

# PILLOT

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**Court dismisses bid to stop certificate forgery suit against Tinubu** ▶▶ 6

**Tragic accident claims 11 lives along Enugu-Port Harcourt Expressway** ▶▶ 7



# Terror alert: We're safe!

*FG tells international community, insists Nigeria, Nigerians are not in danger* ▶▶ 8

*Says security situation not bad enough to warrant terror warning by UK, US*

*That despite terror alerts, FCT, Abuja is not under any imminent attack*

*Assures that security agencies are putting measures in place to forestall any attack*



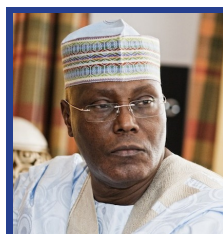
President Muhammadu Buhari presides over security council meeting

## Establish Nomadic Affairs Ministry, Miyetti Allah tells FG

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# Pilot Personality



## HIGH CHIEF RAYMOND DOKPESI (FIRST CLASS MARINE ENGINEER/MEDIA GURU)

**HIGH** Chief Raymond Aleogho Dokpesi, a first class distinction Marine Transport Engineer, was born in Ibadan, Oyo State on 25th of October 1951. He hails from Agenebode in Etsako East Local Government Area in Edo State of Nigeria. High Chief Dokpesi attended Ebenezer African Church School, Ibadan, Loyola College, Ibadan and Immaculate Conception College, Benin City. He worked briefly with the Nigerian Ports Authority as Marine Office Cadet in 1969 before proceeding to Poland for further studies.

He attended Wyzsza Szkola Morska Gdynia and University of Gdansk Sopot for his Bachelor, Masters Degree and Doctorate Degrees. He made a first class with distinction and was also the best graduating student in fifty years in Poland in Marine Transport Engineering.

He lectured in the University of Gdansk, Poland as Assistant Lecturer in Marine Transport Economics before returning to Nigeria on the invitation of the then, Nigerian Head of State who was on State visit to Poland. While schooling, he held the following positions; President, Nigerian Students Union Gdansk Poland (1972 - 1974), President, African Students Union, Poland (1973), President, International Students Association, Poland (1974), President, Nigerian Students, Eastern Europe (1974).

He worked with the Federal Ministry of Transport and Aviation as the Head of Water Transport Division on secondment from

Nigerian Ports Plc (NTCC) between 1978 - 1983.

He was the Chief of Staff of the Gongola State Government from October to December 1983; Managing Director of African Ocean Line Limited from 1984 - 88; Chairman of Baldok Shipping Lines Limited from February 1989; Executive Chairman - DAAR Holding Company Limited and Rimat Properties Limited; Founder/ Chairman-DAAR Communications Limited; Proprietor/operator of the first Independent Radio Station in the Federal Republic of Nigeria, RayPower, Africa Independent Television (AIT); the first Afrocentric Global Television Station, DAARSAT, a fully Nigerian based DHTV and DAAR Investment.

High Chief Aleogho Dokpesi's remarkable role in broadcasting in the federal Republic of Nigeria apart from pioneering private radio and global satellite broadcasting, he also revolutionized the sector through the introduction of 24 hours transmission on both radio and television right from inception, introduction of cyber and chroma technology for television operations and digitalized audio and video signals on both radio and television. Through his efforts Africa Independent Television (AIT) became the first African broadcast station to transmit from and into the United States of America (USA).

Apart from being involved in electronic media, High Chief Dokpesi is also a prolific writer. Some of his publications include: Optimal size of Tankers for International

Trade (1974); West African Shipping Range (1975); Technology Change in Shipping and its impact on Ports (1976); Consultation Machinery in Shipping - The West African Experience, International Multi-modal Transport System - Implication on Nigeria Economy (1980); Thoughts on Nigeria National Shipping policy (1980); Fiscal and Financial Arrangements to Encourage Investment in Shipping in Nigeria (1986); Security in Cargo Handling - The Nigerian Experience Bulk Fleet Development (1986); The Issue of a Shipping Agency in the Maritime Industry (1987); The role of the Seaport in the Structural Adjustment Programme, Problems of Liner Shipping Policy and the review of the United Nations Convention on a Code of Conduct Liner Conferences - Present Status and Prospects (1991).

He is a fellow of several professional and management institutes: the Nigerian Institute of Shipping, Chartered Institute of Transport, Institute of Transport Administration, Nigerian Institute of Management, Nigerian Institute of Public Relations and the Institute of Directors.

High Chief Dokpesi was called upon several times in the past to serve Nigeria. He was a member of the 2005 and 2014 National Political Conference, member - The following are some of the National Assignments that he had been called upon at Presidential Committee on Long Term Measure to solve Piracy and Security Problems in Nigerian Sea Ports and Territorial Waters (1981); Member

- Chief of Defence Staff Board on Boarders and Harbor Security Force (1982), Member - Committee on Decentralization of Nigeria Ports Plc (1983), Member - Shipping Policy Implementation Committee (1987).

He is a recipient of several national and international awards amongst which are: Dr. Kwame Nkrumah Africa Leadership Award and Gold Medal for Excellence in Business Practice, awarded by the Foundation for Excellence in Business Practice, an organ of the United Nations based in Geneva, Switzerland. He is also the recipient of the prestigious Institute of Directors (IOD) 2007 Entrepreneurial Award.

In recognition of his contribution to Nigerian late President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua, on February 14, 2008 conferred National Merit Award on him; Officer of the Order of the Federal Republic (OFR).

Apart from the national award from the federal government, High Chief Dokpesi has also been honored by various Nigerian communities across the country. He holds the following chieftaincy titles: Ogieorunmoa of Weppa Wanno; Araba of Osooroland; Osese of South Uneme; Gbobaniyi of Ilawe-Ekiti; Oganigwe Umu Orji Ako Nibo; Sardaunna of Kpaduma, Abuja; and Ezomo of Weppa Wanno Land, amongst others. An amiable socialite, he is a member of Island, Ikoyi and Apapa clubs in Lagos.

EDITORIAL



# TERROR ALERT IN ABUJA AND MATTERS ARISING

*Abuja has been under a perpetual threat of terrorism, kidnapping and banditry. What Lai Mohammed has failed to understand in his retorts is that, unlike Nigeria with examples too numerous to mention, serious countries that value human life and security do not neglect, play politics or take intelligence reports for granted*

LAST Sunday, the United States and United Kingdom governments released a travel advisory to its citizens as a result of intelligence on a terror alert. The US Government stated that, “there is an elevated risk of terror attacks in Nigeria, specifically Abuja” targeting government buildings, places of worship and schools, among others. Consequently, “The U.S. Embassy will offer reduced services until further notice”. Already, the US has evacuated non-emergency employees from Abuja.

The UK Government followed a similar pattern saying that, there was an “increased threat of terrorist attack in Abuja” adding that, “Attacks could be indiscriminate and could affect western interests, as well as places visited by tourists”.

Last week, the Australian government had released such intelligence listing “flooding, terrorism and kidnapping” on its travel advisory to its citizens. The Nigerian spy agency, Department of State Service (DSS) has confirmed the above reports and had asked citizens and residents to remain calm as security agencies were on top of the situation.

Two issues are very disturbing in the current security alert in Nigeria’s Capital City and, of course, the most secured city in the country, Abuja.

The first, as always, has been a disturbing trend: why should Nigeria’s intelligence community depend on foreign intelligence alert to sensitize Nigerians and non-Nigerians on such a sensitive matter in our country? The DSS, in a statement by its Spokesman, Dr. Peter Afunanya, stated that, “The Department of State Services has received several enquiries relating to the security advisory issued by the US Embassy in Abuja, today, 23/10/22. The public may recall that the Service had variously issued similar warnings in the past”.

Under counterterrorism regime, it is defeatist and admission of failure for the DSS to dwell on “similar warnings in the past”. Intelligence thrives on currency and prompt response. What this implies is that, the agency was caught off guard or else, why did it not alert the nation first before foreign intelligence? By all means, this is not a good omen.

As usual, the reaction of the Minister of Information and Culture, Lai Mohammed, is what it is: hysteria. It has also sadly reminded us of the recurring question of lack of sensitivity of the government of

the day to the issue of security, especially the issue of intelligence. Lai authoritatively boasted that, “this country is safe. And there’s no cause for alarm. No cause to panic”.

He accused the US of stirring public panic in Abuja saying that, “...because of that travel advisory on Sunday, many schools were closed, shops were closed, travel plans were disrupted. We don’t need it. The security – our soldiers, our police - are working round the clock to contain any terrorist attack. This is where we stand,” he said. He also blamed the media for reporting the travel advisory “just for clickbait and the attendant monetary gain.”

No government that has self worth would retort this way in the wake of monstrous and a seemingly intractable national insecurity that confronts our country. This government is particularly notorious for criminal negligence when it comes to intelligence report, processing and corresponding action. Terrorists and criminal elements have cashed in on these lapses to strike, killing innocent lives, maiming and destroying.

Our security agencies allegedly ignored over 40 intelligence reports about terrorist plan to attack Kuje Correctional Services until in July this year when the facility was eventually attacked with zero resistance; some inmates held in custody on terrorism charges were set free. Of course, as usual, there were no consequences.

Abuja has been under a perpetual threat of terrorism, kidnapping and banditry. What Lai Mohammed has failed to understand in his retorts is that, unlike Nigeria with examples too numerous to mention, serious countries that value human life and security do not neglect, play politics or take intelligence reports for granted.

We firmly believe that for three Western powers - acting on intelligence on terrorist threat - to evacuate their staff and citizens from Nigeria or Abuja should not be reduced to puerile and childish diplomatic propaganda.

We therefore encourage and support collaboration by our security agencies to remain vigilant, sustain and improve on their surveillances, as well as share intelligence in order to give them an edge ahead of enemies of our democracy and peace.



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# News

## Perfect operational plans for 2023 elections, Buhari tells police

By Mathew Dadiya, Abuja

President Muhammadu Buhari has charged the Nigeria Police Force to perfect operational plans that will guarantee a credible outcome in the 2023 general elections while remaining apolitical, firm, and loyal to democratic values.

Declaring open the three-day Conference and Retreat for Senior Police Officers on Monday in Owerri, Imo State, the President directed the Police to review the current and evolving internal security threats as they may impact on peaceful and

successful elections.

"As I have often observed, elections are local, and it is only when the votes truly count that the faith of the citizens in the democratic process can be demonstrated and government legitimacy assured.

"This can best be guaranteed through a well policed election and security operations that are impartial, firm and professional.

"This is what, on this day and occasion, I charge the Nigeria Police Force to deliver to the nation during the 2023 General Elections.

"I, therefore, task the Inspector

General of Police to sustain his leadership standards that will guarantee a level playing field, and secure public space for the citizens to freely exercise their franchise, and for the outcome of the elections to be a true reflection of the peoples' choices," Buhari said.

Assuring the force of his full support and encouragement in the build-up to the 2023 polls, the President expressed delight that the reforms undertaken under his watch are paying off with members of the Force demonstrating high professional, ethical and operational standards, reflected in

performances in internal security operations.

Citing the conduct of the Police during the recent off-season electoral outings in some states, Buhari said:

"My desire is to restore the primacy of the Police towards rebuilding public trust and professionalism.

"My vision is also to bequeath to the nation a Police Force that is not only modernized, but well-funded, suitably equipped, and appropriately re-oriented to effectively police our democracy and guarantee a stable internal security order under a citizen-led, technology-driven, rule

of law guided by intelligence-based policing Models.

"I am inspired that by our reform initiatives, we have laid a solid foundation towards the restoration of the operational competence and professional efficiency of the Police.

"I am also pleased to note that our Police, in conformity to my democratic visions, and in manifestation of the positive impact of these reforms, have in recent times been demonstrating high professional, ethical and operational standards as reflected in their performances in internal security operations and during the recent off-season electoral outings in Edo, Anambra, Ekiti, and Osun States."

The President, therefore, commended the Force leadership and all officers, emphasising the need to replicate the same feat in the forthcoming elections.

He noted that it was only by so doing that "the Police can truly, be defined as not just the true friends of the citizens, but as dependable and trustworthy partners in the drive to advance our democratic journey."

Buhari also used the occasion to restate his commitment to entrench a process of free, fair, transparent and credible elections through which Nigerians elect leaders of their choice.

He declared that his administration has prioritized critical reforms in the Nigeria Police Force in order to reposition it to effectively fulfill its internal security and democratic governance mandates in conjunction with the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and other strategic agencies in the electoral process.

Listing some achievements recorded towards entrenching an effective policing system and credible electoral process, the President recalled that he had assented to the Nigeria Police Trust Fund Bill to provide legal framework for an enhanced funding regime for the Force.

Similarly, he said the Nigeria Police Academy Bill had been signed into law, granting statutory recognition to the institution and positioning it effectively to attain its young and



President Buhari with L-R: Mr. Sean Manley, Mrs. Nadja Haakansson, President Siemens Energy Dr. Christian Bruch, Chief of Staff Prof. Ibrahim Gambari, Minister of Finance Hajia Zainab Shamsuna, Minister of Power Abubakar Aliyu and Minister of Foreign Affairs Geoffrey Onyema as he receives in audience President/CEO Siemens Energy in State House on 20th Oct 2022

## Ebonyi Gov, Umahi bans political rallies in schools, markets

By Agency Report

David Umahi, governor of Ebonyi state on Monday announced a ban on any form of political rally in all Primary and Secondary Schools, including markets in Ebonyi state, from 1st November 2022.

The Governor stated this at the "Citizens' input and Consultation for the 2023 Budget estimation and Nigeria 2023 Population and Housing Census" in Ebonyi."

Umahi said all political rallies including that of the All Progressive Congress, APC, must get approval from the Commissioner of Education.

The Governor also banned the movement of motorbikes popularly known as Okada from 7 pm to 6 a.m as he will increase the number of men of Ebubeagu security operatives in Ebonyi State.

He said the decision was taken in a bid to secure lives and properties as criminals use bikes to perpetrate their nefarious activities.

He said: "The Attorney-General will come up with executive order banning motorcycles in every part of the State from 7pm to 6am. If you want to use it, use it before 7pm. We have to do everything to secure your lives."

"When we take hard decisions it is because we have to take it.

The primary responsibility of government is to secure lives and property, so you must make sacrifice to do it.

"From November 1, no rallies in schools whether primary schools or secondary schools. If you must hold rallies there, you must apply to

Commissioner for Education and he must give you permission because when you do rallies in these places and mess it up with faeces and other deaths that will clean it.

"So if you apply, you must put down money for the cleaning after the rally irrespective of the party", he said.

The governor said those calling for ban on Ebubeagu are wasting their time adding that the outfit has come to stay.

He said the group is filling the gap caused by inadequate manpower in the security agencies in the State.

## Stakeholders to brainstorm on lack of development in oil producing areas of Imo State

By Aaron Ossai

Worried by lack of development in oil producing areas of Imo state, group operating under the aegis of Imo Beyond Oil Stakeholders has scheduled a summit on need for sustainable development in the areas and Imo state in general.

In a statement made available to newsmen, an oil expert, Ejike Chukwu, said that the summit will take place on December 9 this year at Landmark Hall, Protea Hotel, Owerri, the Imo state Capital.

According to him, the summit is powered by members of the Urash Economic Empowerment Advocacy Initiative under the leadership of Ejike Chukwu, an expert in the oil and gas industry from Ohaji/Egbema local government area of the state.

Speaking further, he said that there is the need for an engagement of stakeholders in the oil industry from Imo state to rethink and look beyond oil for infrastructural development of the areas and Imo state in general.

He recalled that over the years, Nigeria has continued to deplete in its oil revenue due to variant factors which includes corruption while according to him other countries have continued to diversify its revenue and Gross Domestic Product, GDP through reinventing innovative oil management strategies and revolution of non-oil intervention.

He said Imo state is one of the oil producing states with Ohaji/Egbema and Oguta as the key centre saying: "yet what has been the outcome of this development to the state and the community with various indications showing more needs to be done."

"There needs to be an engaging of various stakeholders in this sector from Imo state to rethink and look beyond oil.

"On the 9th of December 2022, stakeholders will converge for a summit in Imo state at Landmark Hall, Protea Hotel in Owerri, the Imo state Capital.

"This convergence is powered by members of Urashi Economic Empowerment Advocacy Initiative under the leadership of Mr. Ejike Chukwu an expert in the oil and gas industry from Ohaji/Egbema Local Government Area of Imo state.

"This is the first summit of its kind in Imo state and will look towards sustainable engagement of stakeholders on the need to diversify on non-Oil source of revenue", the statement read.

## Buhari leaves for UK amidst security threat in Abuja

By Agency Report

Amidst recent security threat around Abuja, President Muhammadu Buhari will leave Nigeria for London, the United Kingdom for "routine medical check-up".

Buhari will leave for London after attending the Conference and Retreat for Senior Police Officers in Owerri, the Imo State capital.

Special Adviser to the President on Media and Publicity, Femi Adesina, in a statement on Monday, said Buhari will return to the country in the second week of November, 2022.

This is not the first time the President will travel to London for medical check-up in 2022. Buhari was in the United Kingdom in March and in July for medical purpose.



## NUPENG calls for end to casualisation in oil sector

By Michael Oche

**NIGERIA** Union of Petroleum and Natural Gas Workers (NUPENG) has charged the federal government to take action and ensure that persons behind the massive oil theft in the country are arrested and brought to book.

Comrade Williams Eniredonana Akporeha, NUPENG president in an interview with journalists said "Nigeria is currently faced with an unprecedented level of crude oil theft, which is Nigeria's major source of foreign earnings".

He urged President Muhammadu Buhari to set up a Judicial Commission of Enquiry to investigate and prosecute all those found to be involved in what he described as "criminal economic sabotage against the nation and her people."

He said the large scale of oil theft has consequences on the economy and could lead to massive job losses in the sector.

He said, "Activities of oil vandals also have grave consequences on

the environment.

Aside from economic loss, we also talk about environmental issues, health and safety of the Niger Delta People."

Speaking at the recent World Day of Decent Work, Comrade Willians lamented that the issues of casualisation and contract

staffing have continued in Nigeria, especially in the private sector, including the oil and gas sector and must be handled and tackled headlong.

He vowed that the Nigerian workers and their unions shall take actions against companies involved in Casualisation. He said

that it negates the ILO principle of decent work, fair and ethical recruitment.

He said, "The challenges of job security, decent work, health and safety are still very rampant in the Nigeria Oil and Gas industry, which the union is dealing with seriously".



Members of RCCG Jesus House Parish Abuja during the 2022 Arise Walk for Life Road show in Abuja

## NDDC creates breast cancer awareness

By Philip Ezuma, Port Harcourt

**NIGER** Delta Development Commission, NDDC, has stressed the need to create awareness to help in the prevention and early detection of breast cancer in the country, especially for men and women in the workplace.

Speaking during a one-day 'Breast Cancer sensitization' programme, at the NDDC headquarters in Port Harcourt, the Acting Managing Director, Engr Emmanuel Audu-Ohwavborua, said that the Commission organises Workplace Wellness Programmes every year to ensure people pay attention to their health.

The NDDC boss, who was represented by a Director in Health and Social Services Directorate, Dr. George Uzonwanne, urged the staff to imbibe healthy personal habits to reduce the risk of Breast Cancer in the country.

He cautioned against unhealthy habits which increases the risk of Breast Cancer and encouraged staff of the Commission to eat organic food as much as possible, as well as exercise regularly.

He advised women who are forty years old and above to go for breast cancer screening at designated wellness centers periodically.

In her presentation at the seminar, a consultant Obstetrician and Gynaecologist at the University of Port Harcourt Teaching Hospital, UPTH, Professor Rosemary Ogu, emphasized on lifestyle modification as a way of preventing Breast Cancer.

She noted: "Everyone is involved in the awareness and prevention campaign because Breast Cancer occurs in both male and female gender. Regular personal checks are key for prevention of Breast Cancer."

Prof Ogu said that breast and cervical cancers are the number one killers of women worldwide, noting: "One out of eight women will have breast cancer in their lifetime. On the average, every two minutes, one woman is diagnosed with breast cancer. Around the world, one woman dies of breast cancer every 13 minutes. Forty Nigerian women die daily from breast cancer."

## Bauchi Police arrests ex-commissioner over alleged murder of 67 year-old neighbor

By Umar Sa'id Moh'd, Bauchi

**BAUCHI** State Command of the Nigerian Police has confirmed the arrest of a former Commissioner of Information, Alhaji Mohammad Damina over allegation of committing murder of his neighbor.

The Public Relations Officer of the State Command, SP Ahmed Wakili confirmed the arrest to Journalists on Monday.

A civil unrest was averted yesterday in Yelwan Leburu along Bauchi-Dass Road when some youths staged a violent protest burning tires, barricading major roads preventing Civil Servants and Students from attending their activities following the death of one Adamu Babanta, a 67 year old retired civil servant resident in Yelwa Labura area.

As early as 7am, the youths stormed the busy Bauchi - Dass highway and blocked the road on both sides thereby stopping free flow of traffic forcing many road users to turn back and seek alternate roads to and from Yelwa and Bauchi.

**NIGERIAN PILOT** gathered that, on Sunday, 30th of October at about 5.30pm, a man, 67 years old Adamu Babanta was allegedly killed by his friend and neighbor, 68 years old former Commissioner in the state, Alhaji Mohammed Damina, who is also the Galadiman Dass, through reckless driving with his car.

A close relative of the late Adamu Babanta who did not disclose his name, stated that, "Galadiman Dass and my late brother were friends and neighbors for years. Galadima attempted to make arrangements for alleged sexual relationship with the 18 years old Khadijat, SS 2 daughter of his late friend. He had been making advances to her by sending recharge cards to her".

"The girl reported to her mother the intention of the Galadima who then told the father but he did not believe the story. Then yesterday (Sunday), he called the girl and sent her a message that she should meet him at the Total filling station along Bauchi- Dass Road by 5pm so that they can go out.

"The girl informed her father who then asked her to go as planned and

that he will follow behind to ascertain the true situation. As expected, Galadima was waiting at the point while the father was watching as the girl arrived" Galadima asked her to enter the car after he had opened the door but at that point, the father came out and confronted his friend expressing anger. Galadima then tried to run away but there was a struggle between them which led to pushing the late Adamu out of the car, he hit his head on the pavement of the road, the back Tyre matched his legs and broke the bones. He died on the way to the hospital", he added.

Meanwhile, the Bauchi State Police Command through its PPRO confirmed the incident but assured that the situation has been brought under control while combined security operatives have been drafted to keep peace in the area.

