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# The Guardian WEEKEND

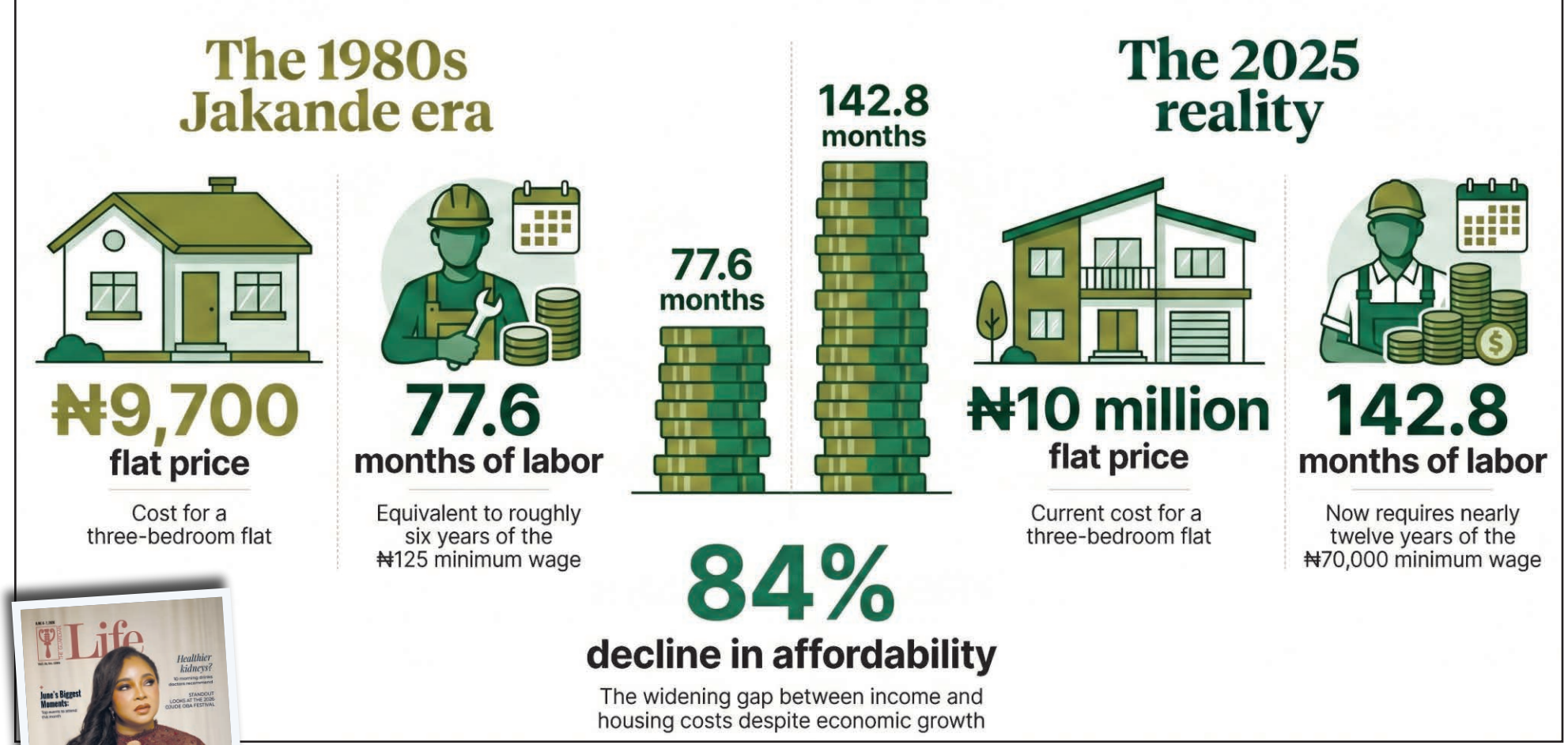
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Conscience, Nurtured by Truth

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# Insecurity: Tears, Blood Flow On The Road To 2027 Polls

From **Johnson Eyiangho, Joke Falaju** (Abuja) and **Adewale Momoh** (Akure)

- Terrorists Kill Five Soldiers, Three CJTF Members In Borno
- Abduct Pastor's 9-year-old Son, Destroy Homes In Ondo
- NSCDC Foils Kidnapping, Cattle Rustling In Kano
- Current Problems Mirror Pre-2015 Elections – Alabi
- Private Security Operators Seek Stronger Collaboration With Govt

AHEAD of the 2027 general elections, Nigeria appears to be under siege with alarming rise in kidnapping and killing incidents. Amid the waiting for the safe release of schoolchildren and teachers abducted from their schools in Oyo and Ondo states on May 15, 2026, five soldiers and three members of the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) paid the supreme price as troops repelled Boko Haram attack on Forward Operating Base (FOB) Mandaragirau under 25 Brigade of Sector 2 in Borno State on Friday morning.

This was even as bandits on Friday invaded Igbosi Community along Imeri Road, Idogun, in Ose Local Council of Ondo State, destroyed homes and kidnapped a nine-year-old boy after his father escaped to safety.

Meanwhile, the prevailing peace in Kano State was disturbed on Thursday following an attempted kidnap and cattle rustling incident at Bakin Komau, Dangora area in Kiru Local Council of Kano State that was, however, successfully foiled by operatives of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) in the state.

Confirming the death of the soldiers and CJTF members, Acting Media Information Officer of Operation Hadin Kai (OPHK), Lt -Col. Haruna Sani, said in a statement that those wounded in the encounter were airlifted by the Air Component Command and were in stable conditions while receiving appropriate medicare.

He explained that the troops of the FOB successfully contained the terrorist attack in the early hours of Friday morning despite adverse weather conditions and poor visibility occasioned by heavy rainstorms.

According to him, the terrorists launched the attack at approximately 0300 hours and attempted to breach sections of the FOB under the extreme weather conditions.

"Determined troops responded with a fierce counter-offensive, decisively frustrating further incursions and inflicting casualties on the attackers. The counter-assault underscores the resilience of the troops at FOB Mandaragirau, and reflects the courage and determination of our troops across the Theatre.

"Their sacrifice embodies the highest traditions of service, courage and unwavering commitment to the defence of the nation. Operation HADIN KAI honours their heroism and the bravery of all personnel who stood firm in the face of a determined but ultimately futile enemy assault," Sani said.

He said the troops remained firmly in control of the FOB and continue to dominate the general area, while exploitation operations are ongoing for consolidation. The failed attacks, he said, further underscored the growing desperation of terrorist elements who continue to suffer devastating losses under sustained operational pressure.

"All necessary measures are being taken to protect communities and sustain relentless pressure with the deployment of additional troops and critical combat enablers throughout the North East Theatre."

*The Guardian* gathered that the gunmen that stormed Igbosi community around 1:00 a.m. on Friday fired sporadic gunshots, after which they forced their way into the residence of Pastor Isaac Olaosebikan.

The pastor was said to have fled from the house upon sighting the gunmen, but his son, Victor Olaosebikan, was subsequently seized by the marauders.

According to sources, the gunmen in their attempt to gain entrance into some houses during the operation destroyed some buildings and left the community around 2:30 a.m. unchallenged.

When contacted over the incident, the Police Public Relations Officer in the state, Abayomi Jimoh, confirmed the attack, stating that an intensive manhunt has been launched on the fleeing suspected kidnappers.

The police spokesperson stressed that upon the receipt of the distress report, the Divisional Police Officer and his men, in collaboration with the Amotekun Corps, immediately mobilised to the scene and launched a coordinated search-and-rescue operation.

He said: "The incident was reported in the early hours of Friday, 5th June 2026, at about 2:30 a.m. by Mr. Olaosebikan Isaac and Mr. Joel Owalekan, both residents of Ugbosi Quarters, Idogun.

"According to their reports, at approximately 1:30 a.m. on the same day, a group of armed men invaded the community, firing gunshots sporadically and causing panic among residents.

"During the attack, the assailants reportedly forced their way into the residence of Mr. Olaosebikan Isaac. In a desperate attempt to save his life, he escaped into the surrounding bush, leaving behind his nine-year-old son, Master Olaosebikan Victor, who was subsequently abducted by the armed men.

"Mr. Joel Owalekan also reported that the same group of assailants unlawfully damaged his residence while attempting to gain entry. He similarly escaped the attack by fleeing to safety, thereby avoiding possible harm."

Jimoh disclosed that security operatives combed the surrounding forests and likely escape routes in a bid to rescue the abducted child and apprehend the perpetrators.

"Investigations have commenced while relevant exhibits have been recovered and documented to determine the circumstances surrounding the attack and track down those responsible.

"The Commissioner of Police, Ondo State Command, CP Felix Ohagwu, has directed all tactical teams, intelligence units and other relevant security assets to intensify efforts towards the immediate rescue of the victim unhurt and the arrest of the perpetrators.

"The Command is also working closely with other security agencies and local vigilante groups to ensure that the criminals are brought to justice.

"The Command assures residents that every available resource is being deployed to secure the safe rescue of the abducted child.

"Members of the public are urged to remain calm, vigilant and cooperate with security agencies by providing any useful information that may aid ongoing investigations.

"Anyone with credible and actionable information relating to the abducted child or the suspects is encouraged to report promptly to the nearest police station or other security agency."

The Ondo State government has also disclosed that a coordinated joint security operation has been launched in the state following the incident.

According to a statement issued by the Commissioner for Information and Orientation, Idowu Ajanaku, the activated emergency security response involves the Amotekun Corps, Nigeria Police Force, Department of State Services (DSS) and the military.

Ajanaku disclosed that the security agencies have since commenced intensive combing operations within the community, surrounding forests, and other locations.

"Preliminary security measures have already been strengthened in the affected axis, while intelligence gathering and search operations are ongoing to ensure the perpetrators are apprehended and brought to justice."

Confirming the foiled kidnap and cattle rustling incident in Kano through a statement on Friday, the Public Relations Officer of the state command of the NSCDC, SC Ibrahim Abdullahi, said the armed bandits had attacked a shepherd, inflicted serious injuries on him, and abducted his two children while attempting to rustle livestock.

"Upon receiving a distress report, NSCDC personnel stationed around the nearby Dansoshiya Forest swiftly mobilised to the scene and engaged the criminals in a gun duel.

Abdullahi added: "Overwhelmed by the superior response of the NSCDC operatives, the suspects abandoned the kidnapped children and fled into the forest with injuries, thereby thwarting the criminal mission."

The statement further said the two rescued persons, Abubakar Saleh, 36 and Muhammad Inuwa Dille, 30, had been reunited with their family, while the injured shepherd, 70-year-old Alhaji Saleh, had received immediate medical assistance.

The NSCDC reassured residents of its unwavering commitment to the protection of lives, property and critical national assets. It, however, urged members of the public to continue providing credible information to security agencies to enhance prompt response to security threats.

The incidents occurred barely three weeks after armed bandits abducted seven teachers and 39 students from Community High School, Ahoro-Esinle, and Yawota Baptist Nursery and Primary School in Oriire Local Council of Oyo State.

On the same day, suspected Boko Haram terrorists attacked three schools, including Mussa Central Primary School, Government Day Junior Secondary School, and a SUBEB school, abducting between 42 and 50 schoolchildren from Mussa town in the Askira-Uba Local Council of Borno State.

By the weekend, the abductors had beheaded one of the kidnapped teachers from Oyo, Mr. Michael Oyedokun.

The continued detention of the teachers and schoolchildren triggered protests in many parts of the country. While demanding the immediate release of the abductees, some of the protesters called for the resignation of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, saying he had failed to secure the lives and property of Nigerians.

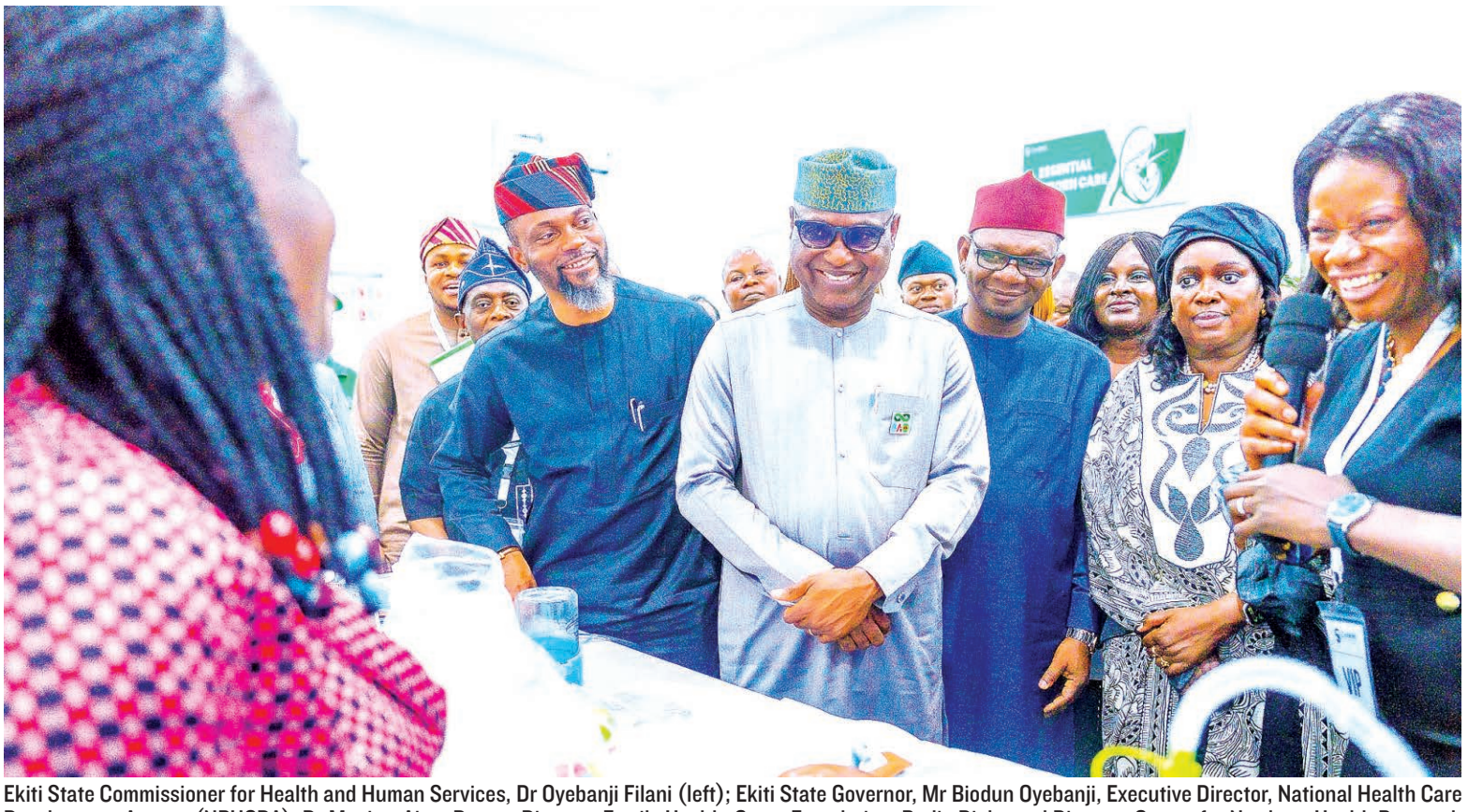
Recall that on Wednesday, April 8, this year, four army personnel, comprising two officers and two soldiers were killed during a terrorist attack on a military base in in Benisheikh, Borno State. Within two days after the incident, no fewer than 15 people were murdered by suspected bandits and kidnappers across the country – a woman and her daughter in Ondo State, five forest guards in Kwara State, and eight residents of Mbwelle village in Bokkos Local Council of Plateau State – indicating that the efforts of Nigeria's security forces at addressing the insecurity menace still falls short.

