

Nigerian president names new defence chief

ABUJA, NIGERIA: Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan announced on Thursday he had appointed a new chief of defence staff as the country faces a deadly insurgency by Islamist extremist group Boko Haram.

No reason was given for replacing existing chief of defence staff Oluseyi Petinrin in a presidency statement, though defence spokesman Yerima Mohammed said he had reached the end of his term.

The new defence chief was named as Vice Admiral O.S. Ibrahim, who had been chief of naval staff. New naval and air chiefs were also named, while Chief of Army Staff Lieutenant General O.A. Ihejirika is to remain in his post.

Jonathan "has approved the following appointments in the armed forces," the presidency statement said before listing the names.

Boko Haram's insurgency has been blamed for more than 1,400 deaths since 2010 in central and northern Nigeria.

A massacre earlier this week in a student housing area of the northeastern town of Mubi that left at least 40 people dead has also stirred outrage in Nigeria, but there was no sign the defence appointments were linked.

Source: *AFP* via I-Net Bridge

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