SP Ahmed Mohammed Wakili said that on Sunday 30th October 2022, at about 1930hrs, a case of fatal motor accident was transferred from the Yelwa Division directly to the MTD for a discreet investigation; it was a case of culpable homicide.

## Court dismisses bid to stop certificate forgery suit against APC presidential candidate

By Kenneth Atavii

**FEDERAL** High Court in Abuja on Monday dismissed a bid by a factional group in the Action Alliance (AA) party to stop the Certificate forgery suit instituted against the Presidential candidate of the All Progressives Congress (APC), Bola Ahmed Tinubu.

The bid by the group loyal to Tinubu and led by Adegunle Rufai Omo-Aje was rejected by the Federal High Court from being joined as an interested party to defend Tinubu in the certificate forgery suit brought against him by the AA party.

Justice Obiora Ekwuatu in a ruling on the joinder application of Omo-Aje and his faction threw out the request on the grounds that

conditions precedent for such joinder to be granted was not placed before the court.

Amongst others, Justice Ekwuatu held that Omo-Aje did not establish his claim as National Chairman of the AA and also did not disclose how his interest would be jeopardized if not joined as defendant in the suit.

Justice Ekwuatu while dismissing the joinder request held that the group remains a meddlesome interloper and busy body until their interests likely to be affected are clearly established.

In the ruling, Justice Ekwuatu said that both Adegunle Rufai Omo-Aje and Ambassador Suleiman Abdumalik who filed the joinder application on behalf of their faction failed to satisfy the conditions on why they should be joined.

Besides, the Judge held that they

also failed to make out a case in any form, to sway the court to join them.

The factional group had in the joinder application sought for dismissal of the suit against APC and Tinubu on the ground that they (as officers of the party) did not authorize the suit to be filed in the name or on behalf of the party.

The Judge thereafter ordered the plaintiff (AA) to open its case of certificate forgery allegations against Tinubu on Friday November 4, 2022.

Justice Ekwuatu specifically ordered that witnesses in the suit must be brought before the court to enable it determines the suit within time stipulated by law.

Action Alliance Party in the suit is seeking disqualification of Tinubu from the 2023 election on alleged certificate Forgery.

## Ebola: FG cautions Nigerians against non-essential travel to Uganda

By Agency Report

**NIGERIA** Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) on Monday cautioned Nigerians and other residents against embarking on non-essential travel to Uganda for now.

The NCDC Director-General, Dr Ifedayo Adetifa, gave the caution in a statement he signed on Monday in Abuja.

He stated that the warning is to enable public health authorities to determine how the Ebola outbreak will be contained.

As at October 29, 2022, the Ugandan Ministry of Health reported 128 confirmed cases and 34 deaths.

Adetifa cautioned that when travelling to Uganda became essential, travelers should avoid contact with obviously sick persons or suspected cases of Ebola.

He said that the Port Health Service of the Federal Ministry of Health had scaled-up screening of passengers returning from Uganda at Points of Entry (POEs).

The NDCC boss said "travelers to Nigeria with recent travel history to Uganda or persons already in Nigeria but with recent travel history to or transit through Uganda within the past 21 days are to look out for symptoms."

"Symptoms such as fever, muscle pain, sore throat, diarrhea, weakness, vomiting, stomach pain or unexplained bleeding or bruising should promptly call 6232 or state ministry of health hotlines for assessment and testing."

"Such persons should not visit health facilities by themselves to avoid further spread through the shared transport system (public or private)."

"They would be visited at home by dedicated responders for assessment and transported through designated transport arrangement to designated treatment centre when required."

"Intending travelers to Nigeria with the above-stated symptoms before departure should not travel to Nigeria, but call to report promptly to Port Health Authorities and/or designated health authorities in the country of departure for testing and care," he said.

He added that in-bound travelers to Nigeria with recent travel history to or through Uganda without symptoms on departure but unwell while on transit, should be denied contact with other people.

Adetifa said such people are required to report to Port Health Service on arrival.

"Travelers with travel history to Uganda who show no symptoms on arrival should provide accurate information on the NITP platform to ensure follow-up from health workers", Adetifa added.



# 'Due process followed in delisting 2,954 amnesty beneficiaries'

By **Mathew Dadiya**, Abuja

**FOLLOWING** an alarm raised by some concerned ex-agitators in the Niger Delta over the recent delisting of 2,954 beneficiaries as against the speculated 3,548 beneficiaries from the regular payment voucher of the Presidential Amnesty Programme, the exercise followed due process.

An insider source disclosed on Monday in Abuja that the exercise was necessitated by the discovery of obvious irregularities on the payment voucher, where some beneficiaries who have been trained and empowered were still receiving their

monthly stipend with others who are currently undergoing in-training still found their names on the regular payment voucher.

The source revealed that the irregularities on the payment list were recently uncovered by an internal audit that was instituted by the new Interim Administrator with a view to cleaning up the data base of the programme.

Adding that those affected by the delisting exercise include, trained and empowered beneficiaries whose names are still on the voucher, those who receive both the in-training allowance of N70, 000 alongside the regular N65, 000 monthly stipends.

Also affected, are beneficiaries with multiple entries on the payment voucher and beneficiaries who have already graduated from higher institutions of learning in formal education.

According to the insider source, it was only 2,954 beneficiaries that were recently delisted from payment voucher and not 3,548 beneficiaries as being speculated in the media, describing the report as sensational and misleading, stressing that such duplications, among other irregularities on the payment voucher would no longer be tolerated when government is thinking of reworking the programme to make more

beneficial to the people of Niger Delta region.

The source further explained that since the Presidential Amnesty Programme commenced twelve years ago, this is the first time that nine point eight percent (9.8% of the 30,000 delegates is being delisted.

It will be recalled that the new Interim Administrator of the Presidential Amnesty Programme, Maj. Gen. Barry Tariye Ndiomu had indicated his desire to collaborate with the Nigerian Army to further train ex-agitators in their training institutions with a view to building the capacities of the ex-agitators after they eventually exit the programme.

## Minister vows to restore operation of Abuja Light Rail

By **Chioma Nnodim**

As part of efforts geared towards the imminent resumption of operations of the Abuja Mass Rail Transit system the FCT Minister, Malam Muhammad Musa Bello, accompanied by officials of the Administration has held a strategic meeting with senior officials of the China Civil Engineering and Construction Corporation, CCECC, at the Operation Control Center, OCC of the rail system in Idu, Abuja.

Speaking after the meeting, over the weekend, the Permanent Secretary, FCTA, Mr Olusade Adesola said that the purpose of the visit to the Center was to review the project and determine what actions to be taken within the shortest possible time, to restore the Abuja Mass Rail Transit system back into operation.

The Permanent Secretary said, "The FCT Administration has made substantial investment in this project with the support of the Federal Government of Nigeria. You will recall that the project was test run shortly after it was commissioned and thereafter, the advent of the COVID pandemic resulted in a forced closure and suspension of the operations.

"COVID is over and we are desirous to resume operations. But there are certain issues that were not intended that had arisen, which will require attention. This is the purpose of coming here to look at the project in its entirety and to know actions to be taken within the shortest possible time, in order to restore the Abuja Mass Rail Transit system back into operation."

Adesola further disclosed that, "A lot of high-powered decisions were reached, which we will give effect to as directed by the Minister. We will look forward to a quick resumption of the operation of the train system."

## Delta pledges support for ailing footballer Henry Nwosu

By **Anastacia Eluwa**, Asaba

Delta Government has pledged financial and moral support for ailing legendary footballer, Henry Nwosu.

Nwosu, a gifted midfielder was the poster boy and the youngest member of Nigeria's victorious 1980 African Nations Cup squad, and scored the only goal for Nigeria at the 1980 Olympics.

He was admitted at the Asaba Specialist Hospital, Asaba for a heart related illness and was in high spirits when the state government officials visited him on Sunday at the hospital.

Speaking during the visit, the Commissioner for Health, Dr Mordi Ononye in company with the Chief Press Secretary to Governor Ifeanyi Okowa, Mr Olisa Ifeajika, said the state government would do everything humanly possible to assist the ailing football star.

He said that as one of the legendary heroes of Nigeria, his labour for the country would not be forgotten by the Delta State Government.

"Your exploits and the major role you played in this nation and for promoting football and sports generally in our country would never be forgotten".

## 2023 census: NPC assures of accurate, reliable head count

**NATIONAL** Population Commission, NPC, has said that it was irrevocably committed to positively rewriting the history of census in Nigeria and deliver to this great country accurate, reliable and acceptable census that will be relevant in the drive towards sustainable national development.

Federal Commissioner National Population Commission in charge of Niger state Alhaji Muhammad Dattijo Usman, stated this at a workshop on compendium of

localities for the 2023 Population and Housing Census held in Minna.

Aliyu explained that preparations for the Population and Housing Census are on course and the Commission is confident that the prospect for an accurate and reliable census appears brighter than ever.

He appealed to Niger state people to join hands with the Commission in its bid to give Niger state reliable demographic

data through the forthcoming 2023 census.

According to Aliyu, getting the 2023 Population and Housing Census right is a task that must be done and the Commission is committed to ensuring that everything about the census is done rightly and professionally to achieve maximum results.

In a Goodwill message Chairman of Gbako local government council Hussaini Aliyu said it is in view of the importance he attached to

Population and Housing Census that he left his office work for this assignment and assured them of his support at all times to succeed.

Acting INEC Resident Electoral Commissioner, Niger state, Malam Yakubu Duku maintained that the success of the National Population and Housing Census is of great importance to them and that he will contribute positively to ensure its success.



FCT Minister, Malam Muhammad Musa Bello (2nd left) flanked by the Secretary, Transportation Secretariat, FCTA, Hon Adamu Candido, and the MD CCECC, (Nig) Ltd, Mr David Wang during the Minister's visit to the Operations Control Center of the Abuja Rail Mass Transit at Idu, Abuja at weekend

## OTUWA demands social protection coverage for at least 40% of West Africa's population

By **Michael Oche**

**ORAGANISATION** of Trade Unions of West Africa (OTUWA) has said that only 13 percent of the 480 million persons in the West Africa sub-region have social protection coverage.

The workers' body said the percentage of coverage is poor and has therefore resolved to develop new advocacy strategies to ensure leaders in the sub-region increase it to at least 40 percent.

With skyrocketing inflation, rising unemployment exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, OTUWA has been championing more persons to be covered by social protection in the sub-region.

Speaking to journalists at the side of a workshop in Abuja, the General Secretary of OTUWA, Comrade John Oda, said the

essence of the workshop was to brainstorm on how to engage government and employers to expand social protection coverage

Giving insight to Africa's case regarding social protection provision, he said; "In terms of coverage, Africa is at 17% coverage of social protection which is the least in the entire world. And when you come to the various sub regions, West Africa is lagging behind with around 13%.

"At the last meeting of the African region directorate of the International Labor Organization, African governments, social partners; that is workers and employers did agreed that we needed to work together to be able to push social protection coverage to a minimum of 40% between 2025 and 2030 to be able to show anything meaningful about the UN

SDG. So, that is what we are hoping that we will be able to work with social partners and government to push up the funding on social protection from a miserable 1.2% of GDP to a minimum of 10%.

"There are nine branches of social protection: the old age pension, maternity protection, unemployment benefits and others. We have a young population in Nigeria and Africa at large and one of the negative characteristics is that we're not providing jobs for them. Why Europe is relatively steady, why the developed countries are relatively stable is because they provide unemployment benefits.

"In Nigeria and other countries in West Africa, we ought to be thinking about providing unemployment benefits, so that individuals, even if they are not immediately engaged, can have

a means of livelihood to sustain them. This is what this whole thing about social protection is trying to achieve.

"Therefore the call is for governments to ensure that of the 450 million people in the West African sub-region, at least 40% of this population should have social protection of one type or the other."

In her remarks, ILO Abuja office Director, Ms Vanessa Phala said Social Protection has grown from not just a social policy but also a vital economic tool used to eradicate poverty and social exclusion.

The Director who was represented by Inviolata Chinyangarara, Senior Worker Specialist at ILO office, Abuja said we all must act fast to close this huge coverage gap.



# Cover

## Terror alert: We're safe!

*\*FG tells international community, insists Nigeria, Nigerians are not in danger*

*\*Says security situation not bad enough to warrant terror warning by UK, US*

*\*That despite terror alerts, FCT, Abuja is not under any imminent attack*

*\*Assures that security agencies are putting measures in place to forestall any attack*

By Our correspondent with agency reports

DESPITE the terror alerts issued by the UK and US governments to its citizens in Nigeria last week, the federal government has said that Nigerians are not in danger and urged them to go about their normal duties.

Briefing newsmen after the emergency security meeting summoned by President Muhammadu Buhari yesterday, the National Security Adviser, NSA, Babagana Monguno said security agencies are putting measures in place to forestall any attack.

The NSA who addressed the correspondents alongside the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Geoffrey Onyeama and the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS), Lucky Irabor, noted that the travel advisories had created unnecessary fear and apprehension among Nigerians adding that the terror alert was needless as the hype and the sense of insecurity it created were unfounded.

According to him, security and intelligence agencies are not resting on their oars to ensure that all Nigerians and every part of the country remains safe.

"From the time this alarm story came out until now, about a week to 10 days, we can see that so far, the

situation has been brought under control." The issue of Nigerians being made to panic is unnecessary; the situation in various areas, the federal capital territory, the situation has been brought under control.

"We are trying as much as possible to work with our neighbours and within the domestic situation to work with our foreign partners in a responsible way without giving the impression that Nigeria is setting on thin ice to be explored.

"That has come to dispel any illusion about any sense of heightened insecurity.

"It is false; it is irresponsible for anybody to give that signal. We are working with our foreign partners in a responsible way and Nigerians should go back to their normal daily undertakings without being put in a situation of fear", he stated.

On his part, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr Onyeama, called on citizens to ignore the security threat and travel advisory recently issued by the US and UK, and continue with their daily routines.

He emphasised that the threat and advisory were mainly issued to the citizens of the countries that originated them observing that it had been the norm for US to make

such pronouncements to its citizens, as dictated by their constitution, just as she almost simultaneously did in South Africa.

"Nigeria has been engaging the United States (US) on intelligent sharing," It's been the norm for the US to make such pronouncements.

"We engage the US from this, and their response was that they are obliged to put out those kinds of statements, normally travel advisories.

"But in this case, it was an alert, but they said that they were obliged to, for their citizens, and that the advice, you know, the alert was really, for their citizens.

"They do it around the world, as you know, they did it also in South Africa, in this particular case," he said.

Also speaking, the Chief of Defence Staff said security agencies had been on their toes to thwart all threats.

Top on the list of those in attendance at the meeting are Vice-President Yemi Osinbajo, Secretary to the Government of the Federation; Boss Mustapha; the Chief of Staff to the President, Ibrahim Gambari and the National Security Adviser (NSA), Babagana Monguno among others.



## Establish Nomadic Affairs Ministry, Miyatti Allah, tells FG

By Agency report

MIYETTI Allah Kautal Hore Fulani Association has called for the establishment of a 'Federal Ministry of Nomadic Affairs' with a mandate to broaden educational opportunities and address pastoralist challenges.

The group stated this in a communiqué issued Monday and jointly signed by its National President, Abdullahi Bodejo, and its National Secretary, Mr. Saleh Alhassan, at the end of the expanded

National Executive Meeting with State Chairmen of the association held in Abuja.

It also demanded the immediate designation, gazetting and development of all the 415 grazing reserves across the country.

It said: "The meeting called for the immediate designation, gazetting and development of all the 415 grazing reserves across the states of the Federation as the only first strategic step in addressing the challenges confronting Fulani herders in Nigeria.

It said: "The meeting called for the immediate designation, gazetting and development of all the 415 grazing reserves across the states of the Federation as the only first strategic step in addressing the challenges confronting Fulani herders in Nigeria.

"This will include building of earth dams and solar boreholes, and the building of veterinary clinics. Development of dairy (milk) collection centres."

The group noted with dismay the recent massacre of Fulani

pastoralists in Taraba State and called on the Inspector-General of Police to set up a high-powered panel to unmask those responsible for the dastardly acts and ensure justice is done to the victims' families to avoid people resorting to self-help.

"The meeting dismissed the consistent claims of farmers-herders conflicts as a major setback of instability and insecurity in Nigeria. But rather the conflicts are exacerbated by activities of state sponsored vigilantes and tribal

hordes who wilfully continue to carry out extra-judicial killings of Fulani pastoralists.

"The leadership of the association also condemned the continuous profiling of Fulani pastoralists by Benue State Governor, Samuel Ortom, through the anti-grazing law. It said the governor had been using the law to officially confiscate and auction cattle belonging to Fulani in Benue-Nasarawa and Benue-Taraba border communities", it stated.

## You can't buy S/West, Atiku campaign tells Tinubu

By Agency report

ATIKU/OKOWA Presidential Campaign Organization (PCO) has accused the Presidential Candidate of the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC), Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu, of trying to compromise the leaders of the South West in a bid to achieve his Presidential ambition.

Spokesperson, Atiku/Okowa Presidential Campaign Organization, Kola Ologbondiyan in a statement on Monday said that it is clear that majority of the people of the South West have rejected the APC Presidential candidate

The statement reads in part: "Nigerians watched with dismay as the APC Presidential Candidate resorted to playing ethnic card at a session he organized at Pa Reuben Fasoranti's house in Akure, Ondo State, at the weekend, in a bid to

divert attention from his numerous anti-people issues and use the unsuspecting leaders to create an impression of having secured the endorsement of the South West."

"Our electoral process is badly scandalized by report in the public space that the APC have been making huge financial overtures to some leaders to create factions in certain credible Pan-South West organizations and use such procured factions to pronounce support for the APC Presidential Candidate.

"The very thought by the APC Presidential Campaign to compromise the leaders of the South West is to say the least, reprehensible, atrocious, sacrilegious and show the extent of disrespect, irreverence and disdain the APC has for such revered leaders.

"Asiwaju Tinubu ought to know that he cannot sway or buy the

South West or any other part of the country the way he procured the APC Presidential ticket; a ticket that has been compared to the Zimbabwean dollar.

"The handlers of the APC Presidential Candidate should know that the South West, like other sections of the country, is holding Tinubu directly responsible for the woes the nation has been passing through in the last seven and half years of the APC administration; an administration Asiwaju Tinubu confessed to have helped install.

"Moreover, Asiwaju Tinubu cannot be trusted by the South West or any part of the country for that matter as his persistent self-centered assertions and barefaced entitlement messaging demonstrates that his presidential ambition is driven by the pursuit of personal aggrandizement and not to serve the people.

"It is clear that the majority of the people of the South West have rejected the APC Presidential candidate and cannot fall to APC's trickeries. This informs why the APC lost woefully in the July 16 Osun State governorship elections to the PDP; a state considered being Asiwaju's ancestry home.

"The people of the South West are knowledgeable; they are egalitarian; they know what is in their best interest and Asiwaju Tinubu's life ambition does not represent that.

"If anything, Asiwaju represents all the woes, miseries, agonies, pains and desolations brought to our country by the APC administration.

"This is why the South West and other regions of the country are rallying with the Presidential Candidate of the PDP, Atiku Abubakar, who represents the hope of Nigerians in their collective determination to rescue and

rebuild our nation from the ruins caused by Asiwaju Tinubu's APC administration", he added.





# FG, DBI move to improve power supply, train 459 workers

By Agency Report

IN a bid to improve service delivery and power supply across the country, the Federal Government and the Digital Bridge Institute (DBI), have embarked on a capacity building of 459 workers from the Federal Ministry of Power, in Abuja.

The three-week training, which began on Monday at the

DBI headquarters, Abuja was sponsored by the Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission (NERC), following the approval of a capacity building training programme for the workers by the Minister of Power, Engr. Abubakar Aliyu.

The DBI is a training institute established by the Nigerian Communication Commission (NCC), to train professionals, and all categories of workers in areas of ICT, Telecommunication and other social services.

Speaking at the opening session of the special capacity building training, the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Power, Temitope Fadeshemi, said the ministry intends to undertake the training for staff in various areas to bridge identified gaps with a view to improve service delivery.

The Permanent Secretary, who was represented by the Director, Human Resources, Ministry of Power, Mrs Victoria Adeosun, said: "Constant training and re-training of staff in the civil service is vital for effective and efficient service delivery and optimal performance of staff towards higher productivity and achievement of the set goals of any organization. It is in recognition of this that the management of the Federal Ministry of Power placed high priority on training as one of its top agenda.

"The Federal Ministry of Power intends to undertake the specific capacity building training for staff in various areas to bridge identified gaps with a view to improve service delivery. Though training like this is not new, it is unique considering the stark records of the institutions

handling it. The objective for the special training is to re-abreast the entire staff of the ministry with core guiding documents of the civil service. Other skilled areas that are very central to the work of civil servants are Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and Project Management, which this training will address."

While thanking the Minister of Power for granting approval for the conduct of the training, the Permanent Secretary said: "I want to thank the management and staff of NERC for their significant roles in sponsoring this specialized training for the staff of the ministry, my gratitude goes to the management of DBI for making this training programme a success."

The President of DBI, Prof. Mohammed Ajiya, while declaring

the training opened, welcomed all the participants, and pointed out that the DBI is an ICT top tier Institution in Nigeria with seasoned instructors to guide them through their training programme.

He added that the training would be useful for them at their individual units and departments and further encouraged the participants to put in their best in participating because the special capacity building training would equip them for optimal performance on their job.

The DBI boss stated that the power sector is very crucial to the development of the country in all areas, hence the need for them to take advantage of the capacity building training for effective service delivery, adding that ICT knowledge and usage was crucial to national growth.

## Oyetola, APC get election tribunal's nod to tender documentary evidence against INEC

By Agency Report

OSUN State Election Petition Tribunal ruled on Monday that the All Progressives Congress (APC) should tender some documentary evidence on Tuesday challenging the result of the July 16 governorship election in the state.

INEC declared Sen. Ademola Oyeleke of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) as the winner of the election; a declaration that prompted the APC and its candidate, Gov. Adegboyega Oyetola to head to court.

At the tribunal's sitting in Osogbo, the Chairman, Justice Tertsea Kume, also charged respondents to cross-check the list of documents to be tendered, with a view to making the process seamless.

Counsel to Oyetola and the APC, Chief Lateef Fagbemi (SAN), had earlier told the court of his intention to tender some documentary evidence to prove alleged non-compliance with the Electoral Act by INEC.

Counsel to the PDP, Alex Izinyon (SAN), however, objected to the tendering of the documents.

