuring that every South African has access to quality healthcare irrespective of their socio-economic status".

Source: BBC



File Photo

Kidnapped Nigerian university students rescued

Nigerian security forces have rescued students kidnapped from a university in northern Kogi state, along with other victims held by the abductors, the army and state government said on Sunday.

Kogi information commissioner Kingsley Femi Fanwo said security forces were involved in a shootout with the armed gang that carried out Thursday's abduction at Confluence University of Science and Technology.

The state had enlisted the help of local hunters who know the Kogi terrain, and a security agent and hunter were wounded.

The Nigerian army said in a separate statement that troops, other security agencies and local

vigilantes were involved in "a fierce firefight" with the kidnappers.

"The superior firepower of the troops led to the kidnappers abandoning nine of the kidnapped students, who were subsequently rescued," the army said.

Source: Reuters



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