

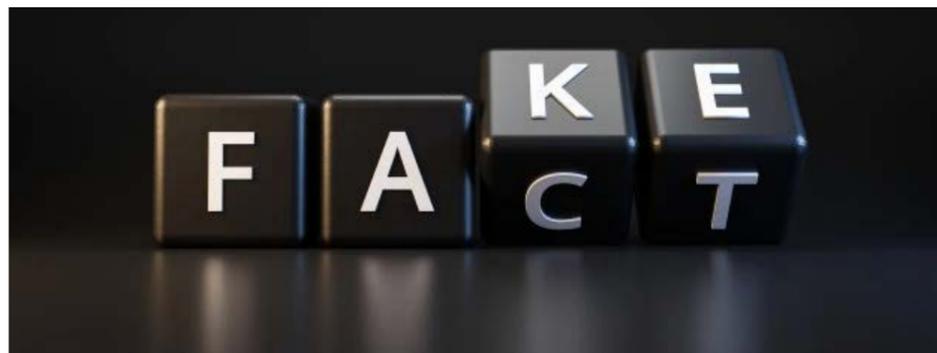
CDD NEWSLETTER

FOR THE WEEK ENDING FEBRUARY 14, 2021

Nigeria's long-running battle with disinformation and misinformation did not start in recent times. Before the outbreak of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, disinformation merchants in Nigeria had always had the intent to stoke animosity and hate between the different ethnic nationalities across the country.



Fake news which was most of the time served with a political undertone is mostly aimed at setting the country's ethnic and religious groups against each other. With this still, not in check, fake news around the COVID-19 pandemic is threatening efforts by the government and health authorities, concerned groups to bring the pandemic under control.



In cases like this, false information shared unintentionally, becomes especially harmful in a society facing a health crisis. This was evident during the Ebola crisis in Nigeria and across West Africa with similar dynamics playing out with the recent disease outbreak.

First, it was fake news around the COVID-19, its prevention and treatment and now, its vaccines remain a threat to defeating the rampaging virus.

Like the Centre noted in a previous report titled *"Health Misinformation: False Stories from Ebola to Coronavirus"* "Nigeria's institutions are weak. The country has a history of low

trust in government, low social capital, elite division, and low government responsiveness. These leave the country especially vulnerable to the essential challenge coronavirus presents: optimally allocating relief during a health pandemic. The distrust in government also means that citizens are more likely to seek alternative solutions rather than look to the government to provide them. Misinformation propagates more rapidly in such an environment.”

THE FACTS

For instance, on Tuesday, February 9, 2021, fact-checkers at the Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD) spotted a headline on MSNBC’s YouTube channel, which trended on several WhatsApp groups in Nigeria. The report, published to stoke fear in the heart of the readers claimed that Billionaire philanthropist Bill Gates had warned that a “Next Pandemic is coming after COVID-19”.

However, investigations by CDD fact-checkers show that Bill Gates did not state that the “Next Pandemic is coming after COVID-19” but urged the world to be ready as there would be another pandemic.

He said in response to a question on the key steps to take concerning the pandemic that: *“We have to do two things at once, we have to bring this epidemic to an end primarily by getting the vaccine out in large numbers to the entire world and we have to make sure we are ready because there will be another pandemic.”*



Bill Gates

Read the full fact-check [here](#)

In other news, on Tuesday, February 9, 2021, fact-checkers at the CDD spotted trending news on Facebook and WhatsApp announcing the death of Muhammad Wakili, a former Commissioner of Police in Kano State.

The story claimed that CP Wakili died in a motor accident.

One of the posts reads: *“Just received the sad news of CP Wakili’s demise, may Allah forgive his shortcomings and make Aljannatul Firdaus his final abode.”*

The news that CP Muhammad Wakili is dead is false.

In a recording done personally by CP Wakili on Wednesday, February 10, 2021, the former Police Commissioner debunked the news of his death.