He argued that the plan ran afoul of Paragraph 3 of the pre-hearing report which indicated that list of witnesses should be filed 24 hours to the hearing.

Izinyon urged the court to dismiss the petition for failing to comply with the tribunal's orders in line with the pre-hearing report.

Counsel to INEC, Prof. Paul Ananaba (SAN), aligned himself with Izinyon's argument and said the attempt by the APC to tender the documents violated the tribunal's order and the petition should be dismissed.

In his arguments, Mr Onyechi Ikpeazu (SAN), counsel to Adeleke, said the petitioners ought to have allowed the respondents to have access to the documents earlier to cross-check them.

In a counter argument, Fagbemi submitted that the Paragraph 3 of the pre-hearing report being relied upon by PDP's counsel did not refer to documentary evidence, but to the calling of witnesses.

## No mercury vaccines administered to children - NAFDAC

By Blessing Bature, Abuja

organisation.

NATIONAL Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC), has debunked a report claiming that children in Nigeria were being administered a vaccine that contains 40 per cent mercury which was prescribed by foreign

The director general, NAFDAC, Prof Mojisola Adeyeye, in a press statement, on Sunday, made available to Nigerian Pilot said mercury is a metal and as such cannot be used as an element or as a component of vaccines.

The basic components of vaccines

are antigens, adjuvants to improve immune response, antibiotics to prevent contamination during manufacturing, preservatives, and stabilizers, Adeyeye revealed, adding that thimerosal a mercuric compound which is a preservative used in multi dose vaccines contains a different form of mercury called ethyl mercury.

She said as a vaccine preservative, thimerosal is used in concentrations of 0.003 per cent to 0.01 per cent, (for example, thimerosal content allowed in vaccines is between 30 parts to maximum of 100 parts out of million parts of the vaccine formula). Thimerosal is a mercury-based preservative that has been used for



FCT Minister, Malam Muhammad Musa Bello, (r) handing over the keys of newly procured operational vehicles to the FCT Commissioner of Police, Sunday Babaji (2nd l) and AIG Zone 7, Kayode Egbetokun during the handover of 60 operational vehicles to security agencies in the FCT Abuja at the weekend

## Buhari congratulates Brazil's new president, Lula da Silva

By Mathew Dadiya, Abuja

NIGERIAN President, Muhammadu Buhari has joined world leaders in congratulating Brazil's newly elected President, Luiz Inacio

Lula da Silva on winning a hard-fought, divisive runoff election.

In congratulating the new leader on staging an astonishing comeback after leaving office and serving

jail term, the President on Monday, said he hoped that Lula as President will further enhance the excellent relations between our two states.

"I look forward to working

together with the newly elected President of Brazil to continue the excellent bilateral cooperation and growing trade relations between our two countries," the President added.

## Army neutralizes seven terrorists, recover arms, ammunition in Kaduna

By Emmanuel Obisue

MILITARY authorities have informed that its troops have neutralized seven terrorists in two separate operations in Kaduna State, and recovered cache of arms and ammunition.

A statement made available on Sunday by Brigadier General Onyema Nwachukwu, Director of Army Public Relations, said the feat was in continuation of its onslaught against terrorist groups in Nigeria's troubled North West region.

"Troops of 1 Division Nigerian

Army on Operation Forest Sanity conducted clearance operation to Maidaro, Kagi Hill, Kusharki and Anguwan Madaki in Birnin Gwari Local Government Area of Kaduna State during which contact was made with terrorists.

"In the fierce encounter that followed, 4 bandits were neutralized, forcing others to flee in disarray. The gallant troops recovered two AK 47 rifles with two rounds of 7.62mm Special, one automatic pump action gun with 3 cartridges, 6 Dane guns, 3 locally fabricated pistols with one 9mm round and 4

motorcycles.

"In a separate operation conducted by another fighting patrol team of 1 Division of Nigerian Army, troops along Sabon Birnin - Zartake, Ungwan Lima Riyawa and Tungan Madaki general area, closely supported from the air by Nigerian Air Force platforms, intercepted fleeing bandits from Kagi Hill. In the fire fight that ensued, the troops neutralized 3 terrorists," the statement read.

The statement added that the Chief of Army Staff, Lieutenant General Faruk Yahaya,

commended the troops for their "gallantry and urged them not to relent until terrorism and other criminalities are brought to an end in the region".

"The General Officer Commanding 1 Division Nigerian Army and Force Commander Operation Whirl Punch, Major General TA Lagbaja has appealed to all law abiding citizens to continue to support the troops and other security agencies with credible and actionable information that will assist in the fight against the criminal elements", he said.



# Politics



2023: You can't buy South West, Atiku Campaign tells Tinubu

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## Nigeria's political contractors at war!

By Tony Okoroji

Nigeria's master propagandists are in the battlefield, firing hot words at each other. Something crazy is going on! Those who have been hired by the big politicians to use superlatives to sell to the public their politicians' unique ability to lead Nigeria in 2023 are using the superlatives to batter themselves.

During the week, my guy, Dele Momodu whom we all in the Lagos media and entertainment family, fondly refer to as "Bob Dee" fired a very dangerous shot at the APC fraternity.

With fanfare, the APC, had Friday week, launched its 80-page presidential manifesto tagged 'Renewed Hope 2023'.

Within 24 hours, Dele Momodu, who has recently assumed the title of Director of Strategic Communications of the PDP Presidential Campaign, went out to burst the big balloon of the APC even before it began to fly. Dele described the APC manifesto as a cut and paste job, in other words a product of plagiarism.

In an article he titled 'APC: Renewed Hope or Forlorn Hope?', Dele wrote that the APC document is filled with "half-thoughts, poor reasoning, and copied notes" from Abiola's 'Hope '93' manifesto.

Before the ink had dried on Bob Dee's critique, the APC Presidential spokesperson, Festus Keyamo fired back saying that Momodu's accustomed lane is to praise-sing socialites and their likes and that he should have stayed there instead of dabbling into the more demanding job of critiquing policy statements. In the words of Keyamo, "It is clearly not his forte!"

Of course, Dele returned fire referring to Festus Keyamo as a 'Certified Nuisance'. In the last week, the Nigerian media space has known little peace from these guys.

The hot and derogatory words these gentlemen have in a few days used on each other to tear down the credibility of the other person, should be a source of worry to their families and friends. Were these men of huge egos hired to promote their candidates or to destroy each other?

What is the benefit of their hot words and diatribe to Nigerians who are presently under siege from bad leadership?



Momodu

I have written here before that I am a sucker for words masterfully put together. I believe that words used the right way can move mountains. They can make men fight like hell in war. The right words can bring peace where strife reigns. The architecture of change is words.

I am one of those who believe that Nigerians have had to endure the excruciating pain we are going through today because we have a president who has very little communication skills.

President Buhari was elected practically, without saying anything to anybody. An avalanche of people like Adams Oshiomhole, Festus Keyamo, and co. hugged the microphones at campaign events and spoke for Buhari and made promises on behalf of Buhari. Please check, Buhari personally promised Nigerians very little. With hindsight, Nigerians never really had a chance to interrogate Buhari. Middlemen and political contractors spoke for him!

Masterfully, the minds of Buhari scattered the presidential debates organized by BON during the elections. Across the world, the political debate has become a critical platform for assessing politicians and their abilities, their communication skills, their temperaments, their mastery of the issues and their readiness for the

job. That is why nations do not joke with debates and nobody gets elected without a debate. Words matter.

On the debate stage, Buhari would have been on his own. There would have been no Garba Shehu, no Femi Adesina or Lai Mohammed to tell him what to say. There would have been no carefully crafted press release to tell us what he meant. We would have heard him unfiltered and left to make up our minds.

If you think that Donald Trump lost the last U.S. presidential election on the day of voting on November 3, 2020, then you were not quite following the events. Joe Biden won the Presidency fair and square on September 29 on the debate stage in Cleveland Ohio.

Words matter. Just imagine how many people have been moved by the immortal words of Martin Luther King Jr in his 'I have a dream' speech. What of the unforgettable 'Ask not what your country can do for you' speech of John F. Kennedy? Without 'Yes we can' would Barack Obama, the young man of Kenyan ancestry, have become President of the most powerful nation on earth?

As a Nigerian, I keep scratching my head in search of the memorable or inspirational words of our President. Of course, the lack of appreciation of the use of words by those who purport to lead us, to paint their picture of tomorrow and to inspire us to dream big dreams, has something to do with the level of our underdevelopment. President Buhari's inability to lift us up with his words and heal our wounds at this

time of distress, is a sore in the heart of many Nigerians. Words do matter.

Most Nigerians are agreed that we should not make the Buhari mistake again but the political contractors are back telling us what Tinubu and Atiku will do for us as if Tinubu and Atiku are deaf and dumb. I am tired of hearing the babble of Bob Dee, Festus Keyamo, Dino Melaye or Femi Fani Kayode. This is not the time. Nigerians are in deep trouble and those who want to lead us out of the trouble must themselves tell us how.

Whether you like Peter Obi or not, he is out there everyday answering questions on Nigeria's problems and saying what he intends to do to solve them.

This time around, no presidential candidate should be allowed to use any subterfuge to escape the Presidential debates. If they cannot talk to us, they should leave us alone. This should not be the time of political contractors.

—Okoroji is former President of PMAN



## 2023: You can't buy South West, Atiku Campaign tells Tinubu



Atiku

Tinubu

By Mike Odiakose

ATIKU/Okowa Presidential Campaign Organization mocks the Presidential Candidate of the All Progressives Congress (APC), Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu, over his "failed attempt" to procure reputable South West leaders to

support his tottering and self-seeking Presidential ambition. The Campaign Council Spokesman, Kola Ologbondiyan said in a statement on Monday that Nigerians watched with dismay as the APC Presidential Candidate resorted to playing ethnic card at a session he organized at Pa Reuben

Fasoranti's house in Akure, Ondo State, at the weekend, in a bid to divert attention from his numerous anti-people issues and use the unsuspecting leaders to create an impression of having secured the endorsement of the South West. According to the PDP Campaign

Council, "Our electoral process is badly scandalized by report in the public space that the APC have been making huge financial overtures to some leaders to create factions in certain credible Pan-South West organizations and use such procured factions to pronounce support for the APC Presidential Candidate.

"The very thought by the APC Presidential Campaign to compromise the leaders of the South West is to say the least, reprehensible, atrocious, sacrilegious and show the extent of disrespect, irreverence and disdain the APC has for such revered leaders.

"Asiwaju Tinubu ought to know that he cannot sway or buy the South West or any other part of the country the way he procured the APC Presidential ticket; a ticket that has been compared to the Zimbabwean dollar.

"The handlers of the APC Presidential Candidate should know that the South West, like other sections of the country, are holding Tinubu directly responsible for the woes the nation have been passing through in the last seven and half years of the APC administration; an administration Asiwaju Tinubu confessed to have helped install.

"Moreover, Asiwaju Tinubu

cannot be trusted by the South West or any part of the country for that matter as his persistent self-centered assertions and barefaced entitlement messaging demonstrate that his presidential ambition is driven by the pursuit of personal aggrandizement and not to serve the people.

"It is clear that majority of the people of the South West have rejected the APC Presidential candidate and cannot fall to APC's trickeries. This informs why the APC lost woefully in the July 16 Osun State governorship election to the PDP; a state considered to be Asiwaju's ancestry home.

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"This is why the South West and other regions of the country are rallying with the Presidential Candidate of the PDP, Atiku Abubakar, who represents the hope of Nigerians in their collective determination to rescue and

## 2023: I will end excesses of touts in Lagos – PDP guber candidate

LAGOS State PDP Governorship candidate, Dr Abdul-Azeez Adediran (Jandor), said he would end all excesses of transport unions and motor park touts if elected governor in 2023. Speaking on Sunday evening at the formal presentation of the PDP Governorship Candidate in Akwa Ibom State, Pastor Umo Eno, to indigenes of the state residing in Lagos state, Adediran said he is prepared to give residents of the state a new lease of life.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that the event was held at the Nigerian Airforce, Kofu Abayomi Street, Victoria Island, Lagos.

The joint Drivers Welfare Association of Nigeria ((JDWAN))

on Sunday said it would commence its proposed seven-day strike from Monday over alleged extortion and harassment from the motor park management and thugs popularly known as Agbero.

Adediran, who played host at the event, said: "We will provide a new leadership in Lagos State.

"We will check the excesses of motor touts as well as Iyaloja and Babaloja in the state. "Anyone that closes any market in the state would be sent to prison. I am not going to have any godfather.

"We will ensure that any money collected as revenue in Lagos State is spent for the people of the state as against what is currently obtainable in the state."

According to him, the time has

come to liberate the people of the state. Adediran said that his administration would provide opportunity for peaceful co-existence between indigenes and non-indigenes in the state.

He said that efforts would be made to ensure that all residents of the state continue to live in peace and harmony under his government.

He said that his administration would appreciate the contributions of non-indigenes to the economy of the state under his government. Speaking on his counterpart from Akwa Ibom, Adediran expressed belief that Eno would follow the footsteps of the outgoing Gov. Udom Emmanuel of Akwa Ibom.

According to him, Gov. Emmanuel sees what others do not see, and that he has taken him (Emmanuel) as his father.

While promising to build on the success story of Emmanuel, the PDP candidate told the people that the election would be a referendum on the performances of the outgoing Governor.

"The government of Obong Udom Emmanuel has completed so many projects in Akwa Ibom State such as good roads, street lights, walkways, fountains, dualised roads and others, and he has made us proud.

"When the standard bearer of the PDP, Alhaji Atiku Abubakar, came to flag off his campaign in

Akwa Ibom, he said that Nigeria wants to be Akwa Ibom.

"The Governor is building the fourth longest bridge in Nigeria. He has opened Akwa Ibom by air, land and sea.

"With these, it is time to go back home, Udom is working. We will send you logistics to come home to vote, while those here should vote for the PDP," he said. Eno said that Akwa Ibom was fast developing, adding that "the election is not a popularity contest, but that it is about a need and impactful assessment."

The cleric-turned politician said that Emmanuel brought peace to the state, hence the need to continue the trajectory of development.

## BMO Lauds Buhari's 'Nigeria First' Economic Policies

By Mike Odiakose

BUHARI Media Organisation, BOM on Monday said President Muhammadu Buhari deserves commendation for exemplifying the federal government's commitment to grow our domestic production through the patronage of locally produced goods and services.

The organisation declared that this is in line with President Buhari's Executive Order 003 by which manufacturers now enjoy the benefits of the right of first refusal.

In a statement signed by its Chairman Niyi Akinsiju and Secretary Cassidy Madueke, BMO said this is part of the domestication of the national economy where all federal government's ministries, departments, and agencies are required to patronize local producers, not just of goods but of services in the areas of security and other procurements.

"What the federal government is doing is to actually lead by examples; by crystallizing the spirit and the intent or intentment of executive order 003.

"The new approval of N660.422 million for the procurement of operational vehicles for the Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC) will not be the first time government agencies would be patronizing Innoson vehicles under President Buhari

"Nigeria's FRSC uses Made-In-Nigeria cars from Innoson. Nigerian firefighters use Made-In-Nigeria fire trucks from Innoson.

"The Nigerian Police use Made-In-Nigeria cars from Innoson. Nigerian Army uses Made-In-Nigeria vehicles and trucks from Innoson.

"This will strengthen the domestication of our economy by growing the economy,

creating jobs, strengthening our domestic currency, reducing capital flight, and increasing contribution to government revenue".

According to the Buhari group, "this will serve as a message of hope to Nigerian manufacturers across board in the area of production and productivity.

"The federal government's commitment has shown that local producers have a ready-made market even if it is for government procurement.

"The move is an effort by the federal government to encourage local industries to thrive in the country.

"We, therefore, urge ministries, departments, agencies, and the sub-nationals (States) to emulate the federal government in patronizing locally produced goods so that the country will reap full benefits of its multiplier effects", the statement added.

## Why Tinubu will record landslide victory in 2023 – APC Diaspora

THE Diaspora Directorate of All Progressives Congress (APC) Tinubu-Shettima Presidential Campaign Council (PCC) says the party will record landslide victory in the 2023 poll, because it has massive support from Nigerians.

Mr Ade Omole, Director, Diaspora Directorate, APC Tinubu-Shettima Presidential Campaign Council (PCC) said this when he spoke with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) on Sunday in Abuja.

Omole said that the massive support being enjoyed by the party was a pointer to its victory in the 2023 general election.

He said that the presidential candidate of the party Asiwaju Bola Tinubu has track records of unprecedented accomplishments during his days as Lagos State governor to show for his bid to

succeed President Muhamadu Buhari.

He said that Tinubu was the most acceptable among the Presidential candidates for 2023 because he has built bridges across the country's geo-political zones as well as buiding people.

"Tinubu has built an empire out of many Nigerians who crossed paths with him ever since his foray into public office.

"These Nigerians and many others who believe in his vision for a better Nigeria, are today mostly his foot soldiers, campaigning for him across the federation," Omole said.

He said while other presidential candidates were literarily asleep, Tinubu, a former two-term Lagos State governor was on the top of his game and his foot soldiers not relenting.



## Politics

# Kidnapping: HURIWA ask FG to constitute judicial commission on alleged military collusion

...Applauds Gov Ugwuanyi for prompt counter kidnapping measures

By Mike Odiakose

Human Rights Writers Association of Nigeria, HURIWA, on Monday, asked the Federal Government to constitute a judicial commission of inquiry to investigate alleged collusion of military officers with terrorist and kidnapers.

HURIWA also asked the Enugu State government to set up a judicial commission of inquiry on alleged involvement of security operatives for aiding and abetting kidnapers.

The group also commended the Enugu State governor Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi for his swift action which led to the rescue of most of the citizens of Enugu State kidnapped recently in Enugu State.

HURIWA's National Coordinator, Comrade Emmanuel Onwubiko, in a statement, described as

worrisome the growing trend of the alleged complicity of security agents in the despicable act of kidnapping and banditry across Nigeria.

The group condemned the recent kidnappings of commuters including students of the University of Nigeria Nsukka along the Enugu-Ugwuogo Nike-Nsukka Road in Enugu State, South-East Nigeria.

Youths under the auspices of Ohanaeze Ndigbo Youth Council lately alleged that the kidnapers have some insiders among security agencies manning various checkpoints on the road.

The National President of the group, Okwu Nnabuike in a statement on Saturday, said that all the security operatives on duty when the incidents took place should be probed,

noting that the importation of insecurity into Enugu is to dent its peaceful status.

Nnabuike said a victim of the kidnap incident narrated that "the police and the army are complicit in the act of kidnapping at the Opi-Ugwuogo axis".

Reacting, HURIWA's Onwubiko said, "The recurring kidnapping on the Enugu-Ugwuogo Nike-Nsukka Road in Enugu is disturbing and condemnable. We call for the immediate constitution of a judicial commission of inquiry to investigate these allegations and many others about collusion between armed security forces and kidnapers of Fulani ethnicity.

"The alleged complicity of security agents and kidnapers has been more resounding in 2022. Earlier in the year, the

Prelate of the Methodist Church Nigeria, His Eminence, Samuel Kanu Uche, after his release, said he observed that military men were present where he was kidnapped and held hostage as he also observed their cows around the vicinity.

"Also, in February 2021, Julius Abuda, the younger brother of Chief Dennis Abuda, an American-based Nigerian businessman who was killed by kidnapers at Ahor, Benin, Edo State, said he dropped ransom for his brother's kidnapers near a police station.

"A former Assistant Director with the Department of State Services, Dennis Amachree, in February 2021, said the compound where Islamic cleric, Sheikh Gumi, met bandits in Niger State to discuss the release of the abducted students and teachers of Government

Science College, Kangara, were very close to a military post.

"Gumi's ally and kidnapers' negotiator, Tukur Mamu, has been cooling off in the custody of the Department of Security Service after military gears and a large amount of cash was found in his residence allegedly.

"In a similar development, a former soldier, Sa'idu Lawal, was arrested in Zamfara State in August 2022 for supplying arms to terrorists in the northwestern state. Another soldier was caught supplying weapons to kidnapers in Gwagwalada Abuja by the DSS.

"HURIWA calls on President Muhammadu Buhari not to sweep all these incidents under carpet but ensure that the perpetrators and saboteurs amongst security agents are brought to book."

## Why Tinubu will record landslide victory in 2023 – APC Diaspora

By Lanre Oloyede

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"These Nigerians and many others who believe in his vision for a better Nigeria, are today mostly his foot soldiers, campaigning for him across the federation," Omole said.

He said while other presidential candidates were literally asleep, Tinubu, a former two-term Lagos State governor was on the top of his game and his foot soldiers not relenting.

## 2023: Kwara PDP Presidential Campaign DG projects victory for Atiku

By Kayode Abdulazeez

AHEAD of the 2023 general elections, the Director General, Presidential Campaign Council of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in Kwara State, Dr Mahmud Babatunde Ajeigbe, has vowed that the party would mobilize the people of the state to queue behind the ambition of the PDP presidential candidate, Alhaji Atiku Abubakar, to ensure his victory at the polls.

Ajeigbe said the PDP presidential flag-bearer has proven himself to be a major force in the nation's political firmament and his candidacy this time around is to effect turnaround in the economy, security and well being of the citizenry.

In a statement issued in Ilorin on Sunday, the Kwara PDP Presidential Campaign Council Director General, who is a

former state Commissioner for Information and Communication noted that Kwarans and Nigerians are not oblivious of the failings of the All Progressives Congress (APC) across levels and rewarding it with another mandate poses danger to the survival of the nation.

He added that the current state of security and economy left much to be desired, especially with the pervasive famine in the land.

Ajeigbe observed that the former Vice President is in the race with a new ray of hope that Nigeria, as the most populous African nation, would attain its greatness when right pegs are put in right holes.

The former Kwara Commissioner assured that the people of the state have shown keen interest in voting massively for the PDP so as to rescue them from the economic doldrums

imposed on them as a result of lackluster and cluelessness of the ruling party.

He appealed to the people of the state to rally round and vote for all candidates of the PDP in the state for the forthcoming general elections.

The Offa-born politician, however, expressed gratitude to the state PDP leader and President of the Eight Senate, Dr Abubakar Bukola Saraki; state PDP elders, leaders and party faithful for the confidence reposed in him and others appointed to lead the presidential campaign council of the party in the state.

"Events in almost eight years of the ruling APC at all levels have shown that Nigerians have grown tired of its direction-less and cluelessness. This therefore means that we can't continue to lament over what we can change with our

hands.

