



**FEDERAL MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR (PRESS & PR)**

PRESS RELEASE

**EDUCATION MINISTER CALLS FOR PROTECTION OF SCHOOLS,
RELEASE OF STUDENTS, TEACHERS IN CAPTIVITY, PROMISES
GOVT'S COMMITMENT TO SAFE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT**

The Nigeria Minister of Education, Adamu Adamu has stated that the Nigeria government is committed and believes in the protection of schools and learning centres across the country from violence and all forms of attacks.

The minister in a statement commemorating the first International Day for the Protection of Education from Attack, stated that the protection of Learners, Teaching and non-Teaching personnel, schools and learning centres from all forms of attacks was an obligation of government and all relevant stakeholders.

While acknowledging that schools and other learning facilities in different locations in the country had over the years been subjects of attacks by parties in conflicts and communal clashes especially Boko Haram, Bandits, thugs and unknown individuals and groups, the Minister admonished that there is need for all stakeholders to appreciate and observe the sanctity of learning centres.

He decried the abduction of CHIBOK GIRLS, Leah Sharibu and other Learners and teachers at places of learning as an infringement on their rights to quality education and called for their immediate release by their abductors.

Adamu Adamu stated that Nigeria is committed to observing all existing international protocols on education and freedom of learning as well as child rights to quality education in a protective environment.

Calling attention to the fact that Nigeria is signatory to most of the existing global and continental instruments on education and child rights, the Minister recalled that the country has domesticated most of the instruments at the national level and integrated some others into our national laws and policies.

"As a nation, we are committed to observing all relevant international conventions for the protection of schools and learning centres and facilities from attack.

We recognize the interdependencies of several conventions, treaties and other instruments that would make this possible, the Minister reiterated

"Nigeria is a signatory to many of these instruments such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC); Convention against Discrimination in Education (CADE); International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR); International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, among others – Adamu Adamu added.

"According to the Minister, apart from the CRC's complementing Optional protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict, there are other instruments such as the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child to which we are signatories and are obliged to observe as a responsible country."

Recalling that Nigeria was one of the first countries to endorse the Safe School Declaration in 2015, Adamu Adamu, said the country is committed to and is making efforts at developing clear and enforceable guidelines that will guarantee the protection of schools and learning centres from attacks.

"One of the areas we have taken steps at ensuring the protection of schools from attack is the proposed amendment to the Armed Forces Act. We are doing this through the Nigerian Education in Emergency (EiE) Working Group. When passed, the amended law, would end the use of schools by the armed forces and would help to prevent attacks on education by opposing armed groups, and limit disruptions to students' learning." – Adamu Adamu assured.

The minister called on different parties in conflicts across the country, to observe the sanctity of learning centres and facilities.

He appealed to armed groups holding abducted students and teachers to release the captives, who he described as innocent casualties of armed insurgency”.

He also called on communities to take ownership of the protection of schools in their environments as they remain the first point of contacts with the school as well as first-line responders in the event of attack.

He also called on security agencies to further make more commitments and efforts at ensuring safety of schools and learning centres.

Adamu Adamu, praised the sacrifices of students, teachers and non-teaching staff who have fallen victims of violent attacks describing them as fallen heroes of the many instances of attacks on learning facilities.

CONCEPT NOTES

September 9 was declared as the International Day for the protection of Education from Attack by a unanimous decision of the UN General Assembly to raise awareness on the plight of millions of children living in countries affected by conflict. The General Assembly resolution affirms that governments have the primary responsibility to provide protection and ensure inclusive and equitable quality education at all levels to all learners, especially those in vulnerable situations.

Nigeria was part of the first group of 37 states that “endorsed” the Safe Schools Declaration (SSD) on May 29, 2015 and signed the letter of endorsement on March 8, 2018. The Federal Ministry of Education chairs a working group, the Education in Emergency (EiE) Working Group which has as part of its priorities the implementation of the letters of the SSD.



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