Wakili in a recording obtained by CDD said: *“I have no idea what the people who put out the story want to achieve by misinforming the public, as I speak I am alive living with my family.”*

CP Wakili is currently serving as Special Adviser on Security to the Governor of Gombe State, Muhammadu Yahaya.

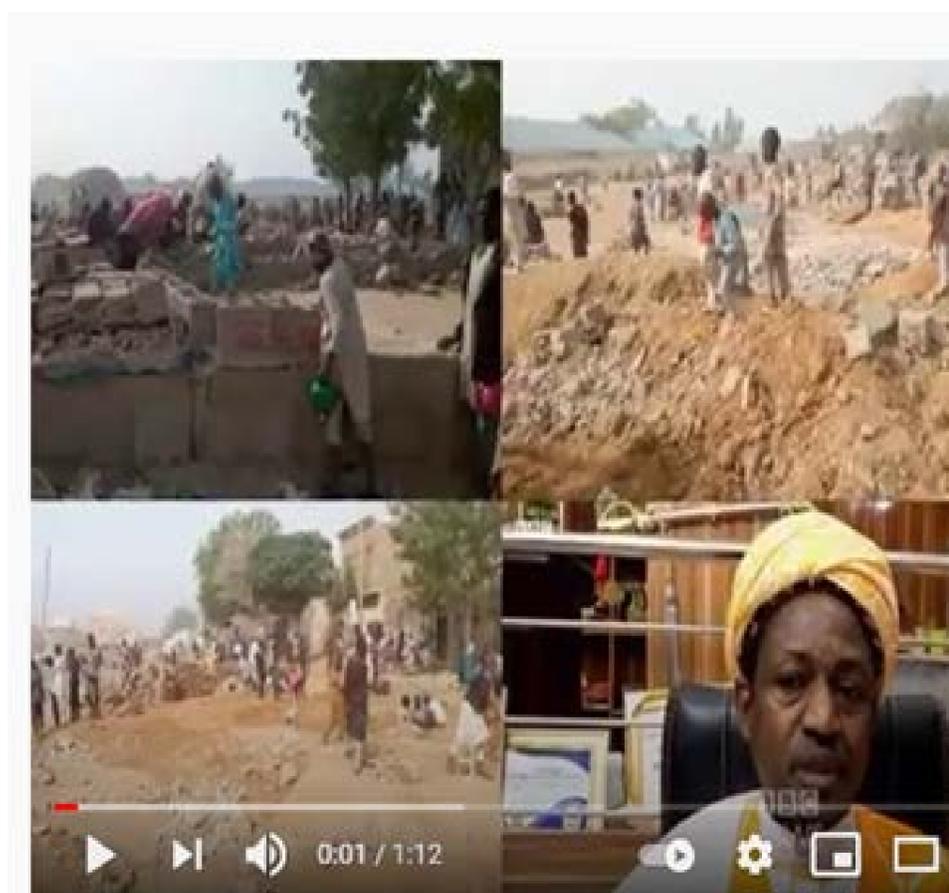
[Read the full fact-check report here](#)



CP Muhammad Wakili

Another report by BBC Hausa claimed that the Kano State Government had demolished a school and mosque belonging to Abduljabbar Nasiru Kabara.

The story was also published by [Express Radio Kano](#), Legit Hausa, Kadaura 24 and some YouTube channels including 9ja Hausa TV, Action Hausa TV, Alheri Royal TV, Kundin Labarai TV, [Komai Da Ruwan Ka TV 1](#).



The report claimed that the demolition followed controversies raised by Kabara’s preaching in Kano even after he was banned by the State Government over “his blasphemous remarks on Islam”.

An investigation by the Centre shows that the claim that the Kano State Government has demolished Abduljabbar Nasiru Kabara’s school and the mosque is false.

A visit to the site by CDD fact-checker revealed that the school and mosque belonging to Kabara has not been demolished.

