

Ebola: No increase in freight rates on cargoes

THE Executive Secretary, Nigerian Shippers Council (NSC) Mr Hassan Bello has allayed the fear of importers and consumers, saying that there is no increase in the cost of freight on Nigeria-bound cargoes.

He said the report that the European ship owners had increased freight rates on cargoes and also imposed surcharge on vessels and crew coming to Nigeria and other West African countries affected by the Ebola virus is not true.

"There is no truth in the allegation. We have checked with the line carriers and their agents in Nigeria and they have all denied the increase. Ordinarily, when something like that is happening, it ought to be published.

"What we have are the normal rates; the congestion charge, risk insurance and so on," he said.

Bello, however, said there was need to eliminate touts in freight forwarding practice, and urged practitioners to seek requisite knowledge in their chosen profession.

According to Bello, the freight forwarding is a profession and the practitioners need to be trained to meet international best practices.

He said as the economy continues to grow, freight forwarders also have a key role to play and that is why they should undergo training in freight forwarding.

He said: "We must all do away with thugs and touts in the freight forwarding profession because we cannot afford to have them in port operations.

"I don't want to see touts as a freight forwarder, rather I want to see someone that is educated and can have the knowledge of international in the practice.

"A freight forwarder needs training constantly, he needs to have an office where he must operate from because it goes beyond clearing of a cargo from the port.

"If we have a strong freight forwarders in Nigeria, then most of our profession is also solved."

The secretary further described freight forwarders as vital to trade, adding that there is need for professional training for the practitioners.

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