"The PDP presidential flag-bearer, Alhaji Atiku Abubakar, is on a rescue mission of turning around the economy that has been battered over the years. It is no longer news that Nigerians are living fear of insecurity. Famine is also here with us. It is obvious that it would be hard for our dear nation to survive under the hopeless situation with APC in the saddle again.

"The time is now for us as Kwarans in particular and Nigerians in their entirety to stop lamenting and vote massively for Alhaji Atiku Abubakar, who has proven to be a major force in the nation's political firmament and his candidacy this time around is to effect turnaround in the economy, security, education, infrastructure, well being of the citizenry among others", Ajeigbe

## Atiku, Tinubu mourn Ariyo-Dare Atoye

PRESIDENTIAL candidates of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Atiku Abubakar and his counterpart in the All Progressives Congress (APC), Asiwaju Bola Tinubu, have commiserated with the family and friends of the late rights activist and executive director of the Adopt-A-Goal Initiative, Ariyo-Dare Atoye.

Ariyo died on Thursday, October 27, 2022, in a private hospital, of lung cancer.

In his message, Atiku Abubakar described Ariyo as a young man filled with energy and passion.

"Mr Ariyo Atoye was a patriot, an activist, and a loyal member of our great party, the PDP. I just received report of his death after a

protracted battle with lung cancer.

"He was a young man filled with energy and passion. My thoughts and prayers are with his family, his friends and his loved ones. May his soul rest in peace," Atiku said.

In his message, Tinubu commiserated with Ariyo's family and friends over his untimely death and prayed to the Almighty God to

grant Ariyo eternal rest.

"Today I commiserate with the family and friends of Ariyo Dare Atoye @AyoAristotle over his sad and untimely passing. I pray that the Almighty God, in his infinite mercy, grants him eternal rest. And may He also grant comfort to his family and loved ones," Tinubu said.

## Tinubu presents manifesto to business leaders in Lagos Tuesday

PRESIDENTIAL candidate of the All Progressives Congress (APC), Asiwaju Bola Tinubu, will on Tuesday present his campaign manifesto to the business and the organised private sector leaders in Lagos State.

This was contained in a statement issued on Sunday by the Director, Media and Publicity of the APC Presidential Campaign Council, Bayo Onanuga.

Onanuga stated that the meeting with the business leaders will hold at the Eko Hotel and Suites in Lagos, noting that it will afford the economic players and thought leaders in the private sector to interact with the APC presidential candidate on his campaign manifesto, tagged, 'Action Plan'.

Speaking on the development, the Secretary of the APC Presidential Campaign Council,

Hon. James Faleke, said the meeting was convened to allow Tinubu share his vision for a better Nigeria with various actors in the economy and allow for critical examination of the policy options contained in the 'Action Plan'.

"Asiwaju Tinubu has a very rich private sector background and experience. He has abiding faith in private enterprise and its fundamental role in national

development and economic growth. The private sector needs power, predictability and consistency in policy to drive investment and boost national productivity.

"The dialogue will enable Business Leaders to also share their insights and concerns with our Presidential candidate. The town hall will be a great avenue to sell Asiwaju's vision for Nigeria," Faleke said.



# On what issues are 2023 Presidency front-liners running?

By Magnus Onyibe

The 2023 general election in Nigeria promises to be a referendum of sorts. That is simply because each of the frontrunners of the three leading parties, All Progressives Congress, APC, Peoples Democratic

Party, PDP and Labour Party, LP that are likely to produce the next president of Nigeria next year have assets or liabilities by virtue of having been in public eyes through public service records that are being scrutinized.

And it is from those prisms that the assessment of the capacities and abilities of the potential next president of Nigeria in 2023 is being carried out.

But even as the February 25 date when the first ballots are expected to be cast is barely four months away, internal schisms are still wracking the main political parties-ruling, APC, main opposition, PDP and a new contender, LP.

The wrangling in the two traditional rival parties is so rife that while the APC could not form its campaign council or produce its manifesto until last Friday October 21, which is nearly one month after the Independent National Electoral Commission, INEC lifted the ban on campaigns last September 28, the PDP which had launched its campaign and manifesto on October 10 which is barely twelve (12) days after the ban was lifted has not really made waves.

The PDP is yet to ramp up its campaign in earnest, in part, owing to hiccups bothering on whether or not it is pausing to accommodate the rebellious gang of governors led by Rivers state governor, Nyesom Wike with three (3) or four (4) other governors, which is gaining traction and with a potential of crystallizing into a breakaway faction of the PDP.

The extended period of ninety (90) days instead of sixty (60) days which had been the time frame within which after the primaries the parties are allowed to campaign before election is held.

Since the extra thirty (30) days for campaign has cost implications, the parties may be saving their best campaign resources for the last leg indicating prudent use of the funds.

I will in the course of this discuss dwell further on the internecine wars raging in the APC and PDP, but which is being quelled by the former, even as it is unfortunately consuming the latter and why campaigns are not near fever pitch.

In contrast to the crisis that has stricken the traditional parties, the LP that is coming in from the rear has been to some degrees, but not totally rancour free. The suspension of the youth wing leader, Aragbe Anselm, who was also a presidential candidate that stepped down for Peter Obi is creating some rumblings in the party.

Remarkably, LP had literally jumped the gone by commencing campaigns online and embarking

on million man marches which are actually street processions staged by angry unemployed and out of school youths.

Somehow, that amounted to campaigning in disguise long before it was legitimate to do so.

And it boils down to bending the rule without breaking it since the nation's elections regulatory organ INEC which had set the takeoff date for the campaigns for the 2023 elections for September 28 did not take cognizance of the power of the internet in political campaigns or could not phantom how to enforce ban on campaigning online.

Consequently, LP was able to seize the space to maximally market its self and its presidential candidate to the youths who are the so called NETIZENS and mainly adult Nigerians, especially those in the diaspora who are now in the forefront of the movement for the actualization of Obi presidency in 2023.

Having started late, since the LP unlike the PDP or APC had never been in power as a ruling party as such it is relatively unknown to the electorate and therefore understandable why the party has been in a hurry to spread its foot prints nationwide.

And, truth be told, it is a feat that it has achieved via its massive social media presence being powered by the same youths that staged #Endsars street protests against government in October, 2020 and out of school students owing to ASUU eight (8) months long strike.

The LP has performed so commendably that both INEC and the traditional parties, APC and PDP have a lesson or two to learn from the new party that has shot itself into national reckoning via its captivating ability to harvest latent youth voter energy hitherto unharnessed.

The current unprecedented wave of youth's participation in politics which has added about ten (10) million to the number of eligible voters for the 2023 contest according to INEC records has resulted in a paradigm shift in politics with politicking based on socioeconomic issues driven by our youths now being the new order.

That is as opposed to focusing on prebendal issues of religion and tribe which the old generation politicians are still dwelling on, hence progress and development of significance have been eluding our country.

So, what appears to be LP's liability which is little or no clout or rich political pedigree prior to the current election season owing to its newness on the national platform compared to the two leading and traditional parties that had controlled power at the centre, PDP for sixteen years and APC for 8 years by May 29 next year) is turning out to also be its strength in light of the fact that it is not bogged down by the burden of a negative record of leadership at the centre like the ruling APC and main opposition, PDP.

Fortuitously, the LP had earlier on in the NETIZENS journey to the 2023 general elections been faced with the

challenges of internal schisms that are presently threatening to tear the traditional parties especially the PDP asunder.

That was when it's current presidential candidate, Peter Obi, a former vice presidential candidate to Atiku Abubakar as presidential candidate on the PDP platform in 2019 seized the LP platform to pursue his presidential ambition when he realized that he had no chance in his original party, PDP where there were multiple major players or 'big boys' jostling to become the presidential flag bearer.

Before joining the PDP, Peter Obi had served as the governor of Anambra state in 2014 under the platform of All Progressive Grand Alliance, APGA, founded by Igbo war icon, Chief Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu of blessed memory.

So in pivoting to the LP, he figured out that he had no fighting chance in the PDP which was quite insightful given the epic battle still raging within the main opposition party arising from a very vicious contest for the presidential ticket last May.

Of course, taking over the LP as its presidential candidate was not a tea party.

But Obi had the good fortune or foresight of escaping to the LP to avoid the fall outs of the demons of post party primaries wrangling that border on personality supremacy that the APC and PDP are currently wrestling with.

Perhaps, given the very contentious nature of labour unions, LP which had labour activists as its core foundation members, the party could not really move forward as it should.

It may be recalled that one of the foremost union leaders in Nigeria, Adams Oshiomhole that later became APC chairman ventured into politics via the LP platform.

But he later switched to APC after becoming governor of Edo state, owing to the complexity of the LP platform.

So, also did Olusegun Mimiko, who also left the LP - a platform under which he served as governor of Ondo state to join the PDP.

Even Dele Momodu, Ovation magazine publisher had once contested for the presidency of Nigeria on the LP platform before he joined the PDP and contested in the primaries for the 2023 presidential ticket.

I have gone this far into details about the antecedents of LP and it's presidential candidate to put into context the fact that for Peter Obi to become the party's presidential candidate he had daunting obstacles to surmount and they include hostile former leaders of the party that he successfully tackled within the party and in the court of law and thus flushed them out.

The acrimony was not unexpected because it is an existential reality that it is such atmosphere and environment of high friction which is synonymous with trade unionism that compelled

the aforementioned notables who had previously leveraged the LP platform to become governors in Edo and Ondo states as well as becoming a presidential flag bearer, that caused them to flee from the party would also afflict Peter Obi.

But whereas the political notables before Peter Obi failed to give wings to the LP to fly, it's current presidential ticket holder has made it a prominent player in the politics of Nigeria such that it has from being a fringe party become both a national and an international sensation by leveraging the support of his somewhat fanatical supporters by the name, OBEDIENTS at home and abroad, that recently transformed into OBIDATTI movement-a tag that is forged out of the acronyms of the surnames of the presidential and vice presidential candidates, Peter Obi and Yussuf Datti Baba-Ahmed.

It is phenomenal that in a space of just six (6) months after Peter Obi took over the reins of leadership, the LP has become a party of consequence in Nigeria's 2023 general elections.

Invariably, the LP is basically running with the message that it would turn Nigeria from a consuming country to a producing one with a promise to correct everything that has gone wrong with our beloved country under the watch of APC, but without details about its rescue plan and how it would be implemented.

Is that enough to cut the ice with the Nigerian electorate that has been disappointed multiple times by politicians who campaign in poetry, govern in prose-a quote attributed to former New York state governor, Mario Cuomo?

At this juncture it is apropos that we shine the light on the jeopardy within the two main traditional parties- the APC and PDP which are increasingly looking as if they are sinking like elephants caught in quicksand (more so with the PDP and less with APC) while their distant rival, LP is galloping like a gazelle in the savannah through populist actions that the leaders are involving themselves in, such as the call for campaigns to be paused in honour of the over six hundred Nigerians that have died from the recent massive flooding in the low lying areas of the country.

It is germane to point out that the hiatus that was triggered in the two leading parties are self inflicted because they are a fall out of the poor management of the high wire politicking that took place during the party primaries between May and June this year.

With respect to the APC, its presidential candidate Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu, BAT who was not the preferred candidate of the leadership of the party but who practically pulled a chestnut out of fire or in a hat trick was at loggerheads with the leadership of the party that presumably preferred Senate President Ahmed Lawan as the party's presidential candidate until Tinubu in last minute horse trading rallied all the Yoruba and a

couple of south-south presidential candidates to step down for him.

The routing of the other contenders for the presidential tickets including former transportation minister and ex Rivers state governor, Rotimi Amaechi and Vice President Yemi Osinbajo who came second and third respectively in the primaries contest left a bad taste in the mouth of the defeated candidates and their supporters.

As such, Tinubu's victory that was aided by the suspected disdain of APC northern governors for senate president Lawan's quest to scale up from number three to number one on the ladder or leadership hierarchy of our country was also the additional wind beneath Tinubu's sail.

Had Lawan who had the Chairman of the party, Abdulahi Adamu as the propelling force succeeded, his presidency could have thwarted the chance of any of the current and immediate past APC governors that are angling or positioning to get a shot at the presidency after Tinubu's tenure.

Their chances could have been zero simply because if Lawan were to become number one Aso Rock Villa occupant from 2023 for perhaps eight (8) years after which it would be the turn of the south to produce the next president, and there would be a likely wait for at least sixteen (16) years before the current northern governors and other top political actors could get a shot at the presidency.

Since they reckon that they would be out of relevance politically or even be too infirm or not be alive sixteen years from 2023, he was denied their support.

There is even a conspiracy theory that senate president Lawan's inability to secure his ticket to return to the senate as his place holder allegedly reneged on their agreement to relinquish the ticket to him emanated from the camp of those that scuttled his presidential ambition who have also gone all the way to cancel him out of active participation in politics in the next dispensation.

With no love lost between those that Tinubu deem as internal foes and perhaps justifiably so, a list of campaign council members prepared by the party without his imprimatur had been rejected after being published in the social media by the party.

Being suspicious of the lack of altruism in the intentions of the party leadership that was initially not enthusiastic about his ambition, BAT had insisted on his input in the manifesto.

And tension had welled up and tempers flared up with the ensuing threat of a rift that could have gravely damaged the fabric of unity within the APC being palpable.

-Onyibe, an entrepreneur, public policy analyst, author, development strategist, alumnus of Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University, Massachusetts, USA and a former commissioner in Delta



# Comments

## Evaluation of Section 849 of CAMA 2020

By Oluchi Elendu

FOR over three decades, the Companies and Allied Matters Act of 1990 had been regulating businesses in Nigeria without any reform. This is despite massive development and evolution in the business world which largely rendered some of the provisions of the law outdated.

On the 7th day of August 2020, the Companies and Allied Matters Act, 2020 (CAMA 2020) was signed into law by President Muhammadu Buhari. The Act introduced immense significant changes in Nigeria's business environment and lessened obstruction which over the years had frustrated business dealings in Nigeria.

These significant changes made under the 2020 Act are to promote access to the business world for foreigners and national investors as well as encourage investments from new entrepreneurs that permit owners of small and medium-scale businesses to succeed and improve Nigeria's economy.

Some of the apparent benefits of CAMA 2020 are: Lessened the effectiveness of the regulations for Micro, Small, and Medium

Enterprises. Lessened the time and cost of setting up a company. Encourage financial steadiness. Improve investment by increasing investor confidence in the Nigerian financial sector as well as all sectors of the economy. Create a conducive business for transactions.

Notwithstanding the above-listed innovations and assurance, CAMA 2020 does not come without its defects and uncertainties. Section 849 of the amended CAMA 2020 provides for the merger of associations. It provides thus: "Two or more associations with similar aims and objects may merge under terms and conditions as the Commission may prescribe by regulation".

Below are appraisals of section 849 of CAMA 2020: Section 849 of CAMA 2020 is unconstitutional. The above section authorized the commission to merge incorporated trustees with the same aims which is both unconstitutional, and a total aberration of fundamental rights to freedom of association as provided for under section 40 of the 1999 Constitution which provides –

"every person shall be entitled to assemble freely and associate with other persons, and he may form

or join any political party, trade union, or any other association for the protection of his interest".

Section 1(1) of the 1999 Constitution (as amended) made the Constitution the supreme law of the land and binding on all citizens of Nigeria. Furthermore, section 1(3) of the 1999 Constitution (as amended) provides - "if any law is inconsistent with the provisions of this constitution, this constitution shall prevail, and that other law shall to the extent of its inconsistency be void", thus declaring any conflicting laws with any provision of the constitution inapplicable to the extent of the inconsistency.

This is called covering the field. Under the doctrine of covering the field, neither the National Assembly nor the State House of Assembly can make a valid law covered by the constitution. This was also the ruling of the court in the case of Attorney General of the Ogun State v. Attorney General of the Federation (1982) 2 NCLR 166.

The Court of Appeal, in the case of Inspector General of Police v. ANPP and Ors applied this doctrine by declaring the provisions of the Public Order Act which provided

that a permit is needed from the Governor before people can assemble in public, contrary to the provisions of fundamental human rights of freedom of expression and association provided for under S.40 CFRN 1999 (as amended) and therefore null and void.

Section 40 of the Constitution is very explicit in granting trustees and members of the Board of Trustees of a duly registered Incorporated Trustee protections under the law.

Considering the above, an association cannot be dissolved except in accordance with section 850 of CAMA nor can it be merged with another Association with similar objects' without infringing on the fundamental rights of the trustees because they are afforded protection under the law. It is therefore submitted that the provision of Section 849 is inconsistent with the provisions of the constitution and is therefore null and void to the extent of that inconsistency.

Section 849 CAMA 2020 is autocratic: From the foregoing, the provision of section 849 of CAMA is autocratic as it fails to bring into the limelight the sovereignty

of the people as enshrined in the constitution under S.14(2)(a) CFRN 1999 (as amended). This democratic precept includes the protection of fundamental human rights as provided in the constitution. It is therefore autocratic and tyrannical for an association(s) to be merged without the consent of the persons who formed the association and therefore constitutes a violation of their democratic rights.

Section 849 of CAMA is incomplete: The section is incomplete as information with regards to similarities in association, the procedure for a merger, etc. were not provided by the regulation. It is submitted that Section 849 of CAMA is inconsistent with the provisions of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended) which is the supreme law of the country and is therefore null and void.

This article serves as a call to the National Assembly for an urgent review in order to prevent possible autocratic exertion of powers by the Registrar-General of the Corporate Affairs Commission.

...Oluchi Elendu is a Human Rights Public Interest Lawyer.

## Mukhtar and prompt passage of 2023 Appropriation Bill

By Ibrahim Biu

RECENTLY, President Muhammadu Buhari presented his last Appropriation Bill to the National Assembly for approval. This is the president's highest proposed budget spending so far since his assumption of office; the appropriation bill is estimated at a total of N20.51trillion. This has continued to generate varied public reactions. While many Nigerians described it as a compact one, others have said it is too tight.

It is however important to understand one fact, that is, as next year's election draws nearer, Nigerians are reminded about the fact that the administration of President Muhammadu Buhari is equally winding down gradually. But that does not mean that governance and development projects are slowing or winding down as government will continue to function in order to provide dividends of democracy to the people.

The joint National Assembly session has received it and the

lawmakers are already working on it with many of them making a break down; statutory transfers will take N774.11billion; recurrent cost at N8.72trillion; N4.19trillion for personnel cost while pension and gratuities got N854 billion. The deliberation on the bill goes on this week.

However, no matter what is being said about it by anybody, the bill deserves a very close appraisal and a prompt attention of the lawmakers. This is because the outgoing administration has already earmarked a lot of projects to be accomplished before President Buhari hands over power to the next president in May 2023.

Among the issues to be tackled include the provision of critical infrastructure to grow the nation's economy, completion of 21 critical roads totalling over 1,000 lines like the Lagos-Ibadan Expressway, Abuja-Kaduna-Kano road, Lagos-Ibadan Rail line, completion of power lines, stabilization of nation's democratic process, overhauling of the health, agriculture, educational

and technological systems, empowering of unemployed youths and tackling food security, as well as general insecurity. There are several other problems staring us in the face.

Happily the bill is already receiving the desired attention as revealed to the nation last week by the chairman of the House of Representatives Committee on Appropriation, Hon. Muktar Betara Aliyu. Hon. Muktar had in fact further commended the appropriation bill describing it as a well-packaged presentation. This statement is good news to Nigerians who are actually eagerly waiting for its prompt approval. I hope the Senate will also give the bill the same prompt attention in the interest of the nation. The two houses should work in harmony and ensure that Nigerians get a better deal out of the budget when it is eventually passed and signed into law.

Muktar Betara has been a consistent supporter of the Buhari administration. His reaction to the

budget is a welcome development. He is convinced that the bill will be passed in record time just like it happened last year. The law maker had assured that it will receive the same prompt attention to enable the Buhari-led administration implement its priority programmes before May next year. Lawmakers like Betara and his Senate counterpart, Sen. Barau, deserves commendation because of their determination to move the nation forward by cooperating with the Buhari-led government. Muktar believes that the Buhari government is a benevolent one.

Outside his legislative duties, Muktar has been very helpful to his constituency. In addition to the physical developments that he had been able to accomplish, Muktar had within the past seven years empowered thousands of unemployed youths to be enterprising entrepreneurs in various areas. This group is made up of women, widows, handicapped persons, farmers, tailors, shoe makers and other

low income earners across his constituency. He is helping his people in many ways. He has initiated and extended many people-oriented programmes which have empowered the youth and it is appropriate to say he is quintessential personality.

Muktar is a loyal and trustworthy grassroots politician who believes in doing everything possible to help his constituency. His unique selling points are his humility, simplicity and humanness. He hates injustice and has remained a dedicated and committed lawmaker. He continues to demonstrate leadership by example. He is accessible, understanding and disciplined.

The Borno State-born lawmaker from Biu has carried to work assiduously for the progress and unity of the nation. The man has been working quietly and a lot for his people without any flamboyance as other politicians are doing all over the place.

...Biu sent this article from Abuja.



Sports Minister congratulates  
Flamingos, Olympic Eagles for

# SPORTS



## Chelsea, Real Madrid battle for Newcastle midfielder

## Barca accelerate bid to capture Messi



Sports

### Chelsea, Real Madrid battle for Newcastle midfielder

Chelsea have expressed an interest in Newcastle midfielder Bruno Guimaraes. But the Blues know they face a difficult fight to prize the Brazilian away from St James' Park. Guimaraes has starred for Newcastle since his £40million move from Lyon in January and this season he has played a key role in helping the Magpies charge into the top four. Real Madrid are also eyeing a move for the 24-year-old but he has four years left on his contract at Newcastle and their super-wealthy Saudi owners are unlikely to let him leave.



### Barca accelerate bid to capture Messi



Barcelona president Joan Laporta wants to accelerate his bid to bring Lionel Messi back to the Camp Nou, according to Marca. The Catalan club have been plotting to re-sign the Argentine, who joined Paris Saint-Germain as a free agent in 2021. Messi's current contract in Paris is set to expire next summer and Laporta wants the club legend to retire "wearing the Barcelona shirt". However, Marca report that Barca are growing impatient and are willing to move for Messi as early as January as they "do not want to wait until the summer".