Writing on the situation, the National Chairman, Ondo State Eminent Persons Group, Banji Alabi, linked heightened insecurity in the country to the 2027 general elections, a view top government officials like Senate President Godswill Akpabio had expressed.

In a piece titled, 'Roadmap To Combating Insecurity, Terrorism In Nigeria' made available to *The Guardian*, Alabi said: "Insecurity in Nigeria did not start yesterday, and it has never been purely criminal. History shows a pattern: whenever disgruntled political actors lose power or fear losing it, they weaponise violence to destabilise the state and create conditions to 'kick out a bad government.'

"We saw it in the lead-up to 2015. Boko Haram's escalation, kidnappings and bombings were amplified and exploited to delegitimise the President Goodluck Jonathan administration. The same actors who could not win at the ballot box sought victory through bloodshed and fear. Communities were infiltrated, local accomplices were paid and intelligence was suppressed because the goal was not peace—it was power. That playbook is still in use. When special interest groups want to topple an administration they dislike, they fan ethnic tensions, fund banditry and ensure that no part of the country feels safe. They know a frightened nation does not ask questions. It only demands change, any change.

Read the remainder of this story on www.guardian.ng



Ekiti State Commissioner for Health and Human Services, Dr Oyebanji Filani (left); Ekiti State Governor, Mr Biodun Oyebanji, Executive Director, National Health Care Development Agency (NPHCDA), Dr Muyiwa Aina; Deputy Director, Family Health, Gates Foundation, Rodio Dialo; and Director, Centre for Newborn Health Research and Innovation (CeNHRI), Dr Olufunke Bolaji, during the commissioning of the centre at Ekiti State University Teaching Hospital (EKSUTH), Ado- Ekiti... on Friday.

## Decentralised Policing, Economic Empowerment Will Curb Banditry, Says Oseni

By **Opeyemi Babalola**

FORMER United States Police officer and Army veteran, Abiodun Ramon Oseni, has stressed the need for the decentralisation of policing powers in Nigeria to states and local councils to improve responsiveness to local security challenges.

He identified this as a key step which Nigeria must go through in a bid to combat the banditry and large-scale insecurity besetting it.

Oseni made these observations shortly after his recognition with the Outstanding Security Personality Award at the 2026 edition of the Nigeria Safety and Security (NSAS) Awards.

The U.S. army veteran noted that with state and local council police in place, community policing initiatives will be promoted, fostering collaboration between security agencies and local communities and enhancing intelligence gathering and trust.

He maintained that state and local council policing will almost always nip crimes in the bud while greatly improving response time to incidences of crime and insecurity when they occur.

Oseni also said that as a long-term plan, governments at all levels must begin to address some of the root causes of banditry and insecurity in society, such as poverty, unemployment and lack of education.

## Food Security: Farauta, UNN VC, Others Urge Investments In Modern Agric Extension Systems

From **Lawrence Njoku**, Enugu

NIGERIAN scholars have called for improved investment in modern agricultural extension systems as a strategy to boost food security in the country.

The scholars spoke during the institution of a memorial lecture series by the University of Nigeria, Nsukka (UNN), in honour of the first Head of the Department of Agricultural Extension, Prof. Lawrence Onyekele Obibuaku, who died in 2021.

Delivering a keynote lecture on the topic, 'From Vision to Practice: The Agricultural Extension Legacy of Professor Lawrence Obibuaku,' the Deputy Governor of Adamawa State, Prof. Keletapwa Farauta, stated that the late Obibuaku's vision about agricultural extension had become important following current challenges faced in the agricultural sector in Nigeria.

She identified the challenges as insecurity faced by farmers, climate uncertainty, rising production costs, poor infrastructure and limited access to extension support, stressing that across many states, extension systems had remained underfunded and overstretched and had gone further to defy recommendations of the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) on one extension officer to 1,000 farmers.

# Abductions: Makinde Restricts Nighttime 'Okada' Operations In Oyo

From **Rotimi Agboluaje**, Ibadan

### • Signs Executive Order To Boost Security

GOVERNOR Seyi Makinde of Oyo State on Friday signed Executive Order No. 002 of 2026 aimed at strengthening security, enforcing vehicle registration regulations and improving traffic management across the state.

The order, which came amid heightened security concerns following the abduction of teachers and pupils in Oriire Local Council of the state, also imposes restrictions on the operations of commercial motorcycle riders, popularly known as *okada*.

Speaking during the signing ceremony at the Governor's Office in Ibadan, Makinde said the executive order would provide a legal framework for the strict enforcement of vehicle registration laws and traffic regulations.

He expressed concern over the increasing use of unregistered vehicles, motorcycles and tricycles in criminal activities, noting that the absence of registration details often hampers investigations by security agencies.

According to him, the order empowers designated enforcement authorities to arrest offenders and impound vehicles, motorcycles and tricycles found to be operating in violation of the law.

He added that offenders would be prosecuted in accordance with existing legal provisions, while confiscated assets would be handled through due process.

Makinde linked the new measures to lessons drawn from recent security breaches in the state, particularly the abduction of schoolchildren and teachers in Oriire Local Council.

"We are living through very trying times. For more than 20 days, our teachers and pupils have remained in captivity in the hands of terrorists. Our thoughts and prayers remain with them and their families who continue to endure unimaginable pain and uncertainty," the governor said.

He assured residents that his administration remained committed to securing the safe return of the victims, stressing that efforts were ongoing in collaboration with relevant security agencies.

"As a government, we share in their anxiety and hope. We remain committed to doing everything within our power to secure the safe return of every one of them," he said.

Makinde acknowledged the anguish being experienced by affected families and communities, insisting that the victims had neither been forgotten nor abandoned.

While declining to disclose operational details, he said extensive efforts were being made behind the scenes and urged residents not to interpret government silence as inaction.

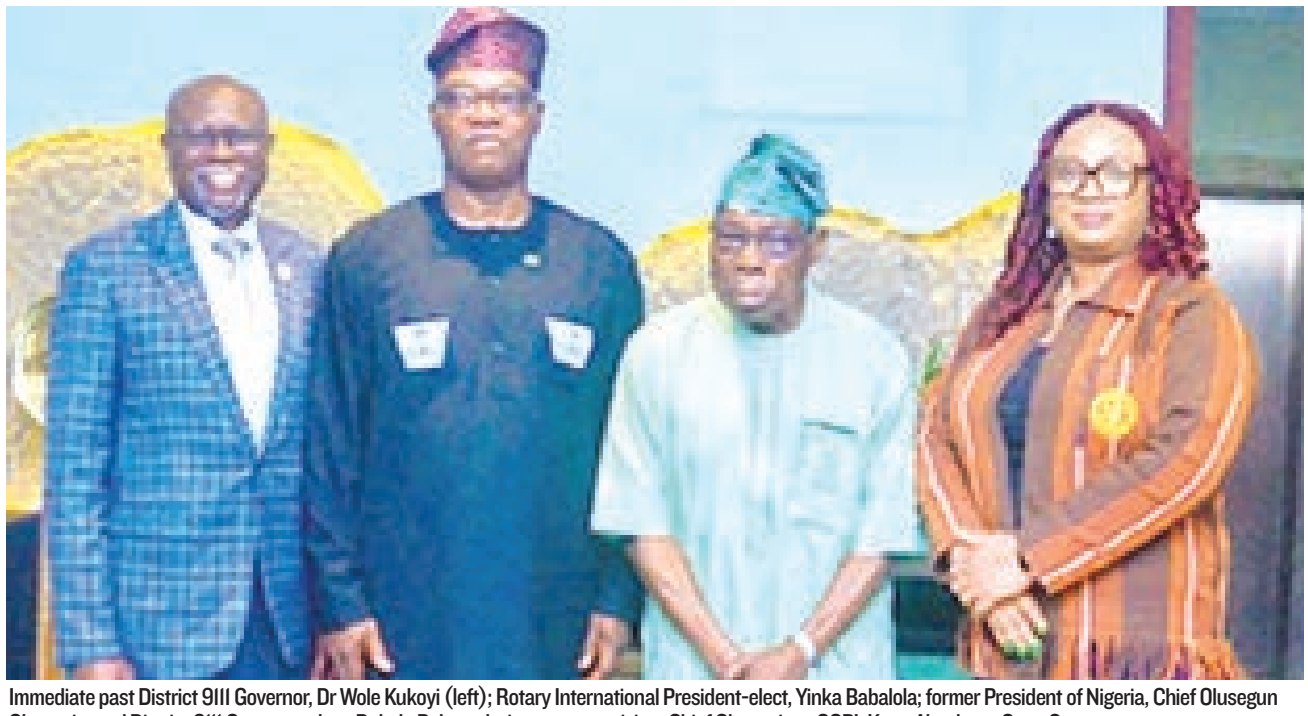
A major highlight of the Executive Order is the restriction placed on commercial motorcycle operations across the state.

Under the directive, commercial motorcycle operators are prohibited from operating between 10:30 p.m. and 5:30 a.m. daily.

The governor said the measure was introduced as part of broader efforts to curb criminal activities, enhance surveillance and improve public safety.

He called on residents to support security agencies by providing timely and credible information on suspicious movements and activities, describing security as a collective responsibility.

"If you see something, say something, and authorities will do something," he said, urging residents to make use of the state's toll-free emergency line–615–to report security threats and emergencies.



Immediate past District 9111 Governor, Dr Wole Kukoyi (left); Rotary International President-elect, Yinka Babalola; former President of Nigeria, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo; and District 9111 Governor-elect, Bukola Bakare during courtesy visit to Chief Obasanjo at OOPL Kuto, Abeokuta, Ogun State.

## 2027: SSDC Warns Businesses Against Cyber, Election-related Risks

By **Opeyemi Babalola**

THE Security Skills Development Company (SSDC) has released its 2026 Security Outlook, highlighting four major security challenges expected to shape Nigeria's business and operating environment as the country moves closer to the 2027 general election.

The report, developed from a nationwide survey and expert contributions at the recently concluded Security Thought Leadership Roundtable, identifies internal security threats, protection of national assets, cyber risks and election-related instability as the most significant concerns facing organisations and institutions in the coming year.

According to SSDC, findings from the survey and stakeholder discussions reveal growing concern over the increasing complexity of security challenges and their potential impact on business continuity, economic stability and public confidence.

A substantial number of respondents identified internal threats within organisations as an emerging risk, pointing to the need for stronger corporate governance, workforce integrity measures and structured risk management systems.

Security experts at the roundtable noted that weaknesses in critical public infrastructure and national assets could have far-reaching consequences for the economy and national development if not adequately addressed.

The report also highlights cybercrime as a persistent and evolving threat to both public and private sector institutions. Participants stressed the importance of strengthening cyber resilience through proactive monitoring, investment in technology-driven safeguards and improved security awareness.

Another key concern raised in the outlook is what SSDC described as the "2027 Election Shadow." Many respondents expressed concerns about the possibility of heightened political tension as the election season approaches, warning that uncertainty and security disruptions could affect business operations, investment decisions and overall economic confidence.

Speaking on the report's findings, SSDC Managing Director, Mike Igbodipe, called for a more strategic approach to security management across both public and private sectors.

He said organisations must move beyond reactive security measures and integrate security considerations into their broader strategic planning and decision-making processes. He also advocated the development of a gold-standard, locally certified training programme for security professionals tailored to Nigeria's unique security environment.

## Appeal Court Voids Recognition Of PDP Factional Caretaker Committee

From **Ameh Ochojila**, Abuja

THE Court of Appeal in Abuja has faulted Justice Uche Agomoh of the Federal High Court in Ibadan for granting reliefs that were not sought by any of the parties in a dispute involving the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP).

In a judgment delivered by Justice Uchechukwu Onyemenam of the Court of Appeal, the appellate court held that the trial judge went beyond the reliefs before her when she recognised a factional caretaker committee in the PDP leadership crisis.

The dispute stems from a judgment delivered by Justice Agomoh on January 30, in which she held that the PDP caretaker committee led by Abdurahman Mohammed and Samuel Anyanwu was the legitimate faction of the party.

The Court of Appeal said none of the parties had sought such a declaration.

"In the instant case, there is clearly a live issue where the trial court went outside the reliefs sought to recognise and uphold a factional caretaker committee," Onyemenam said.

The appellate court added that if the declaratory and injunctive reliefs sought on appeal had not been tied to the legitimacy of the Ibadan convention already nullified by the Supreme Court, it would have ordered a retrial on the leadership organs purportedly created or validated by the convention.

"Once the Convention itself has been pronounced null, void and of no effect by the Supreme Court, any superstructure erected upon it is necessarily without legal foundation," the court held.

The court said the legal foundation of the Anyanwu-led caretaker committee recognised by the trial court had been extinguished by the Supreme Court's judgment. It added that revisiting the issue would serve no practical legal purpose.

The Court of Appeal stopped short of expressly describing the trial court's action as ultra petita, a legal doctrine referring to situations where a court grants relief beyond that sought by the parties.

Part of the judgment reads: "This Court would be driven to the conclusion that the offending portions of the judgment, and indeed the judgment as a whole insofar as the excess permeates the decision, are a nullity and liable to be set aside ex debito justitiae.

"A direction to the trial court to retry an issue that has been settled at the apex level would, in effect, invite it either to repeat what has already been decided or to purport to sit in judgment over the Supreme Court, both of which the law forbids."

"On the merits, I hold that, by reason of the binding decisions of this Court in Appeal No. CA/ABJ/1695/2025 and of the Supreme Court in Appeal No. SC/CV/164/2026, which nullified the Ibadan Convention of 15th–16th November 2025 and settled the core issues underlying this appeal, there is no longer any live controversy between the parties."

The judgment was supported by Justices Mohammed Mustapha and Okon Abang, the other members of the three-member panel.

## Eyamba Congratulates Otu On Third Anniversary

By **Moyosore Salami**

THE Convener of the King Eyamba V Royal Family in the Diaspora, a community of descendants of King Eyamba V, the 19th century Obong of Calabar, Prince Francis Eyamba, has congratulated the Governor Bassey Otu of Cross River State on the third anniversary of his administration.

Eyamba described the past three years as a season of renewal, recovery and purposeful resetting for Cross River State after years of decline and missed opportunities.

According to him, the visible transformation across the state, particularly in the public transportation sector, is a clear indication that the administration is taking meaningful steps towards restoring public confidence and improving the lives of citizens.

"I was deeply impressed by the transformation I witnessed, especially in the public transportation sector, where the blue buses now move across the capital city, making commuting easier and more accessible for residents," Eyamba stated.

He further noted that the progress being recorded has begun to rekindle hope among Cross Riverians, both at home and in the diaspora.