However, an observation by CDD reveals that the Kano State Government demolished a property which is about 200 meters from the school and mosque owned by Kabara.

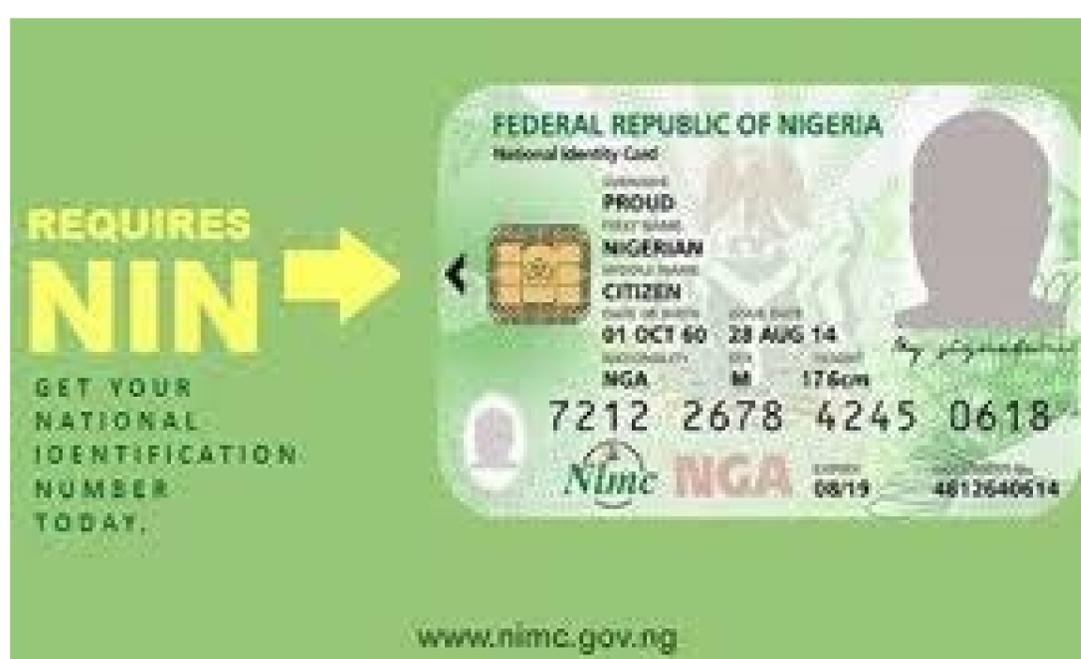
The demolished property is structured within an expanse of land housing several other structures including houses and shops erected by different individuals.

The school and mosque owned by Kabara are still intact.

Also, armed Police officers in their operational vehicles were seen surrounding the residence of Kabara while children played on the demolished site.

[Read the full fact-check report here](#)

On February 8, 2021, CDD fact-checkers also spotted a claim on a website that the Federal Government of Nigeria has approved online registration for National Identity Number (NIN) online.



Details on the website claimed that the alleged decision by FG is aimed at fast-tracking the NIN registration for Nigerians before the disconnection of SIM cards slated for April 1, 2021. According to the website, 117,836 Nigerians have registered and gotten had their NIN generated and number linked.

Checks by the Centre show that the website is a phishing site with an unencrypted and unsecured address devoid of an SSL certificate.

Also, the National Identity Management Commission (NIMC) in a tweet via its official Twitter page, [@nimc_ng](#), debunked the claim.

NIMC in the tweet urged Nigerians to protect their personal information and ensure that they do not become a victim of online fraud.

[Read the full fact-check report](#)

CDD is urging Nigerians to always verify the authenticity of stories before sharing them.

You can forward suspicious messages for verification via +2349062910568 or contact us on twitter @CDDWestAfrica

#StopFakeNews #StopDisinformation

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Centre for Democracy & Development
Centre pour la démocratie et le développement

The Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD) was established in the United Kingdom in 1997 as an independent, not-for-profit, research training, advocacy and capacity building organisation

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