### Inter Miami in secret talks with Lionel Messi

Inter Miami are reportedly confident of signing Lionel Messi and hope the PSG star will agree a deal with David Beckham's MLS franchise in the 'coming months'. Messi is under contract at PSG until next summer but speculation has continued to rage over his future should he not sign a new deal with the French giants. The 35-year-old Argentine forward has been linked with a fairytale return to Barcelona, who he left to join PSG last August. But according to The Athletic, secret talks have been ongoing for several months between his representatives and



### Arsenal target Saka's rival



ARSENAL are considering a January move for Orlando City forward Facundo Torres. The Gunners are due to hold talks with the Uruguayan international's agent as they target a right winger to provide competition for Bukayo Saka. Torres impressed in MLS this season, scoring nine goals and claiming 10 assists. Arsenal's move for the 22-year-old is still at an early stage and it remains to be seen whether they press ahead with a deal for him after talks with his representatives and Orlando. Torres, who played and scored against Arsenal in a pre-season friendly over the summer, only moved to Orlando in January, leaving Uruguayan side Penarol for around £7.75million and signing a four-year contract with the option for a further 12 months.

### De Jong may remain at Barca



DESPITE the previous report from the Star, Spanish media outlet Sport state that Frenkie de Jong is "not thinking of leaving Barcelona". The Dutch midfielder is reportedly on the radar of a number of top clubs, including Manchester United, Chelsea and Bayern Munich, but he has no interest in leaving the Camp Nou. Sport say that it is De Jong's "dream" to "stay and succeed at Barca" so will not even entertain the idea of leaving the club in the winter transfer window. The only way De Jong could depart in future is if the club forces him to leave after accepting an "astronomical offer".

### Ronaldo's Frustration

THE Sun report that Cristiano Ronaldo has privately labelled his return to Manchester United as a "disaster". The 37-year-old returned to Old Trafford last year after leaving for Real Madrid back in 2009. However, the Premier League club have failed to find a consistent level since the departure of Sir Alex Ferguson in 2013. Ronaldo reportedly admitted his situation was a "disaster", while venting his frustrations at the physical shape of his team-mates and the lack of investment on the club's training ground at Carrington.



Sports

### Pro-wrestling boss seeks government assistance



President of Pro-Wrestling Federation of Nigeria Chief John Uche says there is need for government at all levels to support the growth of the sports in order to give the fighters a sense of belonging. He told our correspondent yesterday that the country boasts of talented mats men who can bring glory to their fatherland but they're not encouraged to excel in the game in which Nigeria has produced world champions in the past. "It's quite unfortunate that professional wrestling in the country is gradually going into extinction because of lack of government and corporate support. This was a sport that produced world champion in the person of late Power Mike and many other talented fighters that brought glory to the country but suddenly, nobody is paying attention to the sports which is discouraging most of the wrestlers. " We have a pool of talented and dedicated fighters who are still passionate about the sport and all they need is little financial assistant to enable them achieve their full potential in the game and I hope the government and corporate Nigeria can invest in the game and use it to keep the youths busy thereby fighting crime, restiveness and other social vices in the society", he stressed. Chief Uche explained that not minding the difficulties involved in getting sponsors for their various programmes, he's still optimistic that the sport under his watch will move forward.

### Amoo makes case for improved League



Ifeanyi Marcus, Lagos Flying Eagles Coach, Fatai Amoo has said that for the country's teams to put up a good performance at CAF continental championships, there must be an improvement of the domestic league. He told Nigerian Pilot Sports that for the country to get it right at both the CAF Champions League and Confederation Cups, programme must be put in place stating when the league will commence and end in order to have a normal calendar. "The major problem our teams are having at the continental level is lack of normal calendar

in operating our League. I say this because there is a methodological order of training and if you don't have it, you might think you're good until when you go to the continent where you'll discover you are lacking behind in so many areas", began the former Assistant Coach of the U-23 team. "It's absurd that when other countries are starting their League, we will still be planning and at times we are even not sure who the would be sponsors of the League will be and all these affect the moral of the teams. According to the former Nigeria U-17 Head Coach, efforts must be made to ensure there is improved facilities positing that with good pitches, the players will be at the top of their game at all times. "To be sincere with you, our League has been producing quality players but the standard of the pitches must be of international standard to get out the best from the players. Welfare of players, coaches and other support staff must not be toiled with. There is need for clubs to tell players and officials what they can pay and make sure they stick to the agreement. "A situation where players, Coaches and other administrative staff are not paid for several months does not speak well of Nigerian football and all these negatively affects the development of the game.



## Sports

## Sports Minister congratulates Flamingos, Olympic Eagles for victories



By Afolabi Johnson

Sports Minister Sunday Dare has congratulated both the Nigeria U17 Women's football team, the Flamingos and the Olympic Eagles on their successes over the weekend. On Sunday, the Flamingos equalled Ghana's U-17

female team's feat to finish on the podium in the FIFA U17 Women's World Cup after beating Germany through penalties to pick the bronze medal while the Olympic Eagles beat Tanzania 3-1 on aggregate in Ibadan, Oyo State on Saturday, to qualify for the next round of the CAF U23 AFCON qualifiers.

According to the Sports Minister, "the victories are heartwarming for Nigeria and worth celebrating."

"I commend the coaches and the players of both teams for giving us their best performances as well as congratulate the Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) for these successes."

The Olympic Eagles will face Guinea in the final round of the U23 AFCON qualifiers while football followers will hope to see a good number of the Flamingos grow through the ranks into the U20 team, Falcons and the senior team, the Falcons in a few years.

## Atalanta Coach hails Ademola Lookman's performance



By Afolabi Johnson

SUPER Eagles striker, Ademola Lookman's has continued to receive praises from Atalanta manager Gian Piero Gasperini for his technique and pace after the winger powered the club to a 2-0 win at Empoli.

Lookman netted the second goal of the encounter just before the hour-mark to double Atalanta's advantage after Hans Hateboer had given the Blue-Blacks a first-half lead at the Stadio Castellani.

It was the Nigeria international's fifth goal for Atalanta since joining from RB Leipzig on a permanent deal in the summer.

It would be recalled that Lookman scored his first goal for Gasperini's side on his debut in the 2-0 victory over Sampdoria on August 13.

And the Italian manager has voiced how great he has found working with Lookman since he walked into the club.

"Lookman has scored five goals and always gave a strong contribution to the team," Gasperini told Sky Italia after the game.

"He has technique, pace, is a player any coach would be happy with. We realised pretty quickly what he was capable of, he was convincing from the start."

Lookman is Atalanta's top goalscorer in Serie A with five goals. The former Everton man has also chilled in an assist in 12 league appearances.

## Scrabble: Nwali looks beyond continental title



Ifeanyi Marcus, Lagos

Newly crowned African Scrabble champion, Enoch Tochukwu Nwali says his major target is to follow the footsteps of fellow Nigerian

and former world champion, Wellington Jighere to rule the world of the mental game.

The 300 hundred level Health Education student of University of Lagos last Monday in Lusaka, Zambia defeated other players from across the continent in a gruelling four days encounter to emerge the new African Scrabble champion.

He told Nigerian Pilot Sports shortly after 'Team Nigeria' comprising of 15 players and four officials arrived from the Southern African country aboard Kenyan Airways that he will continue working hard towards not only retaining the title next year.

"This is a dream come through. I have been preparing, studying and praying for this victory. It was not easy, the field in Lusaka, Zambia was tough and I give God all the glory", began Nwali who joined the Scrabble family in 2011.

## From no-spot to third-spot: Nigeria's Flamingos delight in historic WC bronze

Beaten on the away goal-rule by Cameroon (3-3 aggregate after 2-2 in Benin City and 1-1 in Yaounde), Nigeria's U17 girls, Flamingos missed participating in the FIFA U17 Women's World Cup finals for the first time in year 2018.

The girls had featured at the inaugural edition of the FIFA U17 Women's World Cup in New Zealand, and after a win (over South Korea), loss (to England) and draw (with Brazil) in Wellington and Christchurch, they flew back after the group phase. Two years later, the Flamingos reached the quarter finals at the second edition in Trinidad and Tobago after beating North Korea, hosts



Trinidad and Tobago and Chile for maximum points in the group. But they lost to eventual winners South Korea in a quarter-final match in Marabella.

Two years later, in Azerbaijan, the Flamingos drew 1-1 with Canada, thumped hosts Azerbaijan 11-0 and hit Colombia 3-0 to reach the quarter-finals.

## NFF: Mmadu did not play 101 official matches for Nigeria

By Afolabi Johnson

Nigeria Football Federation has disclosed that former Super Falcons' player and one-time assistant coach of the team, Maureen Mmadu did not play up to 101 official matches for Nigeria as is being claimed by the former player and promoted in certain quarters.

NFF's Director of Media and Communications, Ademola Olajire, said on Monday that the Federation's records showed that the former midfielder played 52 matches for the team between 1995 and 2007 when she called it quits with the National Team.

"Our records show that between 16th February 1991 when they played their first

official game (a FIFA World Cup qualifier against Ghana's Black Queens at the National Stadium, Lagos) and 18th September 2007 (when Mmadu featured in her last match for Nigeria against USA in Shanghai during the 2007 FIFA Women's World Cup), the Super Falcons played a total of 103 official matches.

"Maureen Mmadu, who did excellently well for Nigeria while wearing the green-white-green, only started playing for the team during a FIFA Women's World Cup match against Canada in Helsingborg (which ended 3-3) on 8th June 1995, when she came in for Ann Mukoro. Mmadu won about 52 caps in all, and certainly not 101 as claimed in some quarters."



## Confed Cup: Uchendu warns Plateau, Rivers Utd against complacency

Ifeanyi Marcus, Lagos

Former Julius Berger and Dolphins Fc of Port Harcourt player John Kingsley Uchendu has advised CAF Confederation Cup campaigners, Plateau United and Rivers United to learn from their mistakes in the preliminary round of the CAF Champions League and ensure they get it right at the second tier of the continental football showpiece.

Both teams a fortnight ago failed to beat their North African opponents in the return leg of their final preliminary round matches that would have enabled them play in the Group stage of the lucrative Champions League thereby going down to the Confederation Cup and Uchendu believes they must not disappoint this time around.

In an exclusive interview with our correspondent, he explained that for both teams to make any meaningful impact at the Confed Cup, they must ensure they

field their best players in all their matches and avoid giving unnecessary respect to their opponents especially to teams from North Africa.

"It's sad that no Nigerian team was able to make it to the Group stage of the lucrative Champions League but since both Plateau United and Rivers United are now in the second tier League, they should take all their games serious and ensure they score many goals at home especially if they are hosting the first leg to make the away game easier.

"Coaches Fidelix Ilechukwu and Stanley Eguma are good tactically and I expect them to use their wealth of experience in selecting their best players for any game so that they can go far in the competition.

Uchendu was particularly not happy with the Confederation of African Football (CAF) over selection of referees for matches which he says favours North African teams.



"Few individuals are buying private jets, while the majority of the people are sliding into poverty. Poverty and inequality are the main challenges facing humanity." – Professor Chukwuma Soludo, Former CBN Governor

# BUSINESS & ECONOMY

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## Economic Dvt: SEC urges Nigeria to embrace sustainable finance principles

By Onu Okorie

As a country with abundant natural and human resources, Nigeria has been identified as better positioned to embrace sustainable finance principles and attract investment for the continent's much needed growth and development.

This was stated by the Director General of the Securities and Exchange Commission, Mr. Lamido Yuguda during a lecture to mark the commemoration of the IOSCO World Investor Week with the theme: Investor Resilience and Sustainable Finance, held Friday in Abuja.

The IOSCO World Investor Week is an annual event coordinated by IOSCO, which encourages its members, securities regulators around the world, to commemorate in their respective jurisdictions for the purpose of promoting investor education and protection.

Yuguda who was represented by the SEC's Executive Commissioner Operations, Mr. Dayo Obisan stated that the theme for this year's WIW, 'Investor Resilience' and 'Sustainable Finance' demonstrates the high value

IOSCO places on investor protection and the environment, especially in the context of the global pandemic and other challenges such as inflationary pressures, uncertainties occasioned by geopolitical tensions, and continued environmental degradation.

According to him, "Indeed, the themes, undoubtedly, further place emphasis on the universal call for sustainable finance and its resultant economic growth and development. There is no doubt therefore that all jurisdictions must think of transiting from exploiting nature to restoring nature.

"It is worthy of note that SEC through the market development department has done well to outline robust activities for the week long global events.

The SEC Boss said sustainable finance has evolved as a global concept, and the world firmly stands together to promote the transition to a low-carbon, more resource efficient economy towards building a financial system that incentivises sustainable growth across nations.

"World over, issuers and investors

are embracing the idea of sustainable investing and environment friendly projects, hence the significant surge in sustainable investment within the last few years, which is apparently driven mainly by investors' desire for a cleaner, healthier and more equitable future.

"The Commission, as a Regulator, is very much aware of its critical role in ensuring that the financial sector is steered towards green investments through its policies and regulations.

The DG said it is in early recognition of the importance of sustainable finance, the Commission came up with Rules on Green Bonds in 2018, and already three (3) approvals were granted to some corporate Issuers. The Commission has also issued Rules on Social Bonds in 2021.

In his remarks, Director Market Development Department, Mr. Nestor Ikeagu said the IOSCO WIW is an annual global week-long event which aims at promoting investor education and protection as well as strengthening collaborations among member jurisdictions.



**Nigeria, ahead of other ECOWAS countries in research, innovation recommendations - Mamora**

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**West African Power pool adopts working document, Budget for 2023**

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L-R, Director, Market Development Department, Securities and Exchange Commission Mr Nestor Ikeagu Executive Commissioner Operations SEC Mr Dayo Obisan and Executive Commissioner Legal and Enforcement SEC Mr Reginald Karawusa during the 2022 World Investor Week in Abuja at the weekend

## Fashola inaugurates members of Town Planners Registration Council of Nigeria

By Chioma Nnodim

Minister of Works and Housing, Mr. Babatunde Fashola, has inaugurated a new twelve members of the Town Planners Registration Council of Nigeria, TOPREC, at the conference hall of the Federal Ministry of Works and Housing, Mabushi, Abuja.

This was made known to Journalists in a press release by the Director, Press and Public Relations, Blessing Lere-Adams, on Monday.

Fashola, while inaugurating the new Council members, charged them not to only uphold the standard and guidelines of the profession but raise them because it is only by doing this that the challenges faced in urban planning and development could be summanted.

He explained that the essence of constituting the Town Planners Registration Council of Nigeria was to ensure that the country has a professional council that would in turn ensure that the professional

Town Planners are registered as members of the Council.

The Minister also stated that the twelve members were representatives of their different states, adding that as more members are appointed from other states, they would join the council in accordance to the law.

In his welcome address, the Permanent Secretary, Bashir Nura Alkali, FCI, noted that the presence of well - disciplined and adequately regulated professionals in the built environment, would improve the quality of output of the professionals and invariably contribute to the quality of the environment, construction, infrastructure and national development.

He said that, TOPREC, as a critical Agency of Government under the supervision of the Federal Ministry of Works and Housing had the statutory mandate to regulate and control the practice of the profession of physical planning in all ramification in Nigeria.

"TOPREC Mandate includes; determining who are town planners as well as knowledge and skills required for registration of anyone who desires to practice the profession in Nigeria," he said

Alkali revealed that the Minister approved the re-constitution of the new members of the Council after the expiration of the tenure of the former ones in consonance with the provision of Section 2(1) of the Town Planners Registration Council of Registration, TOPREC, Act 2004.

In his remark, the President of the Town Planners Registration Council of Nigeria, Tpl Isiaku Mukhtar Kura, while encouraging the newly inaugurated members to form a habit to read and meditate on the Act that established the council, explained that being members of the council was a call to service that would involve sacrificing their time and resources.

### THE TEAM

- Onu Okorie - Business Editor
- Kehinde Ibrahim - Money&Capital Market
- Palma Ileye - Tourism



## Business

# Nigeria, ahead of other ECOWAS countries in research, innovation recommendations - Mamora

By Eunice Orike

MINISTER of Science, Technology and Innovation, Sen. Dr. Adeleke Olorunnimbe Mamora has said that Nigeria is the first country in the entire ECOWAS sub-region to substantially comply with the recommendations of the African forum on research and innovation FARI.

The ground-breaking achievement was made known to the public, in Lagos by the permanent secretary of the ministry, Mrs. Monilola Udoh who represented the minister during the South-West zonal dialogue between government and stakeholders in the Science, Technology and Innovation ecosystem on the establishment of technology and innovation centers (TICs).

According to the Minister, the

benefits of TICs are to; "find the best way to ensure that products and services in our country are made to compete with the very best in the world, improve on the present understanding of the role of Science, Technology and Innovation in the socio-economic development of Nigeria by the general public, towards moving Nigeria from resource to knowledge-based economy (consumption to production), reduction/stoppage of the present Research and Development (R&D) work in Nigeria being carried out in silos."

The Minister further said that under the 2022 Revised STI Policy, Nigeria is geared towards having a large, strong, diversified, sustainable and competitive economy that will effectively harness the talents and energies of its people and responsibly exploit its natural endowments to guarantee a high standard of living for

Nigerians by 2030.

He further stressed that in line with Presidential Executive Order NO.5 STI Policy of 2022 and the Abuja adopted recommendations of FARI, the protection of researchers, inventors and innovators will be assured with appropriate legal frameworks such as issuance of patent and other intellectual property rights.

Adeleke assured that the next phases of the dialogues that will take place in the North West, South South and North Eastern Zones of the Country will continue to support the development of the country's economy from being dependent on resource to knowledge based one.

Earlier, the National Coordinator Strategy Implementation Task Office for Presidential Executive ORDER NO.5, Engr. Ibiam Oguejiofor, enumerated some of the objectives of the ORDER

to include; promoting domestic and foreign investments through creation of employment and stimulation of National economy through Science, Technology and Innovation (STI). He further enjoined participants to use the opportunity of the dialogue to respond to government and participate in building a new Nigeria that is knowledge and production driven.

Speaking, Lagos State Commissioner of Science and Technology, Hon. Hakeem Fahm, represented by Dr. Iyabo Phillips, director, science programmes and promotion, reiterated the commitment of Lagos state government to support this laudable initiative of the federal government to fill in the infrastructural gaps in the State and also to give more people opportunities to benefit from the innovation hub.



Executives of Lahmad Concept after giving out N10m to ten young people at the Banquet Hall of Government House, Ilorin, Kwara State capital with participants drawn from across the states in Nigeria, tagged "Entrepreneurs Network" was convened by Ahmad Lawal of Lahmad Concepts Limited.

## A'ibom, NNPC sign MOU for Marine Logistics Base

By Emeka Samuel, Uyo

AKWA Ibom state government has sealed a deal with the Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited, NNPC, and Solutions Hub Limited for the establishment of a full-service onshore logistics base for marine construction support in the state.

The logistics base, proposed to be sited on a 40 square kilometers space on Ibaka, Mbo Local Council within the already designated free trade zone in the state, is modeled to be an alternative to existing logistics bases in Nigeria to offer the offshore construction support to West & Central African regions.

Governor Udom Emmanuel, speaking during the signing of the MOU in Uyo last weekend, expressed the pleasure of the state government over the Ibom Solutions Hub partnership deal and assured of support for the execution and completion of the project.

Emmanuel congratulated the NNPC on its new status as a Public Limited Liability Company and expressed optimism that the new management would deploy the right business orientation into the company for timely delivery of desired returns.

He therefore sued for expedition of the process to bring gas onshore and other necessary actions by the NNPC towards the actualization of the Amonia Fertilizer Plant in the state and tasked the NNPC delegation on the need to utilize the resources to address Nigeria's need in the power and agriculture sectors, especially in the face of impending food crisis.

"I am happy that at a time like this NNPC now being a limited liability company, things will be different.

The business approach, the speed in execution will be different because the focus is different, then people who are on the board, with the right corporate governance and risk management structure will be able to deliver on the much expected returns", he stated.

"On the Ibom Solutions Hub I am giving you a hundred percent assurance that it will be a hitch-free project. Nobody will disturb this project. Hindrance will not come from the state, the host community or any part of Akwa Ibom at all." The Governor explained.

Earlier, the Chairman, Board of Directors, NNPC Limited, Senator Margery Okadigbo, said that NNPC's commitment to the pact with Ibom Solution Hub and other partners signaled a new phase of tapping into the potentials and opportunities in the oil and gas sector.

## BDCs, central to CBN's exchange rate policies, says ABCON

By Onu Okorie

THE Association of Bureaux De Change of Nigeria (ABCON) has said the Bureaux De Change (BDCs) are at the centre of Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN's) exchange rate policies.

The ABCON President Aminu Gwadabe, who disclosed in a statement yesterday explained that the continuous suspension of forex sales to the BDCs does not lead to revocation of licenses as the operators are still under the purview of CBN regulations.

Gwadabe, said the small retail exchange institutions - BDCs- remain at the centre of CBN's exchange rate policies implementation, hence the need for the regulator and public to continuously support BDCs' roles in exchange rate stability.

This, he added can be achieved through increased automation of their processes and providing more channels of transactions for sustainable price equilibrium while eradicating rent seeking, currency substitution and speculation.

"I am very confident that Nigeria will in not too distant future appreciate a stable exchange rate and availability of forex in the local economy as the right people for

government policies' implementation get such responsibility," he stated.

According to him, the CBN Governor, Godwin Emefiele had tried to introduce many policies beyond conventional money supply that are not in line with market realities.

Gwadabe cited the Naira-4-Dollar scheme of N5 bonus for every \$1 diaspora remittances as well as the N65 rebate for every dollar of non-oil export proceeds and other incentives as commendable, but require total overhaul with stakeholders' engagement.

"I am not a prophet of doom and student of continuing naira depreciation but except fundamental goodwill and courage is demonstrated, the naira will continue to suffer loss in exchange for the greenbacks," Gwadabe maintained. The question on the lips of everyone is that are the banks not having the allocation for invisible transactions?"

While responding to a question on where the BDCs are sourcing forex, he said though some BDCs are lucky to be operating at the international airport and other off-table transactions, majority of them are out of business due to lack of total absence of alternative sources.

"A licensed BDC in Nigeria cannot

access oil proceeds, non-oil proceeds, and diaspora remittances. We need expansionary regulatory approvals on the scope of transactions and margin reviews," Gwadabe said. According to him, an average BDC operator licensed by CBN is comatose and heading for extinction.

To strengthen the naira, Gwadabe believes it is time to allow competition and mutually-beneficial engagements among stakeholders and regulators.

He said, "Naira is the most difficult currency to predict in the world because of its vulnerability to leadership corruption, lack of competitive space, and the prevalence of ungoverned players."

He urged the apex bank to leverage the capacity and skills of the BDCs operators and also reach out to them to enhance liquidity, and price discovery of the diaspora remittances.