"Our hope is being restored, and the least we can do is support the efforts of the government so it can continue to do more for the people," he added.

# Idonije: 'My Encounter With Fela, Jazz'

By **Gregory Austin Nwakunor**

HIS story is not slipping away. He knows this. At 90, he still has a sharp memory. His mellifluous voice that has long fascinated fans and the media alike is still smooth, sweet, and pleasing to the ear. Well, if you like to add, flowing like honey.

When he talks jazz, his voices convey a tone that is soft, harmonious, and easy to listen to.

"It is just arthritis that is my challenge," he says, drawing a kind of smile.

Does he still write? "Not as much again. My eyes are paining me now, so, I can't do long writing," he explains.

Born June 13, 1936, in Otua, Owan East Council of Edo State, Idonije has had a storied career in music and broadcasting. He is best known as the first manager of Afrobeat legend Fela Kuti and played a key role in the establishment of Radio Nigeria 2 (now Metro FM) in 1977.

Idonije attended Holy Trinity Grammar School, Sabongida Ora, for his secondary education and then Yaba College of Technology, where he studied communications engineering.

Idonije began his career in the 1950s, writing jazz columns for newspapers and joining the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation in 1957. He became a leading voice in music commentary, presenting popular shows like *The Big Beat* and Stereo Jazz Club.

He started presenting the *Big Beat* in 1968. The *Big Beat* was very popular. In fact, that was the programme that made me. Because at that time, it was a network programme. Radio Nigeria was the only station around at the time. And we had a station in Kaduna, we had one in Enugu, one in Lagos. Everybody had to tune in every Saturday afternoon. They called it the *Big Beat*. It was very popular. Then I had NBC Jazz Club from 1962 to 68 or 69. Then I had Stereo Jazz Club from 78 to the 90s, when I retired.

From 1984 to 1992, when I retired, I became a lecturer and chief training officer at the training school at Shogunle.

After retiring from broadcasting in 1992, he continued to write extensively about music and culture, contributing to various art-related media. From 1996 to 2016, he wrote three columns every week, *Evergreen* (every Wednesday) , *Sound and Screen* (every Friday) and *All That Jazz* (every Sunday).

"Because I passed through a lot. I mean, it taught me what I am today, because I learned engineering, I learned broadcasting, I learned how to teach. I started as an engineering assistant, I started production, I started presenting. I became a teacher in the end, for instance, teaching elders. Of course, I was trained by the BBC on a trainee trainer's course. From 1984 to 1992, I was in the training school. I was in charge of programmes production in the training school at Shogunle. Students came from Sierra Leone, from the Gambia, and from all the stations in the country. For all that time, I had to write reports on every student, and based on that report, they were all promoted. So, I'm very happy that I've made a lot of people happy. I've impacted on a lot of people," he reveals. You're so much known for *Highlife My Life*. Was it part of the programmes that made a difference in your career trajectory at Radio Nigeria?

"*Highlife My Life* didn't belong to Radio Nigeria. It was a private concern for MTN. It was produced by Osaze Iyamu for MTN in Lagos."

He believes radio is not the same anymore. "Radio Nigeria is not the same anymore."

He puts a caveat, however. "This has to do with the dynamics of our existence. Because life has changed; life is not what it used to be at that time. And radio is out to mirror society, mirror what is happening now."

He confesses, "I think what radio is doing now is trying to capture the essence of today's events. Because in those days, for instance, I was a teacher. As a teacher, I taught all the programme production formats. Programmes were based on formats. I mean, there were rules. They were like rules. The BBC still does it. You had the talk, you had the interview, you had the magazine, you had discussion, you had drama, you had features, you had documentary, you had variety and light entertainment. All of these programmes happened on radio, and even on television. And they had their own rules. It was the formats that we taught in training school. Because [illegible] BBC taught us how to te[illegible] But we find that you [illegible] listen to, there's no [illegible] for features and [illegible] umentaries on [illegible] dio anymor[illegible] You hardl[illegible] hear dram[illegible] on radi[illegible] anymore[illegible] I'm sur[illegible] you re[illegible] member[illegible] a drama[illegible] p r o - gramme[illegible] like *Sheki Sheki Alao*. It was very popular in those days. I mean, it was like the pioneering drama programme that we had in this country, *Sheki Sheki Alao*. And other features, they don't exist anymore. But all that is happening today is music. You know. So, it's not the same anymore. Because times have changed.

Jazz artistes who really impacted his life were the likes of Miles Davis, Sonny Rollins, Art Blakey, and Duke Ellington. "As a matter of fact, it's a pity that my favourite artistes, all who had made some mark on me, sometime last week, were celebrated post humously. Miles Davis was celebrated for being 100 years. If he were still alive, he would have been 100 years. And then Sonny Rollins died last week at 95. They were my favourite artistes."

To him, Sonny Rollins was one of the greatest tenor saxophonists, along with John Coltrane. Miles Davis on trumpet was his favourite. Also,

Sonny Rollins and John Coltrane were his favourites on the tenor. Charlie Parker was his favourite on alto saxophone. "I have all these favourites on the various instruments. I also had Wynton Kelly, Herbie Hancock as my favourites on the piano, and so on and so forth."

On the kind of jazz that these artistes played, and the kind of jazz that people listen to now, he has this to say: "Of course, I mean, what was happening before is more artistic, more musical than what is happening today. Because, like, for instance, listening to Miles Davis or Sonny Rollins or Clifford Brown or any of those artistes, they played along chord sequences, they improvised creatively along chord sequences. But today, you find that the artists are just repetitive. They are [illegible] just dancing around the melody and all that. So, to answer your question, what the musicians did before, I mean, was more qualitative in terms of artistry than what is happening today."

Okay, now going to your encounter with the late Fela. What was it like? How did it shape your interest in the local music? Songs from, or musicians from Nigeria or possibly Africa?

In 1963, Idonije met Fela Anikulapo-Kuti, the legendary Afrobeat pioneer, marking a significant moment in his career.

Idonije was presenting a jazz programme called 'NBC Jazz Club.' Fela had listened to his programme on the radio for a month.

Then, one night, he drove down to the broadcasting house in Ikoyi to see who was behind the show. He came to the studio and introduced himself. That was how they became friends. He admired his knowledge of jazz and Idonije admired his musicianship. He was a fine trumpeter. From that night, they bonded.

Together, they nurtured the idea of a quintet and formed the band Koola Lobitos , initially playing jazz before switching back to highlife on Fela's mother's advice.

Idonije managed the band until 1969, continuing his advisory role until the early 1970s. His management work with him was on the basis of friendship and not exactly a business deal. he had to advise him, show him the rope, and generally guide him because he was easily provoked.

He worked with him from 1963 till 1974. Idonije didn't quit. Fela just didn't need a manager of his type anymore. He needed managers abroad that would link him into big shows. We were still friends till he died.

"As a matter of fact, Fela and I got to enjoy African music from 1971 when he went to America. He discovered African music in America with *My Lady's Frustrations*, which later transitioned to *Jeun koku*," he says.

He discovered African music. African music that has become world music today, Afrobeat that has become world music that everybody now plays. And music that has become his own creation.

So, for somebody who has seen it all in terms of the African music, what would you say is particular about Afro beat without the S and Afro beats with the S?

"Yeah, the Afrobeat with the S is a commercial venture created by these artistes making waves internationally. The music has touched almost everybody in the world. Listening to Wizkid, listening to Davido, listening to Rema, Nigeria is on top right now. In the whole world, I mean, pushing Afrobeats to various boundaries and touching every heart. So, Nigerian music, Afrobeats has a great future and Nigeria is on the map right now when it comes to music. Music is generational. Music is always in motion. For instance, music started with *Sakara* in those early days. Then it went into Sakara, Akpala and all that. Then it went into Juju music, it went to *highlife*, then it went to Afrobeats.

"Even before Fela died, his Afrobeat transited to what he called classical African music. You know, so music was always in motion. There's no stagnation in nature when it comes to music. So, my son, Burna Boy, would not have been playing highlife today when what is in vogue is Afro, what is trending is Afrobeats. So, musicians would want to identify with what is happening now. You'd be surprised that in the future, Afrobeats may transit into something that is older. So, music is always in motion, like every other thing."

He believes government is relevant to people's lives. So, the people should pay more attention to who governs them. "Come out and vote in the next election," he surmises.



# Mixed Grill Of Hope, Hardship As Baba Adisa Road Project Stalled

By **Suliyat Tella**

WHEN construction work began on the Baba Adisa Junction–Alakun-Elepete Road in Ibeju-Lekki area of Lagos, residents celebrated what they believed would be the end of years of hardship.

For years, the road had been a source of frustration, especially during the rainy season when large section of the road become flooded and difficult to navigate. The arrival of construction workers and equipment brought hope that relief had finally arrived. That excitement has now disappeared.

Months after work slowed down, residents say the project now appears abandoned, leaving behind an unfinished road that has become even more difficult to use now.

According to Peter Okue, a resident of Baba Adisa, the project initially raised expectations of better days ahead. "We all believe that they will eventually complete the road. No one knows when. But now, they have abandoned it totally. Motorists and even bikes cannot even use the road again," Okue said. As a result, many residents now trek long distances to reach the nearest junction.

According to residents, stagnant water remains on the road days after rainfall. Okue recently encountered several vehicles trapped in flooded sections while travelling to and from work.

What makes the situation more concerning, he said, is that the water often remains even when it has not rained for days.

Another resident, who requested anonymity, recalled that a signboard erected at the commencement of the project indicated it would be completed within 12 months.

"There is drainage on both sides, but the main road is always flooded when it rains."

According to him, tricycles can no longer pass through the affected sections, leaving pedestrians as the main users of the route.

"I won't advise anybody to take a bike on that road because you can be dropped into the water."

The abandoned project has coincided with another challenge facing residents, rising house rents.

Okue said his annual rent increased from N300,000 to N450,000 after construction work commenced. "It was the road construction that made them increase the rent because the increment happened after they started the road construction. Almost all the apartments around, the landlords increased the rent." Despite the unfinished state of the road, tenants continue to pay the higher rates.

Another resident, Alao Yusuf, recalled the excitement that greeted the announcement of the project and the disappointment that followed when work stalled.

According to Yusuf, vehicles frequently get trapped whenever it rains. He added that even light rainfall is enough to flood the road. "The only time drivers get to use the road is when it's not raining. But any small rain, the place is flooded again."

In some cases, pumping machines are used to divert water into nearby drainage, but residents say the problem persists.



## Two Forest Guard Patrol Vehicles Deployed For Other Activities In Mile 2, As Officers Battle Insecurity

By **Gbenga Salau**

AS the Federal Government deploys 1000 forest guards to Oyo State to help check the insecurity in the state and probably also help rescue the school pupils and teachers kidnapped some weeks back, if the officers deployed are having issues with inadequate mobility, there are two patrol vehicles lying idle at Mile 2 that belong to the Nigeria Forest security Service.

The two patrol vehicles help to bring to light the inappropriate use of government facility that undermines public trust and compromises the effectiveness of essential services. Recent findings indicate that the two vehicles belonging to the Nigeria Forest Security Service have been operating under the control of persons suspected to be members of the NURTW Mile 2, Lagos far from the locations where they are expected to support forest protection and enforcement activities. The vehicles have been around the area for over six months now, it was learnt. This development raises questions about compliance with asset-use regulations, supervisory oversight, and the potential neglect of critical forestry duties, especially in a time that the South West is also battling insecurity around its forest. Given the importance of these vehicles in supporting forest surveillance and patrol activities, their deployment for purposes unrelated to their designated function warrants investigation.

While one of the patrol vehicles is permanently parked at the entrance of the road leading to the Lagos Ferry Terminal in Mile 2, the other is occasionally parked in front of the NURTW office in Mile 2. One of the vehicles was even deployed for the enforcement of the monthly environmental sanitation that was recently re-introduced by the Lagos State government.



## Traders Lament Illegal Levies As Lagos Tax Reform Bill Gains

By **Suliyat Tella**

THE Lagos State House of Assembly's move to harmonise taxes and levies across the state has raised hopes among traders and business owners who have long complained about multiple taxation and illegal collections in markets.

The proposed Lagos State Harmonised Taxes and Levies Bill 2025 seeks to reduce the number of approved levies and end illegal collections by unauthorised persons. The bill also proposes penalties for anyone caught collecting illegal taxes or mounting roadblocks for levies.

Findings by The Guardian on markets in Lagos Island showed that several roadside traders and small business owners still make regular payments to different groups and officials to avoid harassment, confiscation of goods or forced fines.

Some traders said the payments are unofficial payments made without receipts or tickets, most times demanded under different names, including "weekend money."

According to the traders, the problem is not only the amount being collected, but the fear and uncertainty surrounding the process.

A trader identified as Mariam Adeoye said traders operating by the roadside are regularly approached by officials popularly referred to as CBD officials.

According to her, the payments are usually made to prevent their goods from being seized.

"We call them CBD, meaning Central Business District. We pay them N200 so that they will not carry our market," she said.

"These money, they don't give us ticket for it. Sometimes, they even just come and collect money for weekend. They collect N200 from us, sometimes N500."

She added that refusing to pay mostly leads to intimidation or confiscation of goods.

"If you refuse to pay them, they sometimes angrily carry your market to their office. That's when you will pay higher," she said.

Another trader, Micheal Udeh, explained that most of the collections target traders displaying goods by the roadside, and not those operating inside shops.

According to him, many traders see the payments as a way of avoiding bigger penalties.

"They don't collect money from people in shops, they only collect money from people shading their market on the road," he said.

"The money you are paying is for them not to carry your market. But if they get to carry your market, and you have to bribe them, you give them N3,000, sometimes N5,000, just for them not to take your market to their office."

He explained that once goods are taken away, traders are forced to pay official fines before recovering them.

"Because it is only when they carry your market to their office that you will collect ticket and you pay fine which is sometimes N10,000 or N15,000," he added.

Some traders said the collections have become so regular that they now factor them into daily business expenses.

Oyinkan Quadr, another trader in Lagos Island, said different groups come at different times to demand money.

"My neighbour is even tired. She said she wants to leave here. I don't know if she is going to another market or she wants to find somewhere else because the money we pay is too much," she said.

"Some guys come to collect money from us too. They claim it's for weekend. They collect N1,000 every weekend. They come for their own in the morning, while CBD collects theirs in the evening. We are always paying."