"This agitation of stakeholders we will continue to advocate," he said. "We urge the CBN to embrace our road map and create stakeholders engagement," he said. Gwadabe added that the diversion of the allocations of BDCs to the banks to enhance liquidity in the retail end of the market and price stability, was still a misnomer if the banks had performed the roles of CBN's transmission mechanisms.



# GTCO records N169.7bn PBT in Q3

By Kehinde Ibrahim, Lagos

GUARANTY Trust Holding Company Plc (GTCO) has posted profit before tax of N169.7 billion for the third quarter (Q3) period ended September 30, 2022.

The Holding company unaudited results released on the Nigerian Exchange Group (NGX) and London Stock Exchange (LSE) showed that Group profit before tax increased by 11.7 per cent from N151.9 billion at Q3, 2021 to N169.7 billion under the period review.

The Group's loan book (net) increased by 2.2 per cent from N1.80

trillion recorded as at December 2021 to N1.84 trillion in September 2022, while deposit liabilities increased by 6.4 per cent from N4.13 trillion in December 2021 to N4.39 trillion in September 2022.

The group's balance sheet remained well structured and resilient with total assets and shareholders' funds closing at N5.81 trillion and N872.8 billion, respectively. Strong Capital Ratios and Asset Quality were sustained as CAR, NPL ratio, and Cost of Risk (COR) closed at 20.7 per cent, 5.6 per cent, and 0.2 per cent in September 2022 from 23.8 per cent, 6.0 per cent,

and 0.5 per cent in December 2021, respectively.

Speaking on the results, the group chief executive officer of GTCO, Mr. Segun Agbaje, said: "the group's Q3 result reaffirms our strategy for long-term growth and underscores our capacity to deliver sustainable strong performance despite the volatilities in our operating environment."

"We have also kept in focus our vision of supporting small and medium enterprises specifically through our free business platforms to help them stay in business and expand their offerings."

## West African Power pool adopts working document, Budget for 2023

By Onu Okorie

The Executive Board of the West African Power Pool (WAPP) has adopted a new work programme and budget for the year 2023.

A statement made available to the media yesterday in Abuja stated that it was done at the 55th ordinary session of the WAPP Executive Board Meeting at the WAPP headquarters in Cotonou, Benin Republic.

Speaking during the session, the Chairman, Executive Board of WAPP, Engr. Dr. Sule Abdulaziz expressed satisfaction with the 2023 working document.

According to him, "I remain convinced that it has been prepared in accordance with the rules by the General Secretariat and carefully reviewed by the WAPP Finance Committee."

Engr. Abdulaziz, who is also the Managing Director/CEO of the Transmission Company of Nigeria (TCN), lauded the transparent manner in which WAPP has been implementing projects of the Pool.

According to him, "As with the review of the Financial Statements, where I expressed confidence in this institution and its transparent documentation, I reiterate the same sentiment regarding the 2023 Work Programme and Budget."

Engr. Abdulaziz urged member utility firms to endeavour to pay all contributions and settle all outstanding fees, in order to sustain the progress being made in the regional electricity project implementation.

The WAPP head also commended the Government and the People of Benin Republic and President Patrice Talon for the facilities granted to the institution to establish its General Secretariat.

Earlier in his welcome address, the Secretary General of WAPP, Mr. Sienguí KI, presented the Work Programme and Budget for the year, 2023, focusing on key projects for implementation. He noted that the WAPP projects were progressing according to schedule but needed budget adjustment to accommodate the cost escalation of project implementation. He lauded the Donor agencies but also noted the need for WAPP to explore other funding areas to augment member utility contributions to the Pool.

Some of the WAPP ongoing projects are the Central Information Centre (CIC) project, which is at an advanced stage and the WAPP Network Synchronization project and the WAPP North Core project among others.



Sule

L-R: Multiple Council Chairperson District 404, Nigeria Lion Obo Edet, Past International President Lions Club International and Current Chairman of LCIF Dougla



# Nigeria set to host 2022 Mining Week as FG assures that Abuja was safe

By Palma Ileye

As the count down to the 2022 Nigeria Mining Week begins, the Federal Government has assured investors and stakeholders that Abuja is absolutely safe to host the 2022 Nigeria Mining Week.

The Minister of Mines and Steel Development, Arc. Olamilekan Adegbite gave this assurance yesterday, during the 2nd Pre-Event Press Briefing ushering in the 6th Edition of the Nigeria Mining Week, at the Ministry's Headquarters, in Abuja.

Adegbite disclosed that the Federal Government was not resting on its oars to ensure the safety of lives and property in the country, adding that the Nigerian Security apparatus have been duly briefed to take care of the security situation.

He noted that the fact that Abuja was safe is evidenced in the fact that His Excellency, Muhammadu Buhari, GCFR, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria will declare the event open.

The Minister stated that the event, which is scheduled to hold from 1st-3rd November 2022, with the theme "Successes and Achievements in the

Mining Sector", will highlight the giant strides this administration, through the Mineral Sector, as one of the cardinal drivers of the Diversification Agenda, has achieved.

He noted that key issues to be discussed at the Mining Week, would include the vital mineral resources of the future which are the building blocks for many technologies providing us with green renewable energy, while allowing us to keep in line with the Environmental, Social and Governance, ESG, global standards; the acquisition of bankable geoscientific data; the efficient and transparent mineral title administration processes, as well as downstream opportunities in the Mining Sector and the Nigerian Mineral value-chain Regulations, 2021 among others.

He encouraged stakeholders to participate actively, as Nigeria has enormous amount of minerals of the future that was vital for the economic well-being of the world.

In her remarks, the Minister of State Mines and Steel Development Sen. Gbemisola Saraki stated that the Press Conference was geared towards sensitising the mineral sector stakeholders and the general public

of the upcoming 2022 Mining Week and to drum the support of the media in that regard.

She noted that the 2022 Mining Week will be distinct in many ways especially being the first physical event after the global Covid19 pandemic restrictions, as well as showcasing other developments that has shaped the industry under the present administration.

Speaking, the Permanent Secretary, Dr. Oluwatoyin Akinlade noted that this year's Mining Week will entail very exciting conversations around achievements and solutions proffered to challenges. She expressed profound appreciation to stakeholders for the enthusiasm shown towards the programme.

Earlier, Acting National President, Miners Association of Nigeria, Alh. Musa Muhammad, noted that the interest generated across the globe in terms of calls from both local and international public and private investors and stakeholders has been enormous.

He said the Association have been working round the clock to ensure that the event is not only a huge success but lives up to the desired expectations.



## Business

# Taking deposit insurer a notch higher

*In this article Business Editor Onu Okorie writes that the stability of global financial system is essential to economic growths*

**MOST** speakers during the recently concluded International Association of Deposit Insurers IADI, Africa Regional Committee Technical Assistance workshop pointed out the invaluable importance of deposit insurance in safety-net arrangements of any financial system and the need to build capacity of the stakeholders particularly in emerging economy like in Nigeria.

Held in Abuja early in the month under the auspices of the Nigerian Deposit Insurance Corporation NDIC, the conference was equally adjusted a huge success by the stakeholders.

In the keynote address, the Minister of Finance Budget and National Planning, Mrs Zainab Shamsuna Ahmed applauded the foresight, and vision of the leadership and members of the Deposit Insurance System DIS, whose belief in a virile financial system led to the establishment of the IADI in 2002.

She argued that sharing deposit insurance expertise and knowledge as well as contributing to financial system stability in Africa has made African countries in IADI outstanding. With the theme of the workshop aptly titled "Normality in Turbulent Periods: The Stabilizing Role of Deposit Insurance" the Minister explained that the present socio-economic realities that have continued to undermine the safety and stability of the financial system across the globe, accentuated by the lingering effects of COVID-19 Pandemic, Russian-Ukraine war, global supply disruptions and climate change challenges has made the workshop very crucial. According to her, "these has posed myriads of challenges and risks to the safety and stability of the global financial system."

"Indeed, the banking sector remains pivotal in supporting the real economy through the provision of innovative products and services to all relevant stakeholders. "However, the fiduciary nature of banking business, coupled with increased social-economic challenges across the globe, has increased the risk of banks' failure, with significant implications for depositors' losses and erosion of public confidence in the banking system."

She argued that the negative impact of these challenges on economic growth and financial sector stability in most economies of the World, raised a number of questions concerning the role of DIS in contributing to financial system stability. It has equally demonstrated the important role played by the deposit insurance system, as a component of financial safety-net arrangements in most jurisdictions across the globe, given that, depositor protection is a critical element necessary for maintaining and restoring financial stability.

Mrs Ahmed commended the role played by NDIC in the stability of financial system in despite the fact that the country went into recession two times in less than a decade. "Nigerian economy, like others, felt the brunt of the global economic distortion, having to go into recession twice in the space of five years."

"However, given the resilience of the nation's financial system, we came out within months. We also make bold to say that despite these economic challenges, no depositors' fund was lost given the effectiveness of our agencies, most especially the CBN and the NDIC."

It is well known that DIS provide financial guarantee to protect depositors in the event of bank failure and therefore forms a critical component of the financial safety-net arrangement. This guarantee offered by the DIS plays a major role in strengthening depositor confidence in the financial system during crisis.

Deposit insurers play effective role

during crisis by way of performing the roles and responsibilities as stipulated in their mandates. The NDIC, which was established in 1989, with a mandate of a risk minimizer, has since inception and most especially during critical times been able to allay the fears of depositors through; its wide array of public enlightenment and education programmes, collaboration with the CBN in the efficient supervision of insured institutions to promote sound risk management which reduces likelihood of failure and effective resolution of failing banks.

"All these have helped to improve public confidence, protect depositors and promote the stability of the Nigerian financial" she noted.

She however hinged the success recorded by NDIC to effective collaboration with other safety-net participants in Nigeria, particularly the CBN, the Federal Ministry of Finance and other members of the Financial Services Regulation Coordinating Committee FSRCC.

According to the Minister, "the Ministry under my watch has implemented a set of difficult but necessary reforms as well as successfully engaged international partners to help the country navigate an extremely challenging economic environment.

"That to a great deal, in collaboration with the CBN, NDIC and other agencies, explains why the country's Gross Domestic Product GDP rose to 3.54% year-on-year in the second quarter of 2022.

The GDP growth marks the seventh consecutive quarter of GDP growth, since the recession recorded in Q3 2020. The Nigerian economy has so far shown signs of resilience in the face of economic headwinds like the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, which affected the global economy."

Speaking during the occasion chairman of the NDIC Board Mrs Ronke Shokefun said that the workshop demonstrated the commitment of IADI towards fostering financial stability. She pointed out that the stability of global financial system is essential to economic growth, amongst others factors.

The global economic growth continued to weaken, as indicated by the trajectories of many macroeconomic indicators. Mrs Shofunke however, said that the Nigerian banking system has remained resilience despite the challenges posed by the global operating conditions for businesses.

According to her, "Notwithstanding these developments, the Nigerian banking system remained healthy overall as the capitalisation level is above the prudential requirement and the Non-Performing Loans ratio is also within the requirement at the end of second quarter 2022."

The NDIC Board chair argued that in a world where financial systems are now inextricably linked, robust cooperation is required to ensure financial system stability, and by extension growth and stability of the global economy.

"And it is against this backdrop that we need to keep working through forums like the IADI and other collaborating agencies to share experiences, strengthen our supervisory tools, monitor the effectiveness of insured institutions' Contingency Planning and Crisis Management Framework as well as ensure our readiness for timely, and prompt intervention to engender financial system stability." She said.

She noted that the NDIC has for a long time since its establishment in 1988 collaborated with other international standard-setters and deposit insurers. For instance, the NDIC has collaborated in capacity development with the IADI itself, the ARC members, the Financial Stability Institute, the US FDIC, the Islamic Financial Services Board and several



Minister of Finance, Budget and National Planning, Mrs Zainab Ahmed



Managing Director NDIC, Mr Hassan Bello

other international agencies.

Also, the Corporation has Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to share information and on capacity development with deposit insurance agencies of Ghana, Poland, South Korea, Taiwan and Uganda.

It is in the spirit of such collaboration that this workshop was organised so as to serve as a forum to dissect pertinent issues, share experiences, compare notes and elevate our understanding of the role of deposit insurers in: Early Detection and Timely intervention; Contingency Planning & Crisis Management; Crisis Simulation to strengthen operational resilience; and Contingency Planning Framework for a safer, and more resilient financial system, that is supportive of sustainable economic growth in each jurisdiction.

The presence of global experts from both fiscal, monetary, supervisory and regulatory agencies, and Deposit Insurers in gathering like this, is a manifestation of commitment towards having robust and sustainable system that can detect problem early enough and manage crisis adequately in the banking system to foster financial system stability.

On his part, the Managing Director MD/CEO of NDIC Mr. Hassan Bello said that the theme for this year's ARC Workshop was carefully chosen to match the current and emerging developments in the global financial landscape, with a special focus on Africa.

According to him, "presently, economies globally are stressed, some are still recovering from the impact of COVID-19 pandemic and the spill-over effects of the Russia-Ukraine war. As we are all aware, the fabric of the global financial stability is constantly being threatened by one form of crisis or the other."

He identified the potential threats at present to include the Russia-Ukraine war, cyber threats posing increasing risks to financial institutions, slow growth, increasing inflation and tighter global financial conditions which may all exacerbate pre-existing vulnerabilities.

And while the growing financial interconnectedness has shown that banking crisis can have contagion effects, however a system-wide approach to crisis management, involving collaborative efforts of the financial safety-net participants and regional deposit insurance systems is therefore highly imperative.

Furthermore, the crises led to the review of some of the design features of explicit deposit insurance system in many countries

to accommodate emerging developments in the domestic and global financial system.

Speaking on the Association, Mr Bello explained that it commenced with 25 members in May 2002, but has 92 members as at July 2022, excluding Associates, Observers and Partners. While its mission is "to contribute to the enhancement of deposit insurance effectiveness by promoting guidance and international cooperation" while its vision is to "share deposit insurance expertise with the world".

He further stated that the NDIC Act 22 of 1988 repealed and re-enacted in 2006 created the NDIC as a government agency charged with the responsibility for implementing DIS in Nigeria.

And as a risk-minimizer, the NDIC continues to enjoy close collaboration with other safety-net participants in the financial sector, especially the CBN. He disclosed that in Nigeria, the NDIC provides deposit insurance protection to depositors of: 33 Deposit Money Banks DMBs which are made up of 24 Commercial Banks, Six Merchant Banks and Three Non-Interest Banks NIBs. Others include: 882 Microfinance Banks MFBs; 34 Primary Mortgage Banks PMBs; three Payment Service Banks PSBs and 29 Mobile Money Schemes.

The NDIC boss revealed that as one of the resolution authorities in Nigeria, the Corporation has adopted different resolution mechanisms in resolving the failure of distressed deposit-taking financial institutions in the country. The liquidation activities of the NDIC involved 467 insured banks in-liquidation, comprising 49 DMBs, 367 MFBs, and 51 PMBs, at end-December 2021.

He also acknowledged that the successes recorded by the NDIC in the execution of its mandate, would not have been possible without the strong support and collaborative efforts of other financial safety-net players in Nigeria like the CBN, the Federal Ministry of Finance, Budget and National Planning and other members of the FSRCC.

The Corporation is a member of the FSRCC, an inter-agency body set-up to co-ordinate the supervision of financial institutions and deal with matters of common interest and concern to the various regulatory and supervisory authorities in the Nigerian financial services industry. At the global level, the NDIC has continuously improved on its collaborative efforts and capacity building in achieving its mandate even in turbulent economic periods.



# Features

## Advancing national growth through agribusiness

*For Nigeria's vision of national food security and sufficiency to be realised, there is a need for agribusiness firms, professionals and critical stakeholders to come together to form a synergy towards achieving the common goal, writes CHARLES OLATUNJI*

IT is no news that the food and agriculture industry is a \$5 trillion industry and was ranked the 7th biggest industry in the world in 2021, according to estimations provided by Yahoo Finance. It is projected that by 2050 that the worth of the food and agriculture will increase, with a projection to feed about 9.7 billion people. It is expected that this sector must rise to meet a 70% increase in agricultural production for food security.

In Africa, agribusiness industry is estimated to be worth \$1 trillion. Despite several interventions by the Central bank of Nigeria (CBN), the dream of improving the fortunes of the country's agricultural sector have largely remained unrealized.

According to statistics from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS): "Agricultural imports rose by about 42 percent. Records show that N1. 9 trillion was spent to import agricultural products into the country in 2021, as against the sum of N1. 1 trillion used in 2020 as cost of agric imports".

In comparison with export earnings, "Nigeria earned N504.89 billion from agricultural exports in 2021, "which is 57% higher than N321.54 billion recorded in the previous year, and 87% more than the N269.83 billion recorded in 2019".

The startling and worrying implications of these grim figures show that Nigeria's annual agric trade deficits in the last three years is put at a whopping sum of N1.46 trillion. Little wonder, the struggle to improve and develop the agric sector has largely been stultified by clear and present impediments that have continued to make the dream of advancing the sector a mere mirage.

Uplifting millions of Nigerian citizens from the trapped hole of poverty and despair has attracted the various measures embarked by the CBN in a bid to provide agric inputs and financial aids to farmers in a bid to ensure food security for the nation's 200 million people.

Reports have clearly revealed that agriculture constitutes 25.9% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the Nigerian economy that has an estimated value of N18.74 trillion.

From statistics released by the NBS, "In the year 2021, the sector recorded a 2.13% year-on-year growth in real terms, which is slower than the 2.17%



growth attained in the year before. Over the years, several policies have been implemented in a bid to spur growth in the Nigerian agricultural sector. Some of these include a ban on importation of some food items, closure of land borders, and financial injection into the sector."

In the face of threatening food insecurity ripping across various parts of the country, the coming together of many agribusiness firms under the Nigerian Agribusiness Group (NABG) holds significant rays of light in galvanising agricultural activities towards meeting Nigeria's food requirements and providing raw materials for industries.

Apart from providing food security to the nation, the agric sector in Nigeria has the potential of providing employment to the country's teeming youths. Besides providing source of livelihood for most citizens, no less than 36% of Nigeria's labour force and over 70% of the nation's population is engaged in agriculture at the subsistence level. The NBS further reveals that the country's agric sector has the capacity to reduce "the employment deficit which currently stands at 42.5% unemployment rate".

The Director-General of the NABG and former Kaduna State Commissioner for Agriculture, Dr Manzo Maigari describes the NABG

as "an association of agribusiness professionals, led by experts of a private sector-driven initiative, is poised on synchronising firms by "working together to grow Nigeria's agricultural economy with the sole vision of creating jobs for Nigerian teeming youths and lifting millions of them from the holes of poverty".

"In order to ensure positive and realistic policies aimed at revolutionising the agric sector, the NABG is currently engaging governments at all levels for effective policy directions and recommending regulatory reforms for inclusive socio-economic growth", he said.

In carrying out its activities, the NABG is also engaged in promoting the principles of inclusive growth and sustainability through embracing gender sensitivity that creates employment opportunities for Nigerian youths. The vision of the NABG is through collaboration with government, Development Partners to drive sustainable growth in Nigeria's agricultural sector.

The deployment of technology in providing the missing gaps for accelerated agricultural development remains the key focus of the Group who are deploying their expertise in improving the prospects by rallying critical stakeholders in the promotion of agribusiness.

The chairman of Best Foods

Ltd and President of NABG, Mr. Emmanuel Ijewere, believes that the pathway to ensuring food security is deployment of modern technology. The NABG, according to him, is aimed at focusing "smart agriculture and mechanized farming to enable farmers overcome the natural encumbrances that come with the business in terms of storage, farm implements, seedlings, fertilisers, quality of produce, among others".

Unlike in the past when quality of agric produce was not a serious issue to be considered, Ijewere disclosed that "the NABG would focus on improving the quality of agric produce going out of the country so they can be globally competitive, adding that Nigeria needs to boost its exports and deemphasize imports."

Ijewere, who once held the chairmanship positions of the Agriculture and Food Security Commission and the Modified Value Added Tax Committee, apart from being a member of the National Economic Forum and the International Investment Council (IIC), the new NABG President is set to lead the way in promoting agribusiness, having served as a resource person on Agriculture to the Buhari Transition committee.

In tackling the challenges militating against the development of agriculture, the NABG is bringing on board professional players in the agribusiness who are endowed with the capacity of rallying farmers and tackling some of the challenges confronting farmers and farming.

In attaining food sufficiency and overall development of agriculture, Ijewere adds: "In advancing the fortunes of the agric potentials that

still holds the flame for Nigeria's development, these professionals in the agribusiness field are into robust partnerships with international organisations, including the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, to support active players in the sector and surmounting unique challenges being faced by Nigerian farmers".

The National President of the All Farmers' Association of Nigeria (AFAN), Arc. Kabir Ibrahim, who is also the chairman of the Administrative Board of NABG, points out that the only means of getting the country out of the woods is to change the agricultural landscape for positive development. He lampoons the CBN for the Anchors Borrowers' Programme (ABP).

Arc. Ibrahim poses several questions: "How many farmers were consulted when they were starting the programme? How many real operators were involved or contacted? Even in disbursing the monies, how many real farmers benefited? How do we know that all the beneficiaries were genuine farmers?"

Describing the act of the ABP only two million farmers as insufficient to create the desired impact, Ibrahim recalls that that the former Minister of Agriculture, Dr Akinwunmi Adesina, who is now the Head of the Africa Development Bank (AfDB), had a vision for rallying no fewer than 14.5 million Nigerian farmers in order to get better results in realising the full potentials of the agricultural sector.

For any objective of any meaningful programme to be achieved, continuity must be maintained. For the effective deployment of experts to achieve the goals of the ABP, Ibrahim calls for the institutionalisation of the programme in order to create new frontiers for the development of the agric sector.

With the vast network of synergies created by the NABG cultivated and sustained by agric experts across the globe, the agricultural group may as well become the fulcrum of a deliberate strategy involved in ensuring food security through the modernisation of agricultural systems that operate on largely subsistence platforms.

...Olatunji is a public affairs analyst

*In the face of threatening food insecurity ripping across various parts of the country, the coming together of many agribusiness firms under the Nigerian Agribusiness Group (NABG) holds significant rays of light in galvanising agricultural activities towards meeting Nigeria's food requirements and providing raw materials for industries*



# Features



## Girl child: Beyond commemoration rhetoric

*All over the world, one of the trending issues is the right, welfare and place of the girl child in the modern society. With global conflicts, poverty, disasters and epidemics on the rise, the issue becomes even direr. What is the solution? UCHE ANUNNE examines stakeholders' views on the issue in this report.*

ON October 11, Nigeria joined the rest of the world to celebrate the International Day of the Girl Child. The UN General Assembly, in Resolution 66/170 of December 19, 2011 declared that day as the International Day of the Girl Child.

The Day, among others, seeks to recognise girls' rights and the peculiar challenges girls face globally. The International Day of the Girl Child draws attention to the need to mitigate the challenges that confront girls as well as promote girls' empowerment and the fulfillment of their human rights.

The theme for the 2022 celebration is "Our Time Is Now – Our Rights, Our Future."

"Let's enable girls to thrive in school, in politics, in business, and in all aspects of their lives because investing in girls is investing in our common future."

"Equal representation of Girls in Decision making tables is a milestone in achieving gender equality," said the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in a circulated video to commemorate the day.

It will be an understatement to say that girls worldwide face enormous challenges. In addition to other forms of inhuman treatment such

trafficking for sex and forced labour, and marriage, girls have unique challenges in their education and hygiene as many of them are out of school because lack of toilet and water-related issues.

According to the UN, 10 million girls risk child marriage, and 72 per cent of detected sexual exploitation victims are girls. In this internet age, girls also face challenges as global internet user gender gap has grown from 11 per cent in 2013 to 17 per cent in 2019, with the gap being wider in least-developed countries as it stands at 43 per cent.

No group of women will be in a better position to appreciate the plight of the girl child than female professionals, who have ridden through the challenges to become successful in their careers.

One of such groups is the Nigeria Association of Women Journalists (NAWOJ), Ekiti state chapter which

has added its voice to the call for a better environment for the girl child to reach her potential.

In a statement by the chairperson, Mrs Fatima Bello, and Secretary, Mrs Adewumi Ademiju, to commemorate the 2022 edition of the International Day of Girl Child, NAWOJ said more resources should be devoted to the education of the girl child.

"The multiple roles played by girl children in society before and after they reach adulthood are enormous; they go to school, help with domestic chores, and face life challenges.

"The purpose of this day is to spread awareness about the gender-based discriminations that girls face in our society and to bring change in the attitude towards girls," said the female journalists. In its reaction, the International Rescue Committee (ICR) paid tribute to girls "who are showing remarkable resilience in the

face of discrimination, inequality, and violence".

In Nigeria, statistics released by UNICEF paint a more troubling scenario for the girl child.

"Girls suffer more than boys in terms of missing out on education. In the north-east of Nigeria, only 41 per cent of eligible girls receive primary education, 47 per cent in the north-west. Social attitudes can also impact negatively on education rates especially in northern Nigeria.

"In north-eastern and north-western states, 29 per cent and 35 per cent of Muslim children, respectively, attend Qur'anic education, which does not include basic education skills such as literacy and numeracy.

"These children are officially considered out-of-school by the Government", said the UN agency.

In a message to commemorate this year's event, UNICEF said although there has been increased awareness about the girl child, "yet, investments in girls' rights remain limited and girls continue to confront a myriad of challenges to fulfilling their potential.

"This is made worse by concurrent crises of climate change, COVID-19, and humanitarian conflict. Girls

around the world continue to face unprecedented challenges to their education, their physical and mental wellness, and the protections needed for a life without violence", it said.

However, the Minister of Women Affairs, Mrs Pauline Tallen was recently quoted by the media as assuring that the federal government would continue to prioritise girls in its policies and programmes.

According to her, the government is aware of the challenges faced by the girl child in accessing basic education that will prepare her to be a major contributor to national growth. While it acknowledges the International Day of the Girl Child, evidence shows that the average girl child still suffers from multiple challenges that inhibit her from realising her full potentialities.

It is important that the stakeholders, irrespective of their political, ethnic, and religious leaning join forces with the federal government to guarantee a beautiful future for the girl child.

Society has to transcend the annual ritual of encomiums, statistics, and pledges and take concrete steps to match their professions to the wellbeing of the girl child with actions. (NAN).

*Let's enable girls to thrive in school, in politics, in business, and in all aspects of their lives because investing in girls is investing in our common future. Equal representation of Girls in Decision making tables is a milestone in achieving gender equality*



## Opinion

# Flooding: Unlearnt lessons by the Niger Delta



THE Niger Delta region of Nigeria means different things to different people, depending on where a person may be standing in what has become popularly known as the Niger Delta question. Rather remote and relatively unknown then, the region was spotlighted from the very beginning of Nigeria's creation. At the 1957 pre-independence constitutional conference in London, the Niger Delta delegation raised pertinent issues regarding the region in an independent Nigeria. Specifically, the leaders expressed worries about domination by the majority tribes and the difficult terrain, predominantly swampy with a criss-cross of rivers, lakes and other water bodies. Some areas of the land are below sea-level, coupled with a dense rain forest, one of the largest in the world, only next to the Amazon and the Congolese forests. They contended that an independent Nigeria with the three bigger tribes of Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo at the helm of affairs may not meet the developmental aspiration of the region.

The total lack of social amenities in the region was deafening: no schools, hospitals

and electricity. Inter-linkage of towns and communities by roads was not as such an aspiration at the time, as it was simply seen as something near impossible to do. The delegation therefore presented to Her Majesty, Elizabeth II, Queen of England on whose instance the conference was convened, strong reservations to be part of independent Nigeria. In swift and what seemed at the time an appropriate response, the Willinks Commission of Inquiry was instituted to verify the claims vis-à-vis necessary steps to address them. The Commission did its job with diligence and made far-reaching recommendations on how the Niger Delta region can be properly incorporated and integrated in Nigeria. More than 60 years have since gone by and not much has been seen of government's action on the Niger Delta.

Neglect of the region by successive governments since independence is palpable, even to a first-time visitor. Geographically covering an area of over 70,000 square kilometers, partitioned into six administrative units called states, the original Niger Delta

extended from Cross-River state to Edo state with Akwa Ibom, Rivers, Bayelsa and Delta as member states.

On discovery and exploitation of crude oil, which eventually became the mainstay of the Nigerian economy, the region has since been reconfigured by the Olusegun Obasanjo's administration in the year 2000 to include Abia, Imo and Ondo states for political convenience. In a bid to address some of the perennial demands of oil-bearing communities in the Niger Delta, demand for oil rights became synonymous with agitation for development of the region. The latter three states which are oil-bearing were easy to incorporate in the Niger Delta Development Commission for oil-bearing communities, thereby redefining the original geographical Niger Delta.

The woes of being blessed with oil in the Niger Delta are manifold, or better put inexhaustible. Polite and accommodating hitherto to their visitors: the oil multinationals, the people started getting enlightened on their plight in the hands of the oil companies and the Nigerian state. Life

became 'hellish' for the people in some instances, where whole water bodies, the only source of sustenance for the people are contaminated with oil from spills and the companies simply rest on their oars, backed by government. Fishing and other occupations of the locals were depleted incrementally to the point that all traditional occupations of the people are quickly becoming extinct. There was zero corporate social responsibility, a phrase introduced to the Nigerian business lexicon only in the 1990s. Beyond destruction of livelihoods by oil exploration and exploitation in the region, the wanton pollution of the environment has resulted in a number of malignant ailments that are strange to the people. Studies have shown a direct relationship between oil pollution and infant and maternal mortality amongst several other health problems in the region.

Raising the red flag of environmental degradation in the region, Isaac Jasper Adaka Boro of Kaima in present day Bayelsa state, who later rose to become a Major in the Nigerian Army questioned right of

ownership of the Federal Government over oil on his fatherland. Leading a rebellion for environmental justice, the young Boro held arms against the Nigerian state, but was summarily suppressed, and rebellion quenched. About two decades after Boro, Ken Saro Wiwa, a playwright and environmentalist from Ogoni of River state revived the agitation for oil rights amidst call for a stop to pollution of Ogoni land. Wiwa and his group pressured Shell Petroleum Development Company of Nigeria, the major operator in his area and the Federal Government to either stop their operations or meet demands of the people in the now famous Ogoni Bill of Rights.

Frustrated by his defiance and refusal to compromise the cause, the activist was judicially murdered by regime of late General Sani Abacha on pent-up charges. Commonly referred to as the Ogoni-nine, Saro Wiwa and eight others were sentenced to death by a kangaroo tribunal of the government on accusation of masterminding the murder of four prominent Ogoni men by an irate mob. The cry for



## Opinion



## ...Unlearnt lessons by the Niger Delta

environmental justice began swelling from this point, snowballing later to a full-scale resistance of the Federal government by youths of the region especially the Ijaws and Ogonis. All other ethnic nationalities of the region also contributed their fair – share to the struggle that led eventually to the total destruction of Odi and Odioma in Bayelsa state and Oporoza in Delta state amongst several others communities.

With return of civil rule in 1999, President Olusegun Obasanjo sought to address the Niger Delta question, at least once and for all. After several stakeholder engagements, the PDP led government established the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) as an interventionist agency to address developmental needs of the people. This was in addition to creation of the Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs for the same purpose. Besides the River Basin Development Authorities which was implemented by government of the first republic, amongst recommendations of the Willinks Commission, these actions of the Obasanjo led government were the only actual steps taken by government since independence to address the yearning of the people.

The River Basin Development Authorities, originally established to address flooding and other ecological development problems of the region has since lost focus and direction by proliferation of the agency across the country and politicization of their operations. The River Basin Development Authorities, a product of the Niger Delta question is almost consigned to the dustbin of history and national relic as their impact is near zero.

The Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs operates regularly as any other, but the NDDC has a specialized funding plan that gives it access to much more money than annual budgetary allocations. Oil multinationals are obligated to remit a certain percentage of their net profit to the commission for development of the region. At the last count, the commission has received a whopping N6 trillion naira in about 20 years of its establishment says Abubakar Malami, Attorney General and Minister for Justice of the Federation. Bitter as truth could be, it is often inescapable, whence the question – Is there a reflection of this amount in terms of development in the region?

Rather regrettably, the NDDC has been turned into a

cash – cow for few influence peddlers in the region and their cronies in Abuja. It has been so recklessly milked that the commission has lost tract of its mission. Guided by the NDDC Establishment Act 2000 which has explicit provisions on constitution and tenure of the Governing board, and general modus operandi, politicization of the body has led to jettisoning of its law for a better part of 8 years of APC rule. Lawlessness of the commission and her cronies has resulted in endemic corruption and unabated waste of much needed developmental funds. The foregoing ugly dance by the commission propelled President Mohammadu Buhari to institute a forensic audit on it. Excited by the action of Mr. President, ordinary Niger Deltans hoped that this will stop the pillaging of the body and restore sanity. Alas, three years have since gone by and nothing concrete has come out of the audit. Baba – go – slow is going slowly even on this one. Whether he will be able to conclude the audit before his may 29, 2023 exit date, only time shall tell.

The body has not had and effective leadership since Buhari's second term in office. Contracts racketeering and outright looting has been

widely reported in the media. On projects and developmental strides of the agency, simply put, it is as repulsive as it is repulsive to hear. Billions of naira are wasted on the sham projects of desilting, clearing of water hyacinth and similar others that are not easily verifiable. Physical evidence of workdone can only be limited to construction of 6 – classroom blocks, short – distance concrete walkways, solar street lights and transformer distribution. A particular CEO of the body even told parliament during an investigative hearing that the leadership of the commission helped themselves with N1.5 billion as palliative for COVID – 19. What is really this? Meanwhile, this is a region that is faced with the consequences of constant flooding as seen in 2012 and now 2022.

A region yearning for rail network, seaports, electricity and road network to boast commerce and create an alternative economy to crude oil. What about industrialization and agricultural development? The Netherland and many other countries of the world share similar terrain with the Niger Delta. Who says there are no solutions to the problem of flooding? Whatever happened to proper drainage designs for our cities and

drainage masterplan for the region? Whatever happened to shoreline protection and land reclamation to elevate our cities and villages? Who are these witches that must give way for the Niger Delta to develop? The unlearnt lessons of flooding in 2012 are revisited on us in bigger dimension in 2022.

Lagos state is hurriedly creating an alternative economy to give it financial independence from the Nigerian state. President Obasanjo withheld its allocation for almost a year and Lagos was still fine. Two airports, MM1 and MM2, with a third approved, four seaports with a new one planned for Badagry, Dangote's refinery underway, etc and Lagos is not done yet. On the contrary, Governors and leaders of the Niger Delta are dancing 'Makosa' with developmental opportunities of the region and feeling fine. Let these self – styled leaders of the region continue their absurd wallow in tomfoolery. Even death will not make them escape the wrath and vengeance of the people, coming sooner than later.

...Mr. Princewill W. Igbagara write in from Abuja





## Examining effects of domestic violence

*Domestic violence is one of the modern social problems in our society today. In this analysis, COSMAS ODOEMENA examines the nature, spread and danger of same and how to tackle it.*

THE news that the popular gospel singer, Osinachi Nwachukwu, who died earlier in the year might have died from injuries inflicted on her by her husband has brought to the fore again the issue of domestic violence. Some people who knew the late musician vowed that her husband had been abusing her. Curiously they all kept quiet until the worst happened to her.

The cop-out is that “you can’t help a person who’s not ready to be helped.” According to reports, she had trauma to the chest from a kick from him. But it might not be the only serious injury the woman suffered! People have kept wondering why she could have covered up all this. Why did she not leave the marriage? Why didn’t she go to the police? But she said it was because of her faith she stuck to the relationship.

The husband has been arrested and we hope that the matter will be thoroughly investigated and justice be allowed to take its full course. Domestic violence should be condemned.

According to the United Nations, domestic abuse, also called “domestic violence” or “intimate partner violence,” can be defined as a pattern

of behaviour in any relationship that is used to gain or maintain power and control over an intimate partner.”

It is not a Nigerian problem. It’s found all over the world. It is said that almost one in three, or 30 per cent of women, have suffered physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner or non-partner sexual violence or both.

Abuse could be physical, emotional, sexual, economic or psychological actions or threats of actions that influence another person. It also involves any behaviours that intimidate, frighten, terrorise, manipulate, hurt, blame, humiliate, injure or wound someone. And whenever the victim tries to run away the maltreatment worsens.

Domestic violence can happen to anyone of any race, age, gender, sexual orientation or religion. It could occur between those who are married to each other, living together or dating.

This malaise affects people of all socioeconomic backgrounds and education levels. Incidents are rarely isolated and usually escalate in frequency and severity.

Domestic abuse may lead to serious physical injury or death. But even

with the awareness of domestic violence, few relate the experiences of these women with traumatic brain injuries.

In some minds, the victim only suffered “a small push” or just a “small smack to the head.” Unfortunately too for the victims, they may not be able to recollect what happened and, worse, the assaults may not even be reported to the police.

Brain injuries are said to be like earthquakes. A severe brain injury is like a major earthquake: we find fractures, haemorrhages or penetrating wounds (bridges fall and there are collapsed buildings): There is devastation to the city.

But it’s not so for mild brain injuries or small earthquakes: we see cupboards overturned; cracked glasses. It’s more difficult to make sense of the damage and we can easily miss things that are broken, but no doubt something is wrong.

It was a British doctor, Gareth Roberts, who first alerted the world to domestic-violence brain injuries specifically, in a brief letter to the editor of *The Lancet*.

Then he was teaching neuroanatomy at Imperial College London while studying Alzheimer’s disease with one of the world’s leading groups on the subject.

One of his colleagues asked him to evaluate the autopsy of a 76-year-old woman who died after years of suffering domestic violence from her husband. In that letter, he described bruises, abrasions and rib fractures. The woman had a history of stroke

and was reported as “demented” (majorly memory loss and confusion) in later years.

Interestingly, Robert also found that the brain of the woman had similar features to that of the brain with Alzheimer’s, what scientists call tangles of tau and beta-amyloid proteins which are associated with neurodegeneration or deterioration of brain cells.

Her brain was akin to those of boxers suffering from chronic traumatic encephalopathy or C.T.E., which was formerly known as “punch-drunken syndrome.” This was the first time the literature had linked abused women with neurodegenerative disease. In another study of 26 women, a majority of them had been punched in the head. One was smacked in the head with the handle of a broom; another got a stab in the head; for another, it was the door of a car that knocked her out, while another was run over.

All nine of the victims complained of dizziness, impaired hearing and blurring of vision. It’s not only trauma to the brain that can lead to brain injury of victims. They also suffer strangulation even if momentarily. Strangulation can choke off oxygen supply leading to what is known as anoxic and hypoxic injuries which come about because brain cells have been starved of oxygen. This could lead to fatigue, confusion, and loss of memory.

In addition, traumatic brain injury can also result in irritability, social anxiety, depression, anger, feelings of overwhelm, general anxiety,

mood swings or emotional lability (teariness). It is instructive to say that many survivors of head injury suffer chronic personality changes, such as increased impulsivity, lack of insight and poor judgement. Insight has to do with a person’s understanding of their illness but also in terms of understanding how the illness affects the person’s interactions with the world.

These changes are well-known and likely to affect the ability to make decisions. Mrs Nwachukwu might have decided to cover all she was experiencing because of her religious belief. It could also be because of fear. But it could also be because she might have suffered repeated concussions in the head leading to traumatic brain injury which then affected her thinking ability! Osinachi Nwachukwu’s sonorous voice moved people to tears and joy while she was alive. With her death, joy has died. That is why many are outraged with her demise. To know that a man could torture his wife in the most damaging and the most dehumanising way is heartbreaking. But the as you are reading this piece know that somewhere, another woman is being punched in the face, in the head and kicked all over by a man who claims he loves her, and no amount of cues from her will save her. In the end, like Osinachi Nwachukwu, it’s not only her body—and brain—that fail her. Her society too fails her.

*...Dr Odoemena, a medical practitioner, writes from Lagos*

“In another study of 26 women, a majority of them had been punched in the head. One was smacked in the head with the handle of a broom; another got a stab in the head; for another, it was the door of a car that knocked her out, while another was run over



# Health

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## Malnutrition, Hunger and It's Endemic Situation

*The number of people affected by hunger globally rose to as many as 828 million in 2021, an increase of about 46 million since 2020 and 150 million since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, our Correspondent BLESSING BATURE examines.*

ACCORDING to a United Nations report that provides fresh evidence that the world is moving further away from its goal of ending hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition in all its forms by 2030.

The 2022 edition of the State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (SOFI) report presents updates on the food security and nutrition situation around the world, including the latest estimates of the cost and affordability of a healthy diet.

The report also looks at ways in which governments can repurpose their current support to agriculture to reduce the cost of healthy diets, mindful of the limited public resources available in many parts of the world.

Also, a report jointly published by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the UN World Food Programme (WFP) and the World Health Organization (WHO) says after remaining relatively unchanged since 2015, the proportion of people affected by hunger jumped in 2020 and continued to rise in 2021, to 9.8% of the world population.

Looking forward, projections are that nearly 670 million people with 8% of the world population will still be facing hunger in 2030 even if a global economic recovery is taken into consideration. This is a similar number to 2015, when the goal of ending hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition by the end of this decade was launched under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

This compares with 8% in 2019 and 9.3% in 2020.

Around 2.3 billion people in the world 29.3% were moderately or severely food insecure in 2021 and 350 million more compared to before the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Nearly 924 million people (11.7% of the global population) faced food insecurity at severe levels, an increase of 207 million in two years.

The ongoing war in Ukraine, involving two of the biggest global producers of staple cereals, oilseeds and fertilizer, is disrupting international supply chains and pushing up the prices of grain, fertilizer, energy, as well as ready-to-use therapeutic food for children with severe malnutrition. This comes as supply chains are already being adversely affected by increasingly frequent extreme climate events, especially in low-income countries, and has potentially sobering implications for global food security and nutrition.

The gender gap in food insecurity continued to rise in 2021 to 31.9% of women in



the world were moderately or severely food insecure, compared to 27.6% of men a gap of more than 4 percentage points, compared with 3 percentage points in 2020.

Almost 3.1 billion people could not afford a healthy diet in 2020, up 112 million from 2019, reflecting the effects of inflation in consumer food prices stemming from the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and the measures put in place to contain it.

Furthermore, 149 million children under the age of five had stunted growth and development due to a chronic lack of essential nutrients in their diets, while 39 million were overweight.

Progress is being made on exclusive breastfeeding, with nearly 44% of infants under 6 months of age being exclusively breastfed worldwide in 2020. This is still short of the 50% target by 2030. Of great concern, 2 in 3 children are not fed the minimum diverse diet they need to grow and develop to their full potential.

The intensification of these major drivers of food insecurity and malnutrition includes conflict, climate extremes and economic shocks, combined with growing inequalities, the issue at stake is not whether adversities will continue to occur or not, but how we must take bolder action to build resilience against future shocks.

It is estimated that between 702 and 828 million people were affected by hunger in 2021. The estimate is presented as a range to reflect the added uncertainty in data collection due to the COVID-19 pandemic and related restrictions. The increases are

measured with reference to the middle of the projected range (768 million).

Now an estimated 45 million children under the age of five were suffering from wasting, the deadliest form of malnutrition, which increases children's risk of death by up to 12 times.

Director General, World Health Organization (WHO) Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said every year, 11 million people die due to unhealthy diets, saying rising food prices mean this will only get worse.

According to him, WHO supports countries' efforts to improve food systems through taxing unhealthy foods and subsidising healthy options, protecting children from harmful marketing, and ensuring clear nutrition labels. We must work together to achieve the 2030 global nutrition targets, to fight hunger and malnutrition, and to ensure that food is a source of health for all.

Also, Executive Director, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Catherine Russell said the unprecedented scale of the malnutrition crisis demands an unprecedented response. We must double our efforts to ensure that the most vulnerable children have access to nutritious, safe, and affordable diets and services for the early prevention, detection and treatment of malnutrition.

"With so many children's lives and futures at stake, this is the time to step up our ambition for child nutrition and we have no time to waste", he said.

In the same vein, the International Fund for Agricultural Development

(IFAD), President Gilbert Houngbo said these are depressing figures for humanity. We continue to move away from our goal of ending hunger by 2030.

According to him, the ripple effects of the global food crisis will most likely worsen the outcome again next year 2023 and we need a more intense approach to end hunger and IFAD stands ready to do its part by scaling up its operations and impact.

A report notes as striking that worldwide support for the food and agricultural sector averaged almost US\$ 630 billion a year between 2013 and 2018. The lion's share of it goes to individual farmers, through trade and market policies and fiscal subsidies.