# Diary

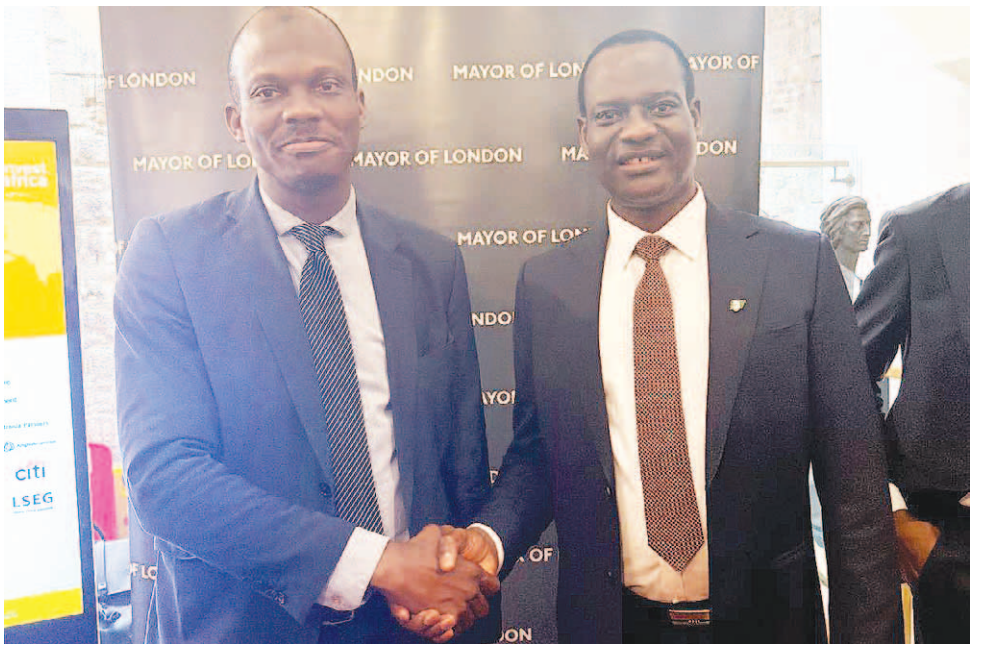




Chief Executive Officer, APIN Public Health Initiatives, Prof. Prosper Okonkwo (left); Commissioner for Health, Plateau State, Dr. Nicholas Ba'amlong; former Minister of Health and Ambassador Designate to Canada, Prof. Isaac Adewole; Chairman of the Board of APIN Public, Prof. Oladapo Shittu; representative of former President Goodluck Jonathan, Ms. Anne Iyonu; Prof. Phyllis Kanki, of Harvard School of Public Health; pioneer Director-General of National Action Against AIDS, NACA, Prof. Ibironke Akinsete; Commissioner for Health, Oyo State, Dr. Oluwaserimi Ajetumobi, and Commissioner for Health, Ogun State, Dr. (Mrs) Tomi Coker, at the unveiling of the book, *'Catalyst of Wellness: The Trailblazing Odyssey of APIN Public Health Initiatives'*, as part of events marking the 25th anniversary of APIN Public Health Initiatives in Abuja...Tuesday.



Vice-Chancellor, Federal University of Health Sciences (FUHSI), Ila-Orangun, Prof. Akeem Lasisi (fifth right); guest lecturer, Prof. Augustine Adeolu (sixth right); Provost of FUHSI's College of Medicine, Prof. Oyelami Oyeku (fourth right) and others during the White Coat ceremony for Part IV Medical students of the university in Ila-Orangun, Osun State... on Friday.




Founder, TEXEM, United Kingdom (UK ), Dr. Alim Abubakre (left) and Minister of Finance/ Co-ordinating Minister of the Economy, Dr. Taiwo Oyedele, who represented President Bola Ahmed Tinubu at the official opening of trading at the London Stock Exchange (LSE) in London ...on Tuesday



Cross River State Governor, Senator Bassey Edet Otu (middle); Special Adviser to the Governor on Events, Effiong Ekpenyong (left); Regional Head, Zenith Bank Plc, Ekanem Asuquo; Deputy Governor, Dr. Peter Odey; Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of T2, Obafemi Banigbe; Chief Executive Officer, Okhma Global Limited, Mary Ephraim-Egbas; and Chairman, Carnival Calabar Commission, Gabe Onah during the theme unveiling event for the 2026 Carnival Calabar & Festival held in Lagos.

# Metronotes



## Muhammad-Bande To Chair First UDUS Media Conference On June 7



Muhammad-Bande

FORMER United Nations General Assembly President, Prof. Tijjani Muhammad-Bande is set to chair Usmanu Danfodiyo University Sokoto (UDUS) first Mass Communication International Conference scheduled to start with a pre- Conference lecture by Prof Fatma El-Sayed of Cairo University, Egypt scheduled for Sunday June 7 at 1pm.

A statement by the Chairman Organising Committee, Dr Danladi Bako, said: "Muhammad-Bande, a one-time Vice Chancellor of UDUS, is delighted to be given the honour of chairing the first International Conference on Media and its intersection with Artificial intelligence in an ever-changing digital world."

The opening ceremony is scheduled for Monday, June 8, at the university auditorium and according to the Vice Chancellor, who is the Chief Host: "We are very ready to host the international academic community".

## Troops Rescue Six Abducted Women, Children In Borno

From **Njadvara Musa,** Borno

TROOPS of the Northeast Joint Task Force (JTF), Operation *Hadin Kai* (OPHK) under Operation Desert Sanity V/Siege Operations, have rescued six women and children in the Amuda-Mandara Mountains axis in Gwoza Local Council of Borno state.

The rescued women and their children included Maryam Muhammad, 20, Ghwa'a Biea, 50, an escapee from terrorists' captivity and Binta Umaru, 19.

A statement released, on Thursday, in Maiduguri by the OPHK Media Information Officer, Lt-Col. Sani Uba, disclosed: "The ground troops continue to intensify offensive and stabilisation operations across the theatre, leading to the rescue of abducted civilians, neutralisation of terrorists, and increased surrender of insurgents' family members.

" In a major humanitarian breakthrough, troops of OPHK, while conducting offensive operations at Amuda general area, successfully intercepted and rescued two abductees from Ngoshe community."

Uba said: "The victims, identified as Mrs. Maryam Muhammad (20) and her infant son, Bello Muhammad (one year and four months), were among those abducted during the terrorist attack on Ngoshe on March 3, 2026."

## NIS Lagos Command Recognises Insurer For Products Growth, Service Efficiency

THE Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS), Lagos State Command, has honoured Lasaco Assurance Plc. with an award in recognition of the company's strong product growth, innovative service delivery and sustained aimed operational excellence in the insurance industry.

The award was presented during a courtesy visit by senior officials of the NIS Lagos Command to Lasaco Assurance's head office in Lagos, where both organisations also explored opportunities for deeper collaboration, institutional synergy and improved service delivery. The delegation, led by the Deputy Comptroller of Immigration and Passport Control Officer commended the insurance company for its commitment to professionalism, customer-focused service delivery and sustainable growth initiatives.

## Engineers Urge Govt. To Prioritise Diesel Price Relief For Productive Sectors

By **Sunday Aikulola**

FOLLOWING the United States/ Israel and Iran war, which affected crude and refined product flows, National President of Nigerian Society of Chemical Engineers, Bayo Olanrewaju-Alo, has urged President Bola Ahmed Tinubu to urgently prioritise diesel price relief for productive sectors.

Addressing journalists at the University of Lagos recently, he observed diesel powers transportation, food distribution, manufacturing, telecoms infrastructure, hospitals and small and medium enterprises.

To this end, he suggested government should enact strong regulations that would provide targeted relief for registered mass transit operators, food logistic providers and strategic productive sectors to reduce inflationary pressures.

In addition, he also stressed need for government to adopt temporary, transparent and targeted measures aimed at cushioning the effects of the price hike for citizens.

## Group Sensitises Lagos Students On Dangers Of Drug, Substance Abuse

By **Cleopatra Eki**

THE President of Soroptimist International of Ikeja (SI Ikeja), Mrs. Bunmi Oguntuase, has called on students to stay away from drug and substance abuse, urging them to make healthy choices that will secure their future and help them achieve their academic and life goals.

Oguntuase made the call during a sensitisation and awareness programme on the prevention of drug and substance abuse among senior secondary school students held at Ogudu Senior Grammar School, Ogudu GRA, Lagos.

The programme brought together about 200 students from Ogudu Senior Grammar School and Ojota Senior High School for an intensive awareness session on the dangers of drug abuse and the importance of mental and emotional wellbeing.

Oguntuase said the programme was designed to achieve three major objectives: creating awareness about drug and substance abuse, educating students on the harmful physical, emotional and mental effects of drugs, and equipping them with practical strategies to resist peer pressure and avoid involvement in harmful activities.

## Dianabasi Eduwem To Deliver UniUyo's 135th Inaugural Lecture On June 11



Eduwem

THE 135th Inaugural Lecture of the University of Uyo (UniUyo), Nigeria, will hold on Thursday, June 11, 2026, at the 1,000-capacity TETFund auditorium, Main Campus, Nwaniba Road, Uyo, Akwa Ibom State at 2.45p.m.

A statement signed by the Acting Vice Chancellor (VC), Prof. Samuel G. Odewumi and Registrar/ Secretary to Senate, Mrs. Blossom E. Okorie, said Prof. Dianabasi U. Eduwem, a Professor of Radiology and Chief Consultant Radiologist, Department of Radiology, Faculty of Clinical Sciences, College of Health Sciences, will speak on the topic: *Seeing the Invisible: Unveiling the Myths, Mysteries and Misconceptions about Health and Diseases*.

# Foundation Empowers 152 Women, Plans Free School For Homeless Children

By Isaac Taiwo

NOT less than 152 beneficiaries comprising widows, elderly women, young women and single mothers have benefitted from an empowerment programme titled "Her Rise Nigeria Women, Wealth and Power Seminar" organised by The Bennie Griffins Foundation, also known as The Bennie Griffins Sisters.

The programme held at St. Lawrence Catholic Church Hall, Isheri-Olofin, Lagos, focused on entrepreneurship and financial literacy aimed at improving the economic wellbeing of vulnerable women and youths.

Speaking at the event, the Convener, Pastor Bennie Griffins, said the foundation remained committed to empowering women, while also extending support to young men through skill acquisition initiatives such as cinematography.

According to her, the foundation recently completed a free primary school in the community for children, including those of homeless families.

"The foundation has just built a free primary school for boys and girls in this community, including children of the homeless, with a capacity to accommodate 100 pupils by September this year.

"It is a free school with free tuition, free stationery and free meals," she said.

Griffins, who is based abroad, explained that the outreach, which started in November 2010, was driven by her passion for humanitarian service and Christian values centred on caring for the needy and vulnerable.

She appealed to Nigerians in the diaspora to support community development projects and contribute meaningfully to improving the lives of ordinary citizens.

"We cannot leave everything for the government. We need to contribute and help build the country. It starts from looking beyond our immediate families and helping strangers who cannot repay us," she said.

The cleric disclosed that the foundation organises monthly food and financial support for over 100 families, while also intervening in cases of domestic violence, family disputes and social crises affecting women and children.

She said the organisation had over the years trained women in tailoring, soap making, catering and other vocational skills, while also providing start-up support such as sewing machines and business funds.

# 'Project Management Skills Acquisition Is Vital To Complement University Degrees'

By Moyosore Salami

STAKEHOLDERS in the project management industry across the continent have called on young Africans to acquire project management skills to complement their university degrees.

This was made in a statement by MD, PMI Sub-Saharan Africa, George Asamani, and Senior Lecturer, Project Management, UNISA, Dr Sanele W Nhlabatsi.

The statement said: "The first is scale. Africa is home to the world's youngest and fastest-growing population, with more than 400 million people aged 15–35, and is expected to have the world's largest workforce by 2040. Yet tertiary enrolment remains around 9 per cent, far below the global average of 38 per cent. Despite growth in university enrolment, higher education capacity is still struggling to keep pace with demographic demand, with some estimates suggesting capacity would need to expand nearly twelvefold by 2035.

Nhlabatsi, Senior Lecturer, Project Management, UNISA, added that: "The second crisis is a crisis of expectation. It is not difficult to see why many African families place such a high premium on university education. A degree has long been associated with a life-changing opportunity and a pathway to better job prospects, higher income, and social mobility.

"This belief has quietly become a burden African youth carry, because when university becomes the only door to success, young people who don't get in don't just lose a place; they feel as though they have lost a future."

Asamani said: "Africa absolutely needs strong universities, and we must continue investing in them. But we must also confront a hard truth: when access remains limited, a single-pathway mindset amplifies pressure, anxiety, and a sense of failure among young people who are simply navigating a persistently high-demand, limited-supply system that has become increasingly competitive.

# CCC Makoko Wins Bible Quiz Competition

By Opeyemi Babalola

THE Celestial Christian Church, Makoko National Headquarters has been awarded a $2,000 cash prize for emerging winner of the second edition of the annual Reverend S.B.J. Oshoffa International Juvenile Quiz Competition.

The competition organised by True Word in Season, the evangelical arm of Greater Tomorrow Group in the Celestial Church of Christ, attracted participants from 34 parishes across the country and beyond coming together for the quiz competition in the following categories: Bible knowledge, church constitution, memory recitation, and other areas of spiritual and doctrinal learning.

Speaking at the event held at the Church's National Headquarters in Makoko, Convener of the Programme, Samuel Ademola Bolaji, said that organising the programme was one of the key ways to preserve the legacy of the late Pa Oshoffa by promoting the teachings of the doctrines among young people, who will become the future leaders of the church.

He said: "It was last year we enacted this cum the musical competition and we are committed to sustaining it. This is a way for us to contribute into the younger generation's future and fulfilling the mission of the founder."

The Assistant Most Superior Evangelist, Afisuru Peter Kiki, Shepherd of CCC National Headquarters, on his part, commended the organisers for expanding the legacy of the church's founder, stressing that educating the youths through such programmes will help to sustain the church's doctrine.

# Lagos Tourism Strategies Fuelling Business Growth, Investments — Aregbe

By Gbenga Salau

LAGOS State government has said that expanding tourism, arts and culture drive is no longer just about entertainment, but a serious economic strategy already attracting investments, boosting small businesses and opening new opportunities for thousands of young entrepreneurs across the state.

The Special Adviser to the Governor on Tourism, Arts and Culture, Idris Aregbe, made the case while addressing pressmen in Lagos on the efforts by the Babajide Sanwo-Olu's administration to make the state a priority destination for tourists globally.

Aregbe said the state's approach is built on the conviction that Lagos is "not merely a city, but a civilisation," adding that every programme rolled out under his office over the last 12 months was designed to turn culture into economic value.

Among the most visible of these initiatives is the Lagos Tourism NBC Trade Fair, co-produced with Naija Brand Chick, which has grown into one of the country's biggest SME and commerce gatherings. The fair, Aregbe said, brought together hundreds of vendors and tens of thousands of visitors, with sales projections running into billions of naira.

The special adviser also pointed to the state's collaboration with private investors in the leisure sector, including the Giwa Gardens partnership, which offered 100,000 free tickets during the festive season and widened access to recreational tourism while stimulating activity around the Lekki-Epe corridor.

According to him, such partnerships are helping Lagos attract more capital into hospitality, entertainment and tourism infrastructure, especially from diaspora investors seeking a reliable environment for business.

Aregbe said Lagos has also begun to formalise its festive tourism calendar through the 101 Days in Lagos initiative, which packages the ember months into a structured tourism product. The calendar brings together hundreds of events across culture, food, nightlife and entertainment, making it easier for visitors, residents and investors to plan and spend.

He said the goal is to move Lagos beyond a seasonal party destination and make tourism a year-round economic engine.

Other initiatives highlighted at the briefing included Skill Up Lagos, through which more than 1,000 creatives have been trained over the last two years; Cook Lagos. Eat Lagos., a gastronomy tourism programme aimed at promoting local cuisine and supporting food entrepreneurs; and Tourism Support Services, a year-round framework involving key government agencies to keep the state clean, safe and visitor-ready.



# Orijin Brings Culture To Life At Ojude Oba 2026

By Suliyat Tella

GUINESS Nigeria Plc, through its iconic Orijin brand, joined thousands of sons and daughters of Ijebuland, dignitaries, cultural enthusiasts, and tourists at the 2026 edition of the Ojude Oba Festival in Ijebu-Ode, delivering an immersive cultural experience that celebrated heritage, identity, and the enduring spirit of community.

Returning as the official alcohol sponsor, Orijin's presence at this year's festival brought to life the brand's renewed cultural platform, which evolves the conversation from last year's "The Roots Run Deeper" toward how culture and identity are expressed today, boldly, creatively, and unapologetically.

From the elegance and pride of the Regberegbe age groups to the splendour of horse-riding families, fashion, music, and movement, Ojude Oba once again proved itself one of Nigeria's most powerful expressions of living culture.

Speaking at the festival grounds, Otunba Deji Osibogun, member of the Ojude Oba Planning Committee, said: "It fills us with great pride to see Orijin at the heart of Ojude Oba once again. This festival is a living archive of our history, culture, and tradition, and Orijin has positioned itself meaningfully at the centre of it all. The brand does not merely sponsor Ojude Oba; it honours it. Orijin understands that culture is sacred, and through its consistent presence and the quality of what it brings to the festival, it is helping to carry our heritage forward with the dignity it deserves.

# National Theatre Stages 'I Wish, I Wish' To Inspire Children

By Suliyat Tella

THE newly renovated National Theatre, now known as the Wole Soyinka Centre for Arts and Culture, came alive on May 30 as children, parents and theatre lovers gathered for the stage production of I Wish, I Wish, a musical designed to promote positive values among young people.

Produced by Proud African Roots in partnership with the National Theatre, the production featured a cast of more than 100 performers and marked the first major performance arts production staged at the facility since its renovation.

Among dignitaries at the event were veteran actresses Joke Silva and Stella Damasus, as well as the Lagos State Commissioner for Tourism, Arts and Culture, Toke Benson-Awoyinka.

Speaking at the event, General Manager and Chief Executive Officer of the National Theatre, Mrs. Adetola Akerele, described the production as a significant milestone for the centre.

"This is our first major production here. We've had a few productions on the premises and an animation festival last week, but in terms of performance art, this is the first major production. The cast is over 100 people, so you can imagine the energy, time and dedication it took to pull it off," she said.

Akerele noted that the production emerged from a summer camp organised by Proud African Roots last year, adding that it was gratifying to see the project evolve into a full-scale performance on the National Theatre stage.

# Special

www.guardian.ng

# Despite Billions Spent, Lagos' 'Low-cost'



By **Samson Ademola & Christiana Alabi-Akande**

WHEN Lagos introduced mass housing under former Governor Lateef Jakande in the '80s, civil servants, factory workers and low-income earners could buy homes through instalment payments that stretched over 30 years.

Four decades later, findings by **DevReporting** show that many of Lagos' 'low-cost' homes now cost between 5 million and 25 million, with repayment conditions that exclude 70 per cent of the city's working population, who earn below 100,000. Only 7 per cent (1,400,000) of Lagos residents earn above 200,000.

An analysis of government procurement records from 2020-2025, housing prices, mortgage requirements, labour income data and interviews with allocatees, reveal that a three-bedroom flat under the Lagos Home Ownership Mortgage Scheme requires monthly earnings above 343,000 to qualify.

Between 2024 and 2025 alone, Lagos awarded at least 2.69 billion in housing-related contracts covering estates in Igando, Egan and Badagry. Yet the schemes met only a fraction of the city's annual housing needs while targeting income groups far above those of the urban poor.

For residents like Tajudeen Fajobi, the shift is not just statistical but personal. He received allocation for a three-bedroom flat at Abesan Estate under Jakande's programme in the '80s, when a 15-year instalment plan totalled 9,700. At the time, he was a SCOA Motors worker earning less than 250 monthly, yet the scheme was structured in a way that made ownership possible over time.

TODAY, those who benefited from the home-ownership scheme sell the same flat for between 17 million and 30 million. What was designed as "low-cost" housing for low-income earners has, over time, become middle-class real estate in Abesan, one of Lagos' oldest public housing estates.

"These houses are no longer for the poor," says Mr Fajobi, now Community Development Council (CDC) chairman of Mosan Okunola Local Council Development Area (LCDA), as he surveys the gentrified Abesan neighbourhood where annual rents are as high as 1.8 million.

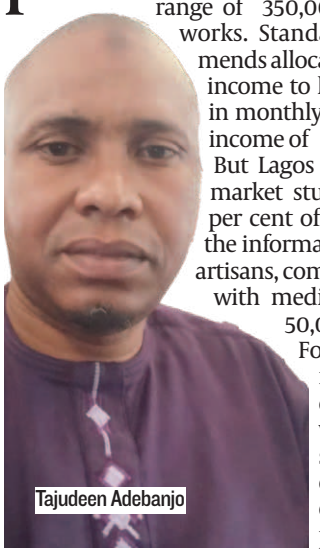


Tajudeen Fajobi

**The Affordability Math: Who can pay 103,000 monthly?**

At Lateef Kayode Jakande (LKJ) Gardens in Igando, a 492-unit estate commissioned in recent years, three-bedroom flats sell for 10 million through the Lagos Home Ownership Mortgage Scheme (LagosHOMS). The rent-to-own arrangement requires a 5 per cent down payment ( 500,000 plus 250,000 in fees) and monthly deductions of 103,000 for 10 years at 6 per cent simple interest.

Tajudeen Adebanjo, a journalist and resident of LKJ Gardens, considers it affordable. "Where will you get that in Lagos State? When house rent is 2-2.5 million annually?" he asks.

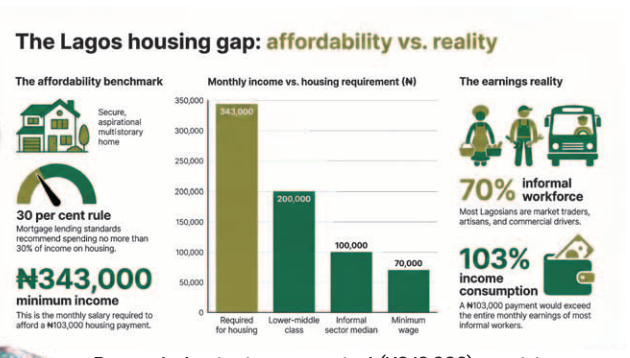


Tajudeen Adebanjo

FOR middle-class professionals like Mr Adebanjo earning in the range of 350,000-400,000 monthly, the math works. Standard mortgage lending recommends allocating no more than 30 per cent of income to housing, meaning that 103,000 in monthly payments requires a minimum income of 343,000.

But Lagos Bureau of Statistics and labour market studies indicate approximately 70 per cent of the city's workforce operates in the informal sector. They are market traders, artisans, commercial drivers, and food sellers, with median monthly earnings between 50,000 and 120,000.

For a trader earning 100,000 monthly, the 103,000 payment consumes 103 per cent of income, which is mathematically impossible. For the minimum-wage earner earning 70,000, it exceeds their entire salary by 47 per cent.




Bar graph showing income required (N343,000) vs. minimum wage (N70,000) vs. informal sector median (N100,000) vs. lower-middle class (N200,000)

Mr Adebanjo, secretary of his estate association, confirms the income mismatch: "Let me say that we do not have up to 5 per cent among the residents who are workers with the state government."

This matters because civil servants receive a 40 per cent rebate, bringing a 10 million flat to 6 million. Yet even with this discount, government workers represent fewer than one in twenty residents at LKJ Gardens. The estate houses private sector professionals, business owners, and diaspora Nigerians who can afford 103,000 monthly or 10 million upfront.

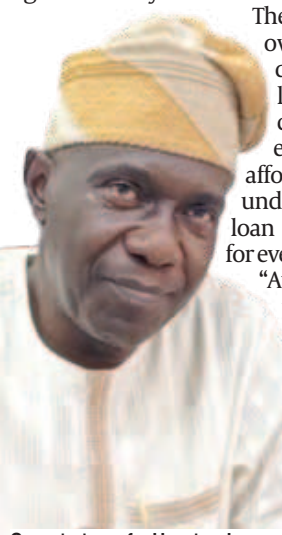
**Documentation Barrier: Six months of bank statements**

Beyond price, the application process itself excludes informal workers. Lagos HOMS requires six months of bank statements showing regular deposits, payslips proving formal employment, LASSRA card (Lagos residency proof), Guarantor letter from the employer or government official, and 20,000 application form fee (up from 10,000 two years ago).

"The things required are things you can easily lay your hands on, not things that are stressful," Mr Adebanjo insisted.

But for informal workers who dominate Lagos' labour market, these documents are precisely what they lack. Market traders banking irregularly have no six-month statements. Artisans paid in cash have no payslips. Day labourers have no employers to provide guarantor letters.

THE Commissioner for Housing, Lagos State, Moruf Akinderu-Fatai, defended the verification process: "We will not expect you to use all your money to pay for housing. If 33.3 per cent of your income does not cover the payment, that means you are not eligible or ready."



Commissioner for Housing, Lagos State, Moruf Akinderu-Fatai

The 33.3 per cent threshold prevents over-leveraged borrowers from defaulting, a policy that inadvertently ensures only middle-class applicants qualify. An informal trader earning 100,000 monthly can afford 33,000 in housing payments under this rule, supporting a maximum loan of 3 million, which is insufficient for even the 5 million one-bedroom unit.

"At times, we advise you can combine with your wife as a family. By the time you combine, you are most likely going to be ready," the commissioner suggests.

The combined-income option helps lower-middle-class couples. It does not help single mothers selling fish at markets, earning 60,000 monthly while raising children alone.

**Even civil servants priced out**



For Adewale Kasumu (not real name), a Grade Level 12 officer at the State Auditor General's Office, Lagos' low-cost housing scheme remains out of reach despite his awareness of it.

"I don't think it's affordable," he said.

Living in Badagry, he spends about three hours commuting to work each day, waking by 5 a.m. to catch the staff bus and avoid traffic. Moving closer to his office would greatly improve his life, but housing prices discourage him from applying.

According to him, information available puts the cost of houses between 25 million and 35 million, far beyond what he can afford on his salary, even with the civil servant rebate.

Although he has the required documents and knows colleagues who secured allocations, he said most of them are directors.

"I still hope to one day own a home in Lagos," he said.

# Feature

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# Housing Excludes 70% Of Residents

Mr Kasumu's situation illustrates the gap between policy and reality: civil servants receive 40 per cent rebate, bringing a 10 million flat to 6 million, yet even this remains unaffordable for mid-level officers. Higher-priced units in estates like Fashola ( 35 million) make homeownership even further out of reach.

**Then vs. Now: The 84 per cent affordability decline**

The gap between government housing and genuine affordability has widened dramatically since Jakande's era.

In the 1980s, a 9,700 three-bedroom flat represented 77.6 months of the 125 minimum wage. Today's 10 million flat represents 142.8 months of the 70,000 minimum wage, an 84 per cent decline in affordability.

The affordability collapse is compounded by currency devaluation. According to Federal Reserve Economic Data (FRED), the naira traded at an average of 55 kobo to a dollar in 1980 and 4.02 in 1987. Today, the Central Bank of Nigeria's official rate stands at 1,373.87 per dollar, a depreciation of over 2,400 per cent. While wages have risen nominally, housing prices have far outpaced both wage growth and currency devaluation.

AN electrician who received an original allocation at Abesan Estate, Bayo Alowoeshin, recalls the difference: "The government did not stress anybody. We decided how much to pay monthly over 30 years. The quicker you paid, the cheaper it was.


Bayo Alowoeshin

Allocatees paying upfront ( 9,700) incurred no interest. Those stretching payments over 30 years paid 50,000 total due to accumulated interest. Mr Alowoeshin completed his payment in 2016.

The flexibility made the difference. Mr Fajobi cobbled together financing through loans, his wife's salary from the Niger Biscuit Company, and contribution schemes to secure his allocation.

"I had to take a loan, got money from my wife. We made contributions to raise money," he recalls.

His salary at SCOA Motors never exceeded 250 monthly until retirement.

Jakande delivered shells: basic structure, two doors, external plaster, nothing more. Allocatees finished interiors incrementally, living in partially completed homes while spreading costs over years.

"There was no toilet, though there was sewage, but we were not connected," Fajobi narrated the situation when he moved in in 1987. He said residents installed windows, plastered interiors, and built bathrooms as funds allowed.

Today's 10 million units come fully finished: tiles, fitted kitchens, wardrobes, modern amenities.

A review of LagosHOMS pricing data across multiple schemes tells a broader story about who these homes are built for. Across projects in Igando, Ikorodu, Sangotedo and Badagry, one-bedroom units range between 3 million and 5 million, two-bedroom flats between 5 million and 10 million, and three-bedroom units reach up to 25 million. Monthly repayments typically range from about 30,000 to over 200,000.

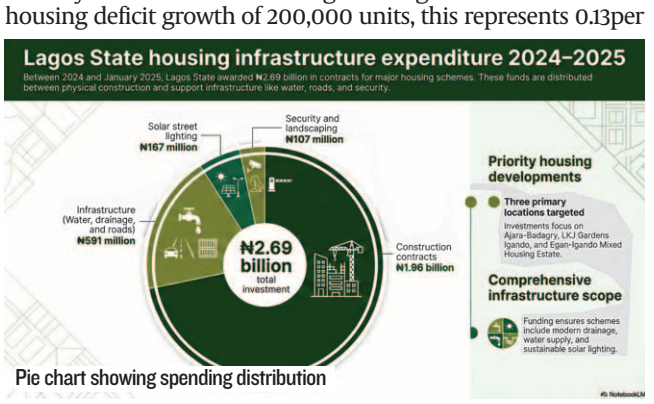
APPLYING standard affordability thresholds, even the lower end of this pricing spectrum remains beyond the reach of many informal workers

**The production gap**

Government procurement records reviewed for this investigation, spanning contracts from 2020 through November 2025, show Lagos State awarded 2.69 billion between 2024 and 2025 alone for housing schemes at Ajara-Badagry, LKJ Gardens Igando, and Egan-Igando Mixed Housing Estate.

The spending includes 1.96 billion on construction contracts, 591 million on infrastructure covering water supply, drainage and roads, 167 million on solar street lighting, and 107 million on security installations and landscaping.

AT 10 million per three-bedroom unit, 2.69 billion theoretically delivers 269 homes. Against Lagos' estimated annual housing deficit growth of 200,000 units, this represents 0.13per cent of need.



Pie chart showing spending distribution

Over 25 years (1999-2024), the Ministry of Housing delivered approximately 10,000 units across 52 schemes. These average 400 units annually. The current administration accelerated production to 1,667 units yearly (10,000 units over six years), a significant improvement.

Yet even at this enhanced rate, the government addresses 0.83per cent of annual deficit growth. At current production levels, closing Lagos' 3-5 million units deficit would require 1,800-7,500 years.

"You naturally have a lot of challenges when demand far outstrips supply. We are conscious that we need to do more, far more. We keep looking for solutions every day in terms of how we build cheaply, how we get cheap materials," Mr Akinderu-Fatai acknowledged.

**Inside Egan-Igando: Same model, same exclusion**

Five minutes' drive from LKJ Gardens, the Egan-Igando Mixed Housing Estate, comprising 270 two-bedroom units, 174 three-bedroom units, and additional one-bedroom flats, represents one of Lagos' latest housing deliveries.

UNLIKE LKJ Gardens, where each block contains mixed unit types, Egan-Igando segregates apartments into separate blocks by bedroom count. Construction continues even as early


Gov Sanwo-Olu commissioning 270-housing units in Egan-Igando

allocatees occupy completed two-bedroom units; three-bedroom blocks remain under construction.

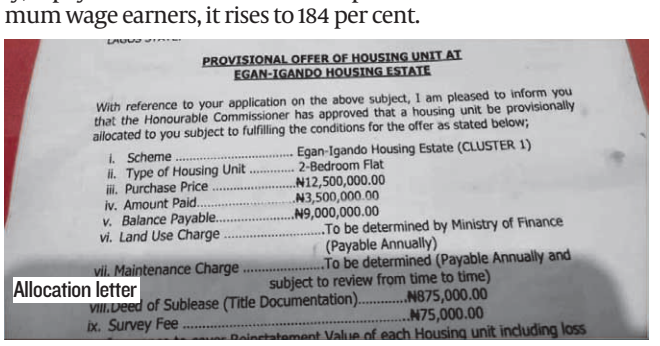

Egan-Igando showing completed blocks

Inside a two-bedroom flat, the finishing mirrors LKJ Gardens: tiled floors, fitted kitchen, two ceiling fans in the living room, and optional wardrobes.

However, an allocation letter reviewed for this investigation shows that a two-bedroom unit is priced at 12.5 million, significantly higher than the 10 million benchmark at LKJ Gardens. Prices for the one-bedroom and three-bedroom units are yet to be officially fixed. Rent-to-own terms and documentation requirements remain unchanged.

Using the same LagosHOMS structure, the 12.5 million price implies monthly repayments of about 129,000, requiring an estimated 430,000 monthly income under standard affordability guidelines.

THIS pushes the entry threshold even further beyond the reach of most Lagos residents. For workers earning 100,000 monthly, repayment would consume 129 per cent of income. For minimum wage earners, it rises to 184 per cent.


PROVISIONAL OFFER OF HOUSING UNIT AT EGAN-IGANDO HOUSING ESTATE

With reference to your application on the above subject, I am pleased to inform you that the Honourable Commissioner has approved that a housing unit be provisionally allocated to you subject to fulfilling the conditions for the offer as stated below;

i. Scheme ..... Egan-Igando Housing Estate (CLUSTER 1)
ii. Type of Housing Unit ..... 2-Bedroom Flat
iii. Purchase Price ..... ₦12,500,000.00
iv. Amount Paid ..... ₦3,500,000.00
v. Balance Payable ..... ₦9,000,000.00
vi. Land Use Charge ..... To be determined by Ministry of Finance (Payable Annually)
vii. Maintenance Charge ..... To be determined (Payable Annually and subject to review from time to time)
viii. Deed of Sublease (Title Documentation) ..... ₦875,000.00
ix. Survey Fee ..... ₦75,000.00
Allocation letter

"These houses are for Lagos residents, not just for government workers," the Commissioner emphasises when asked about accessibility. However, the emphasis misses the point. It reinforces an economic barrier: 12.5 million housing excludes low-income Lagosians regardless of the employment sector.

**Why are costs high?**

A retired civil servant familiar with Lagos lands and housing, speaking on condition of anonymity, outlined five factors driving "low-cost" housing beyond genuine affordability.

First, he says recent government houses are built for medium, upper-medium, and high-income earners, contrasting current estates' modern amenities with Jakande's basic shells. Second, the cost of construction is economically high due to political reasons and the high cost of building materials. Procurement records support this, showing contracts frequently requiring 17-30per cent "variation orders" (additional payments beyond original bids), suggesting either poor planning or contractor bid manipulation.

Third, the lack and cost of redeeming mortgage loans, principal and interest, are beyond low-income earners' reach. At 6 per cent interest over 10 years, a 10 million loan costs 12.36 million total. The 30-year, interest-free terms that made Jakande estates accessible no longer exist.

Fourth, the government's focus is more on revenue generated from houses than on social benefits to the public. When pressed on this claim, the commissioner noted that the government sells at below-market rates ( 10 million vs. 15 million market value), suggesting a genuine subsidy rather than the alleged profit motive.

Fifth, lands are inadequate in supply, and those acquired command compensation, explaining why the government cannot simply provide free land as in Jakande's era.

**The construction cost gap**

A registered estate surveyor and valuer, Nathaniel Adenuga, estimated the current construction costs at 180,000-250,000 per square metre, excluding land. A 75-square-metre two-bedroom flat with mid-range finishes costs approximately 16.5 million to construct.

YET at Fashola Estate in Ibeshe, Ikorodu, a Lagos State government-owned estate, two-bedroom flats sell for 35 million. At this pricing, a minimum wage earner saving 10 per cent monthly would need 416 years to afford a purchase.



400-year Lagos housing ownership pathway

"While Jakande was more focused on true low-cost housing for poor people to reduce homelessness, this new age government is pricing and valuing houses for gain," Mr Adenuga said.

His analysis confirms this investigation's affordability calculations: In 1981, purchasing a Jakande flat required 78 months of minimum wage; today it takes 143 months, an 83 per cent decline matching this investigation's 84 per cent finding.

Mr Adenuga estimates only 2.5 per cent of Lagos workers can afford the current "low-cost" housing. "There is currently zero supply in the 1.5 million to 5 million range in the formal market," he noted.

**Women doubly excluded**

Lagos City Management Associate, African Cities Research Consortium (ACRC), Taibat Lawanson, a professor, highlights how women face compounded barriers.

"Female-headed households are unable to access housing, whether through rental or allocation to public housing, primarily because of the patriarchal dynamic of the political sector," she explains.

Women dominating informal markets as traders and food sellers lack the payslips and bank statements required for allocation. Single mothers cannot "combine with wife" as the Commissioner suggests.

"Women have more trouble getting decent housing," Ms Lawanson said simply.

The ACRC Lagos City foundation report, according to Ms Lawanson, found that Lagos needs two million new builds and three million units from urban upgrading, not evictions, but intentional slum improvement. Yet current housing policy addresses neither need at scale.

**Unoccupied units, while millions need homes**

At government estates, a troubling pattern emerges: some units sit empty.

*This report was facilitated through a partnership between DevReporting and Pro-Poor Development Media Network (PDM-Network) and supported by the African Cities Research Consortium (ACRC).*

Read the remaining part of this story on www.guardian.ng

# Why I Prefer Tinubu To Other Political Leaders—Wike

## • 'Renewed Hope Agenda Has Returned Public Confidence In Government'

**The Minister of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Nyesom Ezenwo Wike, in this interview with select journalists in Abuja, disclosed that courage and ability to identify political plots are key elements in leadership, stressing that President Bola Ahmed Tinubu has demonstrated both virtues in delivering on his presidential mandate. LEO SOBECHI was there.**

**On Rotimi Amaechi and ADC coalition**

HE is my brother. I served as Chief of Staff to his government. When I saw that he was running with Atiku, I saw the entire thing as a set up. If he had called me, I would have advised him against contesting on that platform. It was very clear that he cannot get transparency or due process.

The issue is not about whether we are friends or not. . . .There is no law that says I shouldn't be knowledgeable in everything in politics. And let me tell you, that's why I can comfortably challenge any party. When I see anybody in party A or B, I can clearly say it's not me you will preach to about who is corrupt or not, go and preach to others because I know you.

Take for example when I saw the set up in ADC. I saw (Senator) David Mark there and I laughed. I laughed because when you have worked with people, when you have played (politics) with them, you know who is who, who will do what. That set up was Atiku's set up 100 per cent.

In politics, you can't set a trap for me; you cannot! We know ourselves as politicians. Who told you that that kind of structure will give you transparency? Who told you that that kind of structure will give you free and fair elections?

Amaechi, my brother, made a mistake. He was in too much of a hurry. He was carried away by those who were busy shouting that this government is not doing well. (But) they did all that to lure all of them into ADC to give (the platform) credibility. Are these the kind of people that will fight the government? It's not that they are coming as a coalition, never. I said so from day one.

After Obi saw that the entire scheme was in favour of Atiku, he left. But my brother was thinking that with that (Obi's exit) he would have an opportunity not knowing that every loop had been tied totally for Atiku. They laid that ambush and everybody entered. This was my experience.

When I was running, David Mark was the Chief Electoral Officer – a well-respected former Senate President for eight years; former senator of more than 12 years standing. But by the dictates of electoral regulation and fairness, campaign activities were billed for a specific time frame. That is to say campaign activities will stop at a stated time.

All the aspirants were allowed to come and talk to the delegates. Every aspirant came out; I spoke and then (Aminu) Tambuwal spoke last. It was then time to get into voting.

Suddenly, (Mark) came up again to say there's an announcement. Guess what was the announcement? I thought maybe the man (Tambuwal) was stepping down, either because of ill health or that he does not want to continue because the kind of wave I was carrying was too much.

Everybody heard when I was addressing the people and saw how the Kano delegates hailed me and saw that there was danger. So, they called Tambuwal back, and he said, 'my dear brothers, I hereby step down'. I thought that at that point it was okay, but he (Tambuwal) went ahead to say, 'vote for my senior brother (Atiku).'

Yet, David Mark, the chief electoral empire did not give us (rest presidential aspirants) another opportunity, especially after Tambuwal had said vote for my senior brother. I would have come out to counter that.

So, that happened and let it slide, but I know them. I know everybody there (ADC coalition). For instance, look at Ben Obi. Ben Obi was following Peter Obi everywhere as South East leaders. If you are observant, you will notice that Ben Obi can never abandon Atiku. That is if you know their relationship.

Try to know people beyond merely seeing them so you can decode a lie. So, after Obi left, (Sam) Egwu left; did Ben Obi leave? He will never. As such, when you see certain people in a committee, especially the head and the tail (chairman and secretary), you don't need me to tell you, 'hey, that is a trap. Don't go there.'

But they preached to Amaechi about transparency and he believed that he could win. That, to me, was why I believe he was angry.



**What about Peter Obi and his promise of taking power generation from 5,000 to 10, 000 megawatts…**

How do you know someone who can fight challenges? Yes, granted that Obi was a former governor. (But) Peter Obi likes "food is ready", "mama-put." He does not want to struggle.

But if you look around in this country, there are many challenges. You must have the capacity to face those challenges. It is not when you encounter one problem, you shout, 'oh this problem is too much let me move to so-so place.'

At least you all saw all the governors in PDP. I said I will not leave the party. They (Atiku group) had money, but it's not money. I said that rather than leave, they will leave. Have I left? Have they not left?

**Of Tinubu, leadership challenges and managing FCT**

I maintain that it is the challenges you confront that makes you a leader; that's what makes you a man. Leadership is not about easy opportunities or dashing you positions. For instance, when I came here as a minister, there was nothing I did not get; there was no abuse I did not receive.

My detractors were saying, 'you think here is Port Harcourt, you can't do it in Abuja,' and things like that. I said it will be done! And I'm doing it. Heaven will not fall. In fact, heaven is at peace now. Heaven is at peace based on what we are achieving for the people in FCT.

We have had governments come and go. Everybody noticed that petroleum subsidy was a cancer. There was no past Federal Government that did not identify that fact. The question is: what did you do after identifying that? This is where leadership now comes in.

The present administration of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu came and said, 'this is a problem that we must confront and resolve; how do I solve this problem? I must do this (removal of subsidy) and he did it.

There are cries of suffering; he said 'yes there will be suffering, but it is suffering that will lead us for progress tomorrow.' That is leadership. It doesn't matter what the opponents will do to change the narrative.

You see, the worst of a leader that is called a leader is somebody who has identified a problem and cannot take a decision on how to solve that problem. They didn't bring you here to just identify problems and go. You were brought in to identify a problem and be able to solve the problem.

Of course, there are problems that could be short-term or long-term. But the important thing is: have you laid a strong foundation to help in solving such problems? Problem-solving could entail a lot of difficulties, which is happening today.

**Completed versus pending projects**

When people talk about the many projects that this administration has embarked upon, they ask: are you going to achieve it at the end of the year? My answer is, yes, I'm going to achieve it. Leadership needs courage.

From Monday June 8, we shall begin the commissioning of projects and that will last 31 days. The commissioning will involve Mr. President and other leaders of the administration.

In 2025, we had 19 days of commissioning of impactful projects to the people of FCT. This 2026, it will be 31 days. We are supposed to start, subject to the convenience of Mr. President and his approval, on June 8. That is Monday next week.

And as I said, these projects are not only concentrated in the city centre, but also in the satellite towns, the area councils ranging from roads to water and to residences of public officers.

Let me start with the satellite towns. You agree with us that sometimes most people have actually claimed that those in the rural areas or what they may call the satellite towns do not feel the impact of government. As a result, they allege that there is no infrastructure in the local areas. That it has also affected them in terms of security.

I remember when we came on board; there was this issue of high insecurity, kidnapping in the rural areas and it was a very big problem for us and what we did was to go to the inner towns. We set up committees including indigenes who understand the terrain.

They were able to identify that the problems were mostly about the nature of the roads, which are mainly not accessible at all. And when these criminals attack, the residents cannot repel or fight back because once these attackers come they hit and run back, because there is no means to pursue them; even if you have a car you have nothing to do.

After they identified those problems, we started aggressive road construction in the satellite towns. For example, in Kwali, we were told that if you do so and so road, you have solved the security challenge in half, because that is where we think that the hoodlums come from. The story is the same in Gwagwalada, Abaji, Kuje and others.

So, we took cognisance of all that. We didn't just sit here to say let's go and do so, so road. The people nominated the roads that they want and that will be of use to them. I can tell you that today, those roads have been done and they have really helped in terms of reducing insecurity and in terms of having access to their farm land.

In fact, one of you here (who is an indigene and resides in Karu) can attest to the fact that in Karu, as we speak, the access road has been completed. In fact, it is one of the projects we are set to commission. Virtually all the roads in Karu they requested have been done.

What I found out in governance is: if you sit in your office and allow contractors to come and tell you which roads are due for construction, you don't even know whether that's where he lives. But in our case, it was the people that called for help, telling us that if you can help us to do these roads we will be very comfortable. The Renewed Hope administration is winning back the confidence of the people in government. You see, when government makes promises that are not fulfilled, people lose confidence.

This is not the first time they have made promises to us. Two years ago they made promises to us; five years and up till now nothing has been done. So why do you think you are different?

We said no! We are different in the sense that whatever promise we make by the grace of God, we will implement it. That is how people have come to feel the impact of governance at least in the rural areas.

# Why FG Should Wade Into Festering Abia, A'Ibom Boundary Dispute Now—Abonta

**Former federal lawmaker, Dr. Uzoma Nkem Abonta, in this interview with ONYEDIKA AGBEDO, speaks about the boundary controversy between the Akirika Obu community in Abia State and the people of Ika in Akwa Ibom State, calling on the Federal Government to urgently intervene to prevent the situation from escalating into an inter-community violence.**

**What is the Akirika Obu dispute about?**

IT is about the Akirika Obu community in Ukwa East Local Council of Abia State that Ika Annang people of Akwa Ibom State and the Akwa Ibom State government have been encroaching onto in their efforts to annex it. They have now been attempting so wantonly and blatantly in connivance with Abia State government officials.

Akirika Obu community is within Ndoki Clan in Ukwa East Local Council of Abia State. It is one of the three communities in the Umuigubeachara Group of Communities. The people of Akirika Obu left Akirika Uku and settled on a large parcel of land allocated to their forefathers by their maternal relatives, the Abiaka people of Oberete, now in Obingwa Local Council of Abia State. The community shares partition boundaries with Abiaka in Oberete Ibeme who gave their forefathers the land and substantive boundary with neighbouring Abia State villages and Ika villages in present day Ika Local Council of Akwa Ibom State, but it has no land boundary dispute with any Ika Annang village of Akwa Ibom State.

Since after the Civil War, Ika Annang people and the predecessors of Akwa Ibom State and now Akwa Ibom State itself have been making false and fraudulent claims over the Akirika Obu community. They kept on forcefully encroaching on the community in their attempt to annex it. They have attacked and destroyed the community on several occasions. But the truth is that Akirika Obu community has no single land dispute with any Ika Annang village of Akwa Ibom State, and it has never been administered as part of the Ika Annang area of Abak Division under Uyo Province in the history of mankind. I challenge anybody claiming otherwise to come up with his or her supporting evidence. So, it is only the Akwa Ibom State government that would be claiming land and communities without evidence in the form of solid documents to prove their case. They prefer to fight.

Surprisingly, the Governor of Akwa Ibom State himself does not care to find out whether those representing his state in their claims have supporting documents. A state governor does not need to be a lawyer to ask such elementary questions. He ought to ask: where are the supporting documents with which we are claiming Akirika Obu Community or Ikot Udo as they call it? Bring documents from the archives to show that Akirika Obu community has been part of Ika Annang Area in Abak Division of Uyo Province. It is not enough to rely on Abia State government officials and be prodding and cajoling them to enable you to annex Abia State boundary communities, including Akirika Obu and Azumini. It is not going to work. My constituents and I would not allow such lawlessness.

**Has the Federal Government ever taken a decision on this?**

Yes, more than once. The former East Central State government and later the Imo State government both complained bitterly to the Federal Government against the encroachment into Akirika Obu by Akwa Ibom State's defunct predecessor states, the former South Eastern State and Cross River State. The Federal Government, in reaction, set up at least two commissions. Both commissions decided that Akirika Obu had been part and parcel of Ndoki Clan now in Ukwa East Local Council. At the last sitting of one of the commissions, the Kaloma Ali Boundary Ascertainment Commission of 1982, the Ika Annang people and their then Cross River State government could not produce a single document to support their claim over Akirika Obu community. The commission decided in favour of Akirika Obu being retained in the then Imo State. The commission's decision was subsequently enacted into law – Decree No 23 of 1985 – which clearly provides that Akirika Obu is to be governed by Imo State, which part of Imo State later became part of Abia State. The decree even provides that Akirika Obu is alias Ikot Udo, but is in Imo State. Ikot Udo is one of the former names of the Akirika Obu community that the Ika Annang people have insisted on continuing to call it. But the law said that the community is in former Imo State and Abia State inherited it upon its creation.

**So why are we still having this conversation in 2026?**

That is the troubling part. Despite the existence of that decree, the present Abia State government officials appear to be working against its provisions and effectively ceding Abia State land comprising Akirika Obu community to the Annang people of Akwa Ibom State. The same thing is happening to the Azumini Ancient Kingdom. Azumini tenants from interior Annang connived with Abia State government officials and tried to annex the land of their Azumini customary overlords. These are what have prompted me to speak out. Which kind of government officials do such a thing and go home to sleep?

**You have made allegations against Abia State government officials. Which of them specifically?**

On January 21, 2026, the deputy governor of Abia State went to Community Primary School, Akirika Obu, which had long been forcefully taken over by force of arms, illegally occupied and appropriated by Akwa Ibom State government, and proceeded to partition the land in Akirika Obu community and gave part to Ika Annang people of Akwa Ibom State. He disguised this as road construction by the Akwa Ibom State government without any prior agreement with the Abia State government. He felt comfortable to stay in that forcefully occupied Community Primary School Compound and divide Akirika Obu community into four parts and ceded three of those parts to the Ika Annang people of Akwa Ibom State, and purportedly left one part in Abia State. What do those actions mean? Very embarrassing! As we are here now, Akirika Obu Community Primary School is still being occupied by AK 47 welding Ika Annang boys. These are deeply unjust and reek of sectional bias and foul play against my constituents.



**That is a serious charge. How would you characterise what the deputy governor did?**

What he did amounted to going into another state to manufacture a non-existing boundary dispute for his own state because no such boundary dispute exists between Akirika Obu Community and Ika Annang villages. For me as a lawyer, his conduct is treacherous and treasonous. Remember, Akirika Obu Community had already taken the Akwa Ibom State Government and others to court.

In one of their defence, Akwa Ibom claimed this was a boundary dispute between Akirika Obu and their community, yet they could not name a single of their Ika Annang village with which Akirika Obu has a land boundary dispute. The Akwa Ibom State government also made one puerile and outlandish pleading bordering on blatant lies in their statement of defence. They pleaded that Decree 23 of 1985 divided Akirika Obu Community, which they call Ikot Udo, into four and gave three quarters to the former Cross River State now inherited by them and that the decree left one quarter of Akirika Obu Community in the former Imo State. Of course, Akirika Obu community's lawyer, Femi Falana (SAN), saw through their gimmick and in the Claimants' reply, he flatly and stoutly denied that there is anything like that in the decree.

# Roadmap To Combating Insecurity, Terrorism In Nigeria

By **Banji Alabi**

**INSECURITY** is not an act of God or visitation of the wrath of the Almighty as some people want us to believe; it is a choice by a few which the majority must unequivocally resist, reject and turn against the perpetrators, collaborators and sponsors. Insecurity is neither a natural disaster nor a plague in the class of Ebola or any outbreak of disease; it is man-made just as those behind it, like armed robbers, are not spirits. They are fellow beings/countrymen with known family members. They have wives, children, brothers, sisters, landlords/landladies; they operate bank accounts, attend churches/mosques as well as patronise night clubs and such other social outfits. They move on roads and highways flooded by police, military, civil defence and other operatives' checkpoints without using helicopters or drones. So, they are neither invisible nor invincible. That they keep tormenting us as individuals, states and a nation is our own choice to protect evil. We can and shall defeat them the day we are ready as patriotic citizens; not as saboteurs and conspirators and collaborators.

For too long, we have buried our heads in the sand while our brothers, sisters and children are slaughtered, kidnapped and displaced. We blame the President; we blame the government; we walk away as if security is someone else's burden. It is not! The truth about insecurity in Nigeria is that it has political fathers.

Insecurity in Nigeria did not start yesterday, and it has never been purely criminal. History shows a pattern: whenever disgruntled political actors lose power or fear losing it, they weaponise violence to destabilise the state and create conditions to "kick out a bad government."



We saw it in the lead-up to 2015. Boko Haram's escalation, kidnappings and bombings were amplified and exploited to delegitimise the President Goodluck Jonathan administration. The same actors who could not win at the ballot box sought victory through bloodshed and fear. Communities were infiltrated, local accomplices were paid and intelligence was suppressed because the goal was not peace—it was power. That playbook is still in use. When special interest groups want to topple an administration they dislike, they fan ethnic tensions, fund banditry and ensure that no part of the country feels safe. They know a frightened nation does not ask questions. It only demands change, any change. This is treason against the Nigerian people. And it succeeds only because we, the people, refuse to own our neighbourhoods. Blaming one man will not save 300 million people. No president, not Tinubu, not Buhari, not Jonathan, can police every village, every highway and every market from Abuja. Criminals live among us. They marry from us, trade in our markets and are protected by our silence. If we intend to stop this, we must stop pretending that security is a federal problem alone. We must become good citizens, not just good critics.

The Roadmap: I call for the immediate formation of a National Committee Against Insecurity, structured from the wards to the centre. The war against insecurity and terrorism cannot be won solely by the regular armed forces; it is a battle that calls for the involvement and contributions of all Nigerians. It is an absolutely wrong mindset to conclude that it is the constitutional responsibility of government to ensure security. It is equally the constitutional calling of every Nigerian to report and expose threats to security and national stability and those behind it. Failure to do so makes a citizen a collaborator or conspirator. Remember that the people the criminal agents of insecurity often get at are helpless, innocent Nigerians who are your brothers, sisters, children or those of your fellow Nigerians; not people in Abuja or in other Government Houses. The Committee system I am advocating will be an organised civil engagement platform to be established in every political ward in the country and all other layers of governance to the central (federal) level.

Ward Security Councils: Every ward must constitute a council of traditional rulers, religious leaders, youth leaders, market leaders and retired security personnel. Their mandate: meet weekly; identify unusual movements, vet local vigilantes and report directly to the local council. No more "we didn't know."

State and Regional Policing: Nigeria is too large and too diverse for one police command. We must implement true federalism and resource control. Let states and regions establish their own police forces to handle community crimes, while federal forces focus on interstate terrorism, borders and transnational crime. This is the spirit of the Aburi Accord.

The Bible asks, "Can two walk together unless they agree?" Nigeria is made up of strange bedfellows. A weak centre and strong regions is the only structure that respects our differences and secures our people.

Cut Off the Oxygen of Crime: Pass a Whistleblower Protection and Reward Act. Pay for actionable intelligence that leads to arrests. Publicly name and prosecute landlords, traditional rulers and officials who harbour criminals. Establish a Bipartisan National Security Caucus. Any politician caught funding or inciting violence must face prosecution, regardless of party.

Fix the Forces: Improve welfare, housing and equipment for police and soldiers. A hungry officer cannot fight corruption. Create an independent body to prosecute rogue officers. Publish a public dashboard of arrests, prosecutions and convictions every 90 days.

My call to every Nigerian from today is to adopt this slogan: "If You See It, You Own It." If you see an unusual movement, report it. If you know a landlord housing bandits, report it. If you hear a politician funding violence, say it. The Niemöller warning is upon us: "First they came for the Socialists….Then they came for the Trade Unionists….Then they came for the Jews….Then they came for me—and there was no one left to speak out."

*•Banji Esq is the National Chairman, Ondo State Eminent Persons Group, as well as the Chairman of Eti Osa chapter of the Nigerian Bar Association Law Week.*

# Editorial

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# Towards Resilient, Affordable Health Systems

BY canvassing global support for science and investment in world health systems as she did recently, the wife of the President, Mrs. Oluremi Tinubu, has rightly postulated that consistent and sustainable investment is the anchor upon which innovation in health sciences is rooted. Senator Oluremi Tinubu's message is significant, coming as it were on the occasion of the 2026 World Health Day, which was tagged "Together for Health. Stand with science." She stated that sustainable growth in healthcare is predicated on innovation, research, and robust collaboration across nations and sectors. She noted that scientific partnerships play significant role in tackling global health challenges.

While health functionaries are usually keen to align with advocacy as that of the First Lady, they have failed consistently to accord the country's health sector the much needed investment and other necessary attention. Most public officials prefer to patronize health facilities abroad because they can afford it; leaving the average Nigerian with decrepit hospitals and health facilities.

At different times, collaborations have scaled up advancements in research and medical science. For instance, during catastrophic cross-border pandemics, such as Covid-19 and Ebola, the world rallied to provide solution, in vaccines and other containment measures. Those moments have made clear that physical borders may not be sufficient to isolate vulnerabilities.

To commemorate the day this year, the World Health Organisation (WHO), signaled the urgency to combat health misinformation, strengthen evidence-based policy, and promote scientific collaboration for a "One Health" approach. The goal is to protect humans, plants, animals and the planet. The WHO seeks to rebuild trust in scientific evidence and combat misinformation and inter-connected health challenges. The global health body urged governments, scientists and the public to prioritise data and innovation to build more resilient health systems.

Here at home, there is no doubt that Nigeria's health systems are not resilient. Rather, the systems are in a shambles because for decades governments have not prioritized health. The systems have been underfunded and facilities rendered unsustainable. In dismantling the Second Republic, the military described the country's hospitals as having become 'mere consulting clinics.' Since then, there haven't been serious efforts by successive governments to scale up the sector, in terms of sustainable investment.

Worried by the persistent low funding of health, African political leaders at the Abuja Declaration of April 2001 directed member states of African Union (AU), to allocate at least 15 per cent of their annual budgets to the health sector. However, most countries have failed repeatedly to increase their health budgets. Health funding only hovered around 7.2 per cent average in the continent.

The Federal Government struggles to barely keep the sector. In 2024, it budgeted around 4.6 per cent to the sector. In 2025 it was 5.15 per cent and that of 2026 is around 4.2 per cent. The shortfall notwithstanding, recurrent expenditure takes around 78 per cent of the total allocation. This means that significant sums are spent on salaries and overheads, rather than in building resilient systems. There is barely anything left to fund capital expenses. Out of the N218 billion appropriated for the Federal Ministry of Health's capital projects in 2025, the minister of Health, Ali Pate revealed that only N36 million (about 0.0165 per cent) was released as at February 2026.

This funding gap is responsible for the deplorable condition of health facilities across tertiary health institutions across the country. Diagnostic and laboratory facilities are not up to date but left to decay over time. This has shifted the responsibility of timely and efficient medical investigation into a handful of private sector operators. The cost is prohibitive for the larger population of Nigerians.

Cost of medicine and treatment are also astronomical, particularly for over 200 million citizens who cannot afford the cost of medical treatment abroad. Households spend more than six per cent of their income on health, which constitutes a strain on family resources.

Meanwhile, the elite, especially politicians and political office holders travel around the world for their health needs. They do not mind the strain of their luxurious lifestyles on the economy, which is estimated at over $3.6 billion yearly ($40 billion in over a decade), as lamented by the Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria, Yemi Cardoso. Those in the corridor of power owe posterity a duty to lead by example. Let them improve on and patronise local health institutions.

Nigeria must return to that era when it was reported that our foremost tertiary health facility, the University Teaching Hospital (UCH), Ibadan, catered to high-net-worth citizens around the globe. It begins with fiscal discipline, timely releases of capital budgets and insisting funds are invested transparently and accountably.

Today, the UCH and other institutions of its cadre are a shadow of their previous state of excellence. They are in darkness as they can no longer pay commercial rates for privatized electricity. Energy owners classify tertiary health institutions as commercial outfits rather than facilities rendering social service. Government should compel a reversal of this mindset or provide sufficient fund to meet energy bills.

Health insurance is not available for majority of citizens. Coverage is abysmal, only available to roughly five per cent of the population. Every effort to expand it is met with bureaucratic lethargy and corruption. Paying out-of-pocket is costly for the majority. That must change.

This government should climb down from sermons at podiums to deliver quality health. Quality health and quality education are top indices of development. Health tourism for the political class is not a sustainable habit for the country. It is a costly habit that denies Nigerians opportunities for healthcare.

Failure to invest in healthcare is the reason there is massive brain drain in the sector. Nigeria should not be training health personnel for other countries. Nigerians have had enough of podium rhetoric and need more investment at home. Quality healthcare for citizens is a constitutional right, not a privilege.

## LETTER

# The Unwritten Rules Of A True Democracy

SIR: Without doubt, much of our current national disconnect stems from a fundamental defect: we are operating a democracy while remaining acutely unaware of the unwritten rules that anchor it - chiefly, the social contract between the leaders and the led. Worse still, even those benefiting most from this democracy seem to doubt its ability to engender true development. Tragically, we remain a people who base vital decisions on the sentiments of religion, ethnicity and gender, rather than on merit or national interest.

You do not "rule" in a democracy; you govern. The distinction is fundamental, yet it remains one of those unstated boundaries our political class routinely crosses. That said, Nigeria's erosion of quality is largely due to the collapse of what we might call quality control. Standards are down across the board, in every facet of national life. The country whose personnel and structures were once greatly admired by African nations that obtained independence after us is now a thing of the past; we have moved away from being a shining beacon for others to emulate. This is tragic, and it is a key to understanding why over 139 million people are trapped in multidimensional poverty in a major oil-producing nation that should, by now, be a post-COVID one-trillion-dollar economy. How indeed are the mighty fallen in the heat of the contest for modernity?

Again, the current administration must remember the profound warning written by Italian political philosopher Antonio Gramsci from his prison cell: *"The crisis consists precisely in the fact that the old is dying and the new cannot be born; in this interregnum a great variety of morbid symptoms appear."* Sad that Nigeria is living through these very symptoms today, manifest in the terrifying realities of kidnapping, terrorism, banditry and economic stagnation. We are, quite literally, living in Gramsci's "age of monsters."

To regain quality, the social contract must be reinforced in favour of the overwhelming majority and their families. We must return to the standards we once held during what now looks like a golden age. The "Nigerian factor" must never again be used as an everyday excuse. The self-depreciation must stop. Nigeria must now insist on quality control, making international best practices the baseline for all operations.

In reality, true self-development requires those at the helm to take the bull by the horns. Nations like China, Malaysia and India succeeded because they committed to a vision. They refused to succumb to the policy somersaults that plague others; and, predictably, they are now reaping the rewards of that discipline.

Out of higher standards of quality will come a more equitable and just society based on shared prosperity, in line with the central ethos of the social contract. This is how that society becomes more productive, turning productivity into the engine room of a balanced economy that will eventually drive out poverty. After all, there is no gain without pain - just as there can be no Easter Sunday without the sacrifice of Good Friday. A focus on production would increase revenue and boost incomes, serving as the essential first step towards escaping the poverty trap. This is "old hat", a concept exhaustively analyzed by development economists over the last 50 to 60 years, many of whom have rightly earned the Nobel Prize for their work. Therefore, the path is well-known. Unfortunately, it is a path that cannot be taken by an "Aristocracy of Labour" fixated solely on short-term personal aggrandisement.

We know from economic history that shared prosperity is a magic formula to incentivize the population into attaining higher levels of production. It is also true that higher levels of production generate more funding for education, health and both social and physical infrastructure. The gains are huge, meaning that equity, like quality, can only be achieved if it is based on a vigorous interpretation of the social contract.

Propriety can only be achieved in a country striving for higher standards of quality, equity and social justice - all propelled by increased production. Propriety cannot be ascertained in a dog-eat-dog economic framework. It can only come about through guaranteed minimal standards, an acceptable quality of life, and the aspirational desires of the overwhelming majority of the population.

History has a way of masking harsh contradictions … Had Nigeria not sadly jettisoned the Lyttleton Constitution, we would have achieved all of this 66 years ago. Under the Lyttleton Constitution bedrocked on production, our country was on its way. On October 1, 1960, Nigeria possessed one of the most promising emerging economies in the world. Fast forward 66 years, we have slid drastically down global rankings. The facts are incontrovertible.

Even if the principalities and powers of entrenched interests prevent us from returning to the structure, tone and core argument of the Lyttleton Constitution, we must go back to its accompanying ethos and norms. In an unstated way, these values had the development of a social contract as their operating driving force.

• ***Abiodun Komolafe.*** *Email: ijebujesa@yahoo.co.uk.*
*Mobile: 08033614419 SMS only.*



# Opinion

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## Beyond 'I Do': Addressing The Pressure On Nigerian Women

By **Chinwe Enyinna**

ONE afternoon at D' Survivor Hub, a young mentee asked me what I thought about her delaying marriage to pursue her master's degree abroad. I replied, "Well, I think education and personal growth are investments that no one can ever take away from you. It gives you the financial security to make confident life choices." She then asked what I had to say about her family, who were constantly warning her that too much education would scare off potential suitors. I said, "A man intimidated by your progress is not the right partner for you anyway." Her immediate, exhausted reply was, "That sounds nice in theory, Aunty Chinwe. But you know our society. It doesn't matter how many degrees you have; if you aren't married by thirty, people look at you with pity, like your life is incomplete." I had to agree with her on the reality of that pressure.

Being born a girl in many Nigerian households comes with a predetermined timeline. As a girl reaches her twenties, her academic and professional achievements are often overshadowed by the looming question of when she will "settle down." Some families set a strict deadline, insisting that a woman must be married in her mid-twenties, while for others, the pressure begins shockingly early. Current data shows that Nigeria still has some of the highest numbers of child brides globally, with millions of girls married before they even turn eighteen. In many rural communities, girls don't even get a chance to complete their education because they are married off early to sustain their families financially.

When a Nigerian woman crosses her mid-twenties, she is suddenly deemed "old enough" and rushed into finding a partner. Parents and relatives consider it a primary duty to see her married off, often investing heavily in wedding preparations while treating single, divorced, or childless women as societal anomalies. Because of this, women are conditioned to believe that no matter how driven or talented they are, their ultimate destination is a marital home.

"Your worth is not defined by whether someone chooses you; it is defined by who you are." — Chinwe Enyinna

Suffering in Silence - A Societal Evil

Because of this immense pressure, the compromises Nigerian women make are devastating. Terrified of the labels society assigns to single or divorced women, many suppress their intuition and remain in highly toxic relationships. They sacrifice their dreams, careers, and mental health because they have been taught that "endurance" is the hallmark of a good wife. The reality of this endurance is incredibly grim. National demographic surveys and UN data consistently reveal that nearly one in three Nigerian women has experienced physical or sexual violence, overwhelmingly at the hands of an intimate partner.

When women prioritise marriage above their personal development and financial independence, they often find themselves trapped in abusive situations without the means to walk away. This is further sustained by a tragic culture of silence and glaring systemic failures.

Nigeria: One in three women face gender-based violence. The reality of domestic abuse in Nigeria remains a shadow pandemic, with nearly a third of women experiencing intimate partner violence.

Justice system fails survivors of domestic abuse: Recent reports highlight a staggering culture of impunity, noting that only a minuscule fraction of reported domestic violence cases ever result in prosecution.

Blooming From the Thorns

Not only dreams and careers, but lives end because of this pressure. These stigmas and systemic failures contribute to the dangerous way marriage is viewed in Nigeria as a rescue mission rather than a partnership. Parents must stop raising girls solely to be wives and start raising them to be confident, educated, and purpose-driven. We need to normalise discussions around emotional intelligence and financial independence for women, while equally teaching boys about positive masculinity and fundamental respect.

Society must step up with compassion instead of judgment when a woman chooses her peace over a toxic environment. We must stop pressuring women back into harmful situations just to save face. Rushing through or forcing an event as critical as marriage, just to appease societal timelines, ends in uncalled-for trauma.

This article was inspired by the daily conversations I have with survivors and mentees, and echoes the themes of rebirth and healing in my new book, My Garden of Thorny Roses.

Those in distress or facing intimate partner violence can reach out to D' Survivor Hub Nigeria or local domestic abuse helplines for immediate support and a safe space.

• *Chinwe Enyinna is a Gender Equality and GBV Advocate and the Founder of D' Survivor Hub Nigeria. She is the author of new book, "My Garden of Thorny Roses."*

## Stewardship For A New Epoch In African Intellectual Diplomacy

By **Mondy Selle Gold**

IN formally entrusting Professor Stephen Sinikiem Azaiki with the Directorship of the Centre for Polish and African Affairs, Poland on May 4, 2026, the distinguished Wy sza Szkoła Komunikacji i Zarz dania in Pozna has demonstrated remarkable institutional foresight and scholarly discernment, grounded in a recognition of Azaiki's exceptional professional competence, intellectual sophistication and multidimensional versatility. The appointment recognizes a man whose life path has become inextricably intertwined with statesmanship and strategic leadership.

For the Ijaw nation, whose population is estimated at nearly twenty million people across the Niger Delta region of Nigeria and the global diaspora, this moment carries immense emotional gravity and historical symbolism. It resonates not merely as personal recognition for one accomplished leader in Nigeria from Bayelsa State, but as a broader vindication of a people whose contributions to national development and global intellectual advancement have often remained inadequately acknowledged. Despite decades marked by ecological devastation, political marginalization, economic exploitation, and historical neglect, the Ijaw people continues to produce minds of extraordinary brilliance capable of shaping international discourse and redefining the contours of African scholarship. Consequently, Professor Azaiki's emergence on such a prestigious global platform symbolizes the continuing intellectual renaissance of the Ijaw people and, by extension, the enduring resilience of the Niger Delta spirit.

Indeed, Stephen Sinikiem Azaiki's journey has consistently reflected uncommon fortitude, refined intellect, and unrelenting dignity. Since my first encounter with him during one of the most consequential gatherings of Nigerians in the illustrious city of Atlanta, United States, in 2002, he has remained a leader of exceptional cerebral depth and remarkable composure. Much like an ancient lighthouse standing resolutely against relentless tides and turbulent storms, he has embodied the rare capacity to illuminate pathways for others while remaining steadfast amidst adversity. His life has never been circumscribed solely by the pursuit of personal acclaim, based on my personal experience. Rather, it has been animated by an enduring commitment to societal advancement through scholarship, diplomacy, governance, historical consciousness, and principled leadership. In this regard, his appointment appears not accidental, but profoundly providential.

Significantly, Europe hosts several globally respected institutions dedicated to African affairs and transcontinental scholarship, including the University of Oxford African Studies Centre, the University of Edinburgh Centre of African Studies, the University of Copenhagen Centre of African Studies, and the Africa Initiative of the European University Institute in Italy, which provides advanced research, education, and policy engagement concerning African affairs. Within this distinguished intellectual ecosystem, the Centre for Polish and African Affairs increasingly occupies a strategic and consequential position in strengthening intercultural understanding, promoting scholarly cooperation, advancing research excellence, and deepening diplomatic engagement between Africa and Europe.

This reality becomes even more critical in an age characterised by ideological fragmentation, geopolitical uncertainty, cultural polarization, and growing global distrust. That is why, in my opinion, institutions capable of fostering mutual respect between civilizations and facilitating meaningful scholarly dialogue have become indispensable pillars within the international order. Professor Azaiki's appointment therefore places him at the epicenter of some of the most consequential intellectual and diplomatic conversations shaping Africa–Europe relations in the twenty-first century.

Without question, his intellectual temperament renders him exceptionally qualified for such a consequential responsibility. Over the course of his distinguished career, he has occupied several strategically significant positions spanning multiple continents, from Nigeria to Ukraine, from Washington, D.C. to the United Kingdom, and from China to South Africa. These global engagements have afforded him the rare privilege of interacting with eminent dignitaries, policymakers, scholars, and international thought leaders, while also serving on numerous occasions as a keynote speaker and presenter of scholarly papers on critical global issues in no fewer than fifty countries. Such extensive international exposure has further strengthened his increasingly rare ability to navigate seamlessly the interconnected worlds of academia, governance, public policy, diplomacy, cultural identity, and historical interpretation.

In an era where such multidimensional versatility has become exceedingly scarce within contemporary leadership structures, Professor Azaiki stands out as a leader of remarkable intellectual adaptability and global relevance. More importantly, he understands with profound clarity that modern diplomacy is no longer confined exclusively to conference chambers, presidential villas, or ministerial negotiations; rather, it is equally advanced through ideas, narratives, historical memory, scholarly exchange, and the deliberate cultivation of intercultural understanding.

For Nigeria, this appointment carries profound national significance. It projects the country's intellectual capital onto the global stage and reinforces the enduring truth that Nigeria's greatest resource extends far beyond mineral wealth or petroleum reserves. The nation's most valuable asset remains the brilliance, creativity, resilience, and scholarly sophistication of its people. Through Professor Azaiki, the international academic community recognizes a distinguished Nigerian from Bayelsa State whose scholarship, leadership, and statesmanship reflect some of the finest dimensions of African excellence.

Even more importantly, his elevation challenges longstanding stereotypes that have too often reduced Africa to simplistic narratives of dependency, instability, and perpetual crisis. Appointments of this magnitude compel the international community to recognize Africa not as a continent perpetually awaiting salvation, but as a formidable reservoir of wisdom, innovation, intellectual sophistication, leadership, and transformative scholarship capable of contributing meaningfully to global civilisation.

Viewed through the prism of the Ijaw struggle for justice, recognition, equity, and historical visibility, the symbolism becomes even more compelling. Every international accomplishment attained by distinguished Ijaw sons and daughters expands the moral geography of the Ijaw identity while affirming the intellectual legitimacy of a people whose voice continues to resonate with increasing authority within global consciousness. Consequently, Professor Azaiki's appointment belongs not solely to him as an individual, but also to the collective aspirations, dignity, and historical advancement of the Ijaw people. There is, undeniably, a certain poetic magnificence embedded within this historic moment. From the creeks and rivers of the Ijaw Nation, including Epie Creek, Bomadi Creek, Nembe Creek, the Andoni River, River Nun, and the majestic Bonny River, to the refined academic corridors of Europe, this extraordinary journey embodies the timeless triumph of perseverance over limitation and preparation over circumstance. It is a journey shaped by disciplined scholarship and an unrelenting commitment to excellence. In many respects, it represents the gradual unfolding of destiny through vision, sacrifice, and enlightened purpose. Indeed, history itself appears to speak through this moment with unmistakable eloquence, affirming that true greatness cannot be confined by geography or suppressed by historical neglect. It embodies the reality that even within the intricate archipelago of creeks and rivers that define the Ijaw Nation, brilliance asserts its presence, transcending borders and rising above every attempt at limitation.

Furthermore, the decision by the Senate and governing authorities of the institution to approve Stephen Sinikiem Azaiki's appointment reflects profound confidence in his professional competence, intellectual depth, and distinguished capacity for leadership. As Director of the Centre for Polish and African Affairs, Professor Azaiki now occupies a strategic platform capable of shaping critical scholarly and diplomatic conversations between Africa and Europe for many years to come. Under his stewardship, the Centre is expected to evolve into an even more formidable nucleus for cultural diplomacy, strategic partnerships, academic innovation, policy research, and transcontinental intellectual engagement.

For younger generations across Nigeria, Africa, and the Diaspora, this historic moment offers invaluable lessons and enduring inspiration. It demonstrates that scholarship remains