However, not only is much of this support market-distorting, but it is not reaching many farmers, hurts the environment and does not promote the production of nutritious foods that make up a healthy diet. That's in part because subsidies often target the production of staple foods, dairy and other animal source foods, especially in high- and upper-middle-income countries. Rice, sugar and meats of various types are most incentivized food items worldwide, while fruits and vegetables are relatively less supported, particularly in some low-income countries.

With the threats of a global recession looming, and the implications this has on public revenues and expenditures, a way to support economic recovery involves the repurposing of food and agricultural support to target

nutritious foods where per capita consumption does not yet match the recommended levels for healthy diets.

Director General, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), QU Dongyu eailer said low-income countries, where agriculture is key to the economy, jobs and rural livelihoods, have little public resources to repurpose.

The DG noted that FAO is committed to continue working together with these countries to explore opportunities for increasing the provision of public services for all actors across agrifood systems.

David Beasley WFP Executive Director, disclosed that there is a real danger these numbers will climb even higher in the months ahead. The global price spikes in food, fuel and fertilizers that we are seeing as a result of the crisis in Ukraine threaten to push countries around the world into famine.

"The result will be global destabilization, starvation, and mass migration on an unprecedented scale. We have to act today to avert this looming catastrophe."

The evidence suggests that if governments repurpose the resources they are using to incentivize the production, supply and consumption of nutritious foods, they will contribute to making healthy diets less costly, more affordable and equitably for all.

Also governments could do more to reduce trade barriers for nutritious foods, such as fruits, vegetables and pulses.





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## Education Digest

## TETFund Boss commends FG's plan to give incentive to students

EXECUTIVE Secretary of Tertiary Education Trust Fund, TETFund Arc Sonny Echono has expressed confidence that Federal Government's plan to place students studying education on scholarship and other incentives will boost enrollment into the programme and attract best brains into the teaching profession.

Echono stated this at a two-day capacity building programme for heads of Colleges of Education (Northern Zone) with the theme, "Enhancing Pedagogical Skills And Curriculum Development For Quality Education Delivery In Nigeria Colleges of Education."

The TETFund boss decried the dwindling enrollment into educational courses, poor remuneration of teachers and the low perception of the teaching profession in the country as factors keeping the best brains away.

He commended President Muhammadu Buhari for approving so many incentives for teachers, saying the target to be paying stipend to students studying educational courses in tertiary institutions will boost the profession.

"Enrollment in education courses generally has been dwindling and the demand is very low. The remuneration is very poor, the public perception and reputation and everything are very low so nobody wants to go there.

"So when you incentivize like Mr President has done it will attract people there and we should implement those incentives quickly.

"The first that will attract a lot of students is the fact that the government has said those studying education in our colleges of education as well as in our universities will move quickly to ensure they no longer pay any tuition fee and be placed on automatic scholarships or what we call stipends on a monthly basis.

"That way, a lot of those who even have difficulties in meeting the financial requirements will see it as a variable option and career.

Echono also urged state governments to ensure that only qualified persons are employed into the teaching profession to enhance the quality of teaching and learning.

The workshop which is aimed at creating programmes that can revive the glory of the NCE programme in Nigeria is organised by the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCCE) in collaboration with the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund).

He lamented that most of the teachers recruited across states were not competent enough while stressing the need to reposition the teaching profession in order to attract the best brains.

"In Nigeria today, teaching has become a profession only if you don't have another option. What is even more painful is the practice of employing fictitious names and teachers who don't have anything to do in the profession. My message to you is to recommend your profession as a calling.

"It should only attract the best brains, which is the only way to maintain quality. We must give them enough remuneration to keep them in the profession. No country can attain greatness without teachers."

Echono admitted that the country is currently facing the issue of funding that needs to be addressed from the root through birth control.

"If you can slow down the rate at which we are giving birth then you can come and say let us freeze the number of schools that we have or you are going to be creating an army of illiterates who have not been given opportunity to try themselves and in the end they become bigger problems.

"So we must continue to expand access to every child in this country to have opportunity. But I support that we should take a drastic move at a rate we are increasing our population," he said.



## FG, World Bank reiterate commitment to effective skills acquisition program

IN its bid to ensure the success of the Innovation Development and Effectiveness in the Acquisition of Skills, IDEAS, Project, the Federal Ministry of Education in collaboration with the World Bank has a 2-day workshop for Monitoring and Evaluation Officers as well as Innovation Grant Officers.

While delivering his opening speech, read by the Director Technology and Science Education, DTSE, Mrs Elizabeth Adedigba, the Minister of Education, Malam Adamu Adamu stressed the need for monitoring & evaluation towards achieving the required objective of the project.

Adamu also said that, the training workshop would provide Monitoring & Evaluation Officers the opportunity to better their capacity to effectively implement monitoring & evaluation

activities across all the four project components.

He emphasised that the training is meant to achieve the sole aim of strengthening, monitoring & evaluation capacity in the management of IDEAS Project.

Earlier in her welcome address, the Ekiti State Commissioner for Education, Dr(Mrs) Kofoworola Olabisi Olabimpe Adeyire represented by Hon Olukayode Babade (Chairman Board for Technical & Vocational Education ) Ekiti State commended the Federal Ministry of Education and the World Bank for organising the workshop in Ekiti State.

Babade further commended the World Bank for the recent fund mobilisation released to benefitting States and the attendant clearance of the Institutional Development plans of Technical Colleges in Ekiti State.

She also appreciated the endorsement of the Grant Agreement Forms for benefitting Technical Colleges.

According to her, training of M&E Officers is key to the successful implementation of the projects, which will undoubtedly enhance the use of the project fund, better project tracking and consistent attainment of project development objectives.

She advised all the monitoring and evaluation officers to avail themselves of this opportunity to tap the adequate knowledge that would make them perform optimally and display dexterity in their project bits, adding that this is the only way the project objectives could be met.

Meanwhile, Officers for the workshop were drawn from the 6 participating States of Ekiti, Benue, Edo, Abia, Gombe and Kano.

## Osun Gubernatorial election: NYSC refutes alleged abscondment of Corps Members

NATIONAL Youth Service Corps has refuted the statement credited to Dr. Deji Adeleke, alleging that 45 Corps Members assigned for Osun State Gubernatorial Election held on Saturday, 16th July, 2022 failed to turn up.

The Management of the Scheme denied this in a Press statement made available to journalists on Tuesday in Abuja.

The statement read in part "The attention of the Management of National Youth Service Corps has been drawn to a statement credited to Dr. Deji Adeleke, alleging that 45 Corps Members assigned for Osun State Gubernatorial

Election held on Saturday, 16th July, 2022 failed to turn up at their respective polling units, thus implying an attempt on the part of the Corps Members to undermine the credibility of the exercise.

"Management wishes to state that the allegation in its entirety does not represent the true position of what happened on the said day.

"It is pertinent to state that before every election, Corps Members are trained and sensitised on the provisions of the Electoral Act.

"The security of Corps Members is a cardinal policy thrust of the Scheme which is always given prominence

during the training sessions.

"Accordingly, in line with the foregoing policy, Corps Members that participate in electoral duties are under strict instruction not to move to any polling unit, with sensitive and non-sensitive materials in the absence of vehicles and complementary security cover provided by Independent National Electoral Commission."

It further explained that "8,141 Corps Members participated in the exercise. There was no case of abscondment on the part of the Corps Members as alleged.

"However, it took a while before the polling officers detailed to a few newly-created

polling units could locate them through the intervention of the Desk Officers, Electoral Operations Support Centre.

"Consequently, it is appropriate to restate, while reassuring the general public, especially the electorates that the Scheme will continue to discharge its electoral duties in tandem with the provisions of the Electoral Act, with the highest degree of discipline and neutrality.

"In the final analysis, the general public is hereby advised to disregard the sweeping statement made by our respected elder statesman for lacking in facts and accuracy."



# Perspective

## Insecurity: How NAF's precision air power is helping military win the war

By Emmanuel Obisue

THE role of air components is key to achieving positive results in modern day warfare. This is because air surrounds the earth, overlaying the land and sea. Thus, the decisive impact of air power when professionally orchestrated along with land and maritime forces, leaves an enemy in devastating state. The Nigerian Air Force, NAF, knows this, and is already taking advantage of it.

Established in 1964, the Nigerian Air Force is among the elite air forces in Africa. With more fleets in expectation, NAF already boasts of a frightening fleet that will make an enemy tremble. Among its fleet are: Super Tucanos; Dassault-Dornier Alpha Jets; Chinese Chengdu F-7s; JF-17 Thunder Blocks; M-346 FAs; Helicopter Gunships; Armed Attack Drones, and many more.

Italy's Leonardo Helicopter is set to deliver two units of AW109 Trekker helicopters to the Nigerian Air Force, after the current administration set aside N2bn to complete their procurement. NAF had placed an order for six Leonardo AW109 helicopters in 2019. The equipment is a militarised version of the AW109E that can be armed with heavy machine gun pods and 70 mm rocket launchers. It is also good for aerial scout, reconnaissance, armed escort, troop transport, Search and Rescue, SAR, and medical evacuation. Another N27bn has also been made available for NAF to acquire six units of TAI/AgustaWestland T129 ATAK helicopters from Turkey. The T129 is a twin-engine, tandem seat, multi-role, all-weather attack helicopter based on the Agusta A129 Mangusta platform.

This means nothing more than doom for the enemies of Nigeria's peace and security. Recently, Nigeria's Chief of Air Staff, CAS, Air Marshal Isiaka Oladayo Amao, while commissioning the NAF Air Warfare Centre, confirmed that lessons learnt from recent and ongoing operations across the country, has further confirmed the dynamism of air power employment as critical to operational successes, as well as meeting the safety and security aspirations of all Nigerians.

According to a statement by Air Commodore Edward Gabkwet, NAF's Director of Public Relations and Information, the CAS also noted that air power has become a key determinant of operational effectiveness, as well as a force multiplier in all ongoing operations in the country. "Enhancing



and sustaining critical air power capabilities required for joint force employment in pursuit of national security imperatives", just as it tallies with two key drivers of his Vision, which "focuses on doctrinal development and application of air power in joint military operations" as well as "pursuit of purposeful training and human capacity development", he noted.

The successes drawn from the deployment of precision air warfare in recent military operations in Nigeria, especially in the northeast and northwest, is over the moon. Successful air strikes have largely degraded the resources and capabilities of terrorists. In September during one of the routine press briefings by the Nigerian Defence Headquarters, Major General Musa Danmadami, Director, Defence Media Operations, DHQ, informed that at least 250 Boko Haram and Islamic State West Africa Province, ISWAP terrorists, were neutralized within two weeks by precision air bombardments.

Only recently, air components of Operation Whirl Punch operating in the northwest, targeted and neutralized scores of foot soldiers in Kaduna State, which has been a base for armed bandits and kidnapers. During the air raid, a notorious terrorist kingpin, Ali Dogo, AKA 'Yellow' alongside scores of his loyal fighters were given devastating judgement by NAF. "The Air Component Operation WHIRL PUNCH on 8 October 2022 based on credible intelligence carried

out an air strike at Yadi in Giwa Local Government Area of Kaduna State. During the air strikes, a terrorist kingpin, Ali Dogo, AKA Yellow alongside his fighters were neutralized in a building they were said to be hosting a meeting. Yellow and his fighters were said to have relocated to Kaduna State following continued bombardment on his location in Niger State," Major General Danmadami told newsmen recently at a press briefing.

Similarly, Danmadami informed that on the same day, acting on credible intelligence, some terrorist leaders and their foot soldiers converging under tree covers for a meeting in the northwest of Mando, Kaduna State, were also bombarded, with scores neutralized. In more recent air successes, scores of fighters including relatives of notorious terror kingpin, Bello Turji, were killed in an air raid carried out by NAF in Zamfara State. The raid which according to reports was largely successful, was conducted around Turji's hideout in the Fakai community of Shinkafi Local Government Area of the state on a weekend when the terrorists were said to be attending the naming ceremony of a child at Turji's house. They were caught unawares by the air bombardment. An Air Force source at the Forward Operation Base in neighbouring Katsina, who asked not to be named as he was not authorised to speak with the media, also confirmed the raid.

According to the senior officer, Turji's whereabouts remained unknown after

the raid, while other sources alleged that he escaped with serious injuries. Also speaking on the incident, a former Councillor in the Fakai community, who spoke to journalists on condition of anonymity, said the terrorists were inside an uncompleted mosque when the soldiers struck.

"I left the community for some personal business in Shinkafi around 1:58 p.m but didn't reach my destination when I started receiving calls that the community was under attack. My family thought it was bandits that were attacking but then they called to say it was the air force. I could hear the roaring of the jets," he said. He further claimed that Turji was not in the town during the attack, and that majority of those killed were his fighters who were inside the Mosque at the time. "If he (Mr Turji) is in the town, everyone knows because you'll see his fighters with sophisticated weapons protecting his house. The naming was conducted in the morning while the normal women's event was yet to start in the evening," he added.

Another resident told newsmen that the military offensive "was very deadly. I saw the bandits running while we were trying to hide outside the community. Everyone was confused but thanks to God that the jets didn't stay for long, it would have affected some of us, innocent residents". The raid was carried out by the officers from Operation Forest Sanity and air components of Operation Hadarin Daji using Mi-17 and Alpha Jet, while

another aircraft provided surveillance throughout the offensive, a senior personnel informed.

Recently again on October 11, NAF's Super Tucano conducted large scale of bombardments at Gargash and Ngauri Boko Haram hideouts in Bama Local Government Areas in Borno States. The A-29 Super Tucano is a Brazilian turboprop attack and counter-insurgency aircraft, which carries a wide variety of weapons, including precision-guided munitions. Since its acquisition, it has boosted NAF's air prowess, and has done commendable damage to the enemy. Thus, the Bama bombardment scored devastating impact, as scores of the terrorists were barbecued in the process. The unlucky insurgents were said to be those who coordinated attacks in Kumshe, and were planing to attack troops in Mayinty or Darajemal before they were hit by the Air Force strikes. Damage assessment indicated that scores were consumed.

In the bombardment/ambush carried out by Air Component of Operation Hadin Kai and land troops of Troops of 152 Battalion Banki, Operation Hadin Kai, the deployed Super Tucano delivered accurate hits. A Counter-insurgency/Security Expert in the Lake Chad region, Zagazola Makama, who confirmed the the attack, said troops staged an ambush following an Intelligence report that dozens of Boko Haram terrorists had been troubling commuters and robbing them of their valuables in the area.



## Last Line

Last line: "Travellers with travel history to Uganda who show no symptoms on arrival should provide accurate information on the NITP platform to ensure follow-up from health workers."

- FG cautioning Nigerians against non-essential travels to Uganda.

## Flooding: Unlearnt lessons by the Niger Delta

By Princewill Igbagara

Guest Writer

The Niger Delta region of Nigeria means different things to different people, depending on where a person may be standing in what has become popularly known as the Niger Delta question. Rather remote and relatively unknown then, the region was spotlighted from the very beginning of Nigeria's creation.

At the 1957 pre-independence constitutional conference in London, the Niger Delta delegation raised pertinent issues regarding the region in an independent Nigeria. Specifically, the leaders expressed worries about domination by the majority tribes and the difficult terrain, predominantly swampy with a criss-cross of rivers, lakes and other water bodies. Some areas of the land are below sea-level, coupled with a dense rain forest, one of the largest in the world, only next to the Amazon and the Congolese forests.

They contended that an independent Nigeria with the three bigger tribes of Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo at the helm of affairs may not meet the developmental aspiration of the region. The total lack of social amenities in the region was deafening: no schools, hospitals and electricity. Inter-linkage of towns and communities by roads was not as such an aspiration at the time, as it was simply seen as something near impossible to do.

The delegation therefore presented to Her Majesty, Elizabeth II, Queen of England on whose instance the conference was convened, strong reservations to be part of independent Nigeria. In swift and what seemed at the time an appropriate response, the Willinks Commission of Inquiry was instituted to verify the claims vis-a-vis necessary steps to address them.

The Commission did its job with diligence and made far reaching recommendations on how the Niger Delta region can be properly incorporated and integrated in Nigeria. More than 60 years have since gone by and not much has been seen of government's action on the Niger Delta.

Neglect of the region by successive governments since independence is palpable, even to a first-time visitor. Geographically covering an area of over 70,000 square kilometers, partitioned into six administrative units called states, the original Niger Delta extended from Cross River State to Edo State with Akwa Ibom, Rivers, Bayelsa and Delta as member states. On discovery and exploitation of crude oil, which eventually became the mainstay of the Nigeria's economy, the region was reconfigured by the Olusegun Obasanjo's administration in 2000 to include Abia, Imo and Ondo States for political convenience. In a bid to address some of the perennial demands of oil-bearing communities in the Niger Delta, demand for oil rights became synonymous with agitation for development of the region. The latter three states which are oil-bearing were easy to incorporate in the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) for oil-bearing communities, thereby redefining the original geographical Niger Delta.

The woes of being blessed with oil in the Niger Delta are manifold, or better put inexhaustible. Polite and accommodating hitherto to their visitors: the oil multinationals, the people started getting enlightened on their



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plight in the hands of the oil companies and the Nigerian state. Life became 'hellish' for the people in some instances, where whole water bodies, the only source of sustenance for the people are contaminated with oil from spills and the companies simply rest on their oars, backed by government. Fishing and other occupations of the locals were depleted incrementally to the point that all traditional occupations of the people are quickly becoming extinct. There was zero corporate social responsibility (CSR), a phrase introduced to the Nigerian business lexicon only in the 1990s. Beyond destruction of livelihoods by oil exploration and exploitation in the region, the wanton pollution of the environment has resulted in a number of malignant ailments that are strange to the people. Studies have shown a direct relationship between oil pollution and infant and maternal mortality amongst several other health problems in the region.

Raising the red flag of environmental degradation in the region, Isaac Jasper Adaka Boro of Kaima in present day Bayelsa State, who later rose to become a Major in the Nigerian Army questioned right of ownership of the Federal Government over oil on his fatherland. Leading a rebellion for environmental justice, the young

*The military disruption of civilian governance since 1966 coupled with failure of the politicians to do the right things have created a lot of imbalance*

Boro held arms against the Nigerian state, but was summarily suppressed, and rebellion quenched. About two decades after Boro, Ken Saro Wiwa, a playwright and environmentalist from Ogoni of River State revived the agitation for oil rights amidst call for a stop to pollution of Ogoni land. Wiwa and his group pressured Shell Petroleum Development Company of Nigeria, the major operator in his area and the Federal Government to either stop their operations or meet demands of the people in the now famous Ogoni Bill of Rights.

Frustrated by his defiance and refusal to compromise the cause, the activist was judicially murdered by regime of late General Sani Abacha on pent-up charges. Commonly referred to as the Ogoni nine, Saro Wiwa and eight others were sentenced to death by a kangaroo tribunal of the government on accusation of masterminding the murder of four prominent Ogoni men by an irate mob. The cry for environmental justice began swelling from this point, snowballing later to a full scale resistance of the Federal Government by youths of the region especially the Ijaws and Ogonis. All other ethnic nationalities of the region also contributed their fair share to the struggle that led eventually to the total destruction of Odi and Odioma in Bayelsa State and Oporozain Delta State amongst several others communities.

With return of civil rule in 1999, President Olusegun Obasanjo sought to address the Niger Delta question, at least once and for all. After several stakeholder engagements, the PDP led government established NDDC as an interventionist agency to address developmental needs of the people. This was in addition to creation of the Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs for the same purpose. Besides the River Basin Development Authorities implemented by government of the first republic, amongst recommendations of the Willinks Commission, these actions of the Obasanjo led government were the only actual steps taken by government since independence to address the yarning of the people. The River Basin Development Authorities, originally established to address flooding and other ecological development problems of the region has since lost focus and direction by proliferation of the agency across the country and politicisation of their operations. The River Basin Development Authorities, a product of the Niger Delta question is almost consigned to the dustbin of history and national relic as their impact is near zero.

The Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs operates regularly as any other, but the NDDC has a specialised funding plan that gives it access to much more money than annual budgetary allocations. Oil multinationals are obligated to remit a certain percentage of their net profit to the Commission for development of the region. At the last count, the Commission has received a whopping N6trillion in about 20 years of its establishment.

Rather regrettably, the NDDC has been turned into cash cow for few influence peddlers in the region and their cronies in Abuja. It has been so recklessly milked that the Commission has lost tract. Guided by the NDDC Establishment Act 2000 which has explicit provisions on constitution and tenure of the governing board, and general modus operandi, politicisation of the body has led to jettisoning of its law for a better part of eight years of APC rule. Lawlessness of the Commission and her cronies has resulted in endemic corruption and unabated waste of much needed developmental funds. The foregoing ugly dance by the Commission propelled President Muhammadu Buhari to institute a forensic audit on it. Excited by the action of Mr. President, ordinary Niger Deltans hoped that this would stop the pillaging of the body and restore sanity.

## Sports Watch

Joshua 'll not fight till next year, battles mental health



Joshua

Anthony Joshua will not box in December as he battles to rebuild his mental health after back-to-back Oleksandr Usyk losses.

The 33-year-old London 2012 Olympic golden boy was dethroned by his WBA, IBF and WBO world titles by the Ukrainian mastermind in September 2021.

The former unified heavyweight champ suffered a second consecutive defeat to the Ukrainian and he failed with his August rematch - despite a vastly improved performance - and broke down in the aftermath, throwing a couple of his old belts to the floor and crying in the post-fight press conference.

A decade of carrying such huge expectations on his giant shoulders came pouring out of the father-of-one, after he lost his crowns and any chance of his career-long goal of an undisputed decider. And despite the Watford icon and promoter Eddie Hearn vowing he would fight in December, the powerhouse pin-up has now confirmed - although he is fighting fit - his head is still not fully recovered.

AJ entered talks with undefeated WBC Gypsy King Tyson Fury about a potential December 3 showdown.

But he pulled out of talks when his commercial and sponsorship partnerships clashed with playing second fiddle on the Fury show, planned for the Cardiff stadium.

And he has now confirmed to broadcasters DAZN, that his family has urged him to take an extended break to let his huge heart and mind recover from the punishing losses.

"You saw after my last fight, I swear it tore me apart," Joshua bravely admitted.

"I had so much riding on it, for me, the British fans, the undisputed fight.

"It just really tore me apart so, from a mental capacity, my close ones are telling me to rest, mentally.

"Physically I am down to ride, I am a warrior, I like this game and I like competing.

"But, from a mental aspect, I think people have really seen it means a lot."

Bitter nemesis Fury has made a second career out of being a mental health campaigner, after his own breakdown coincided with a 2017 back-dated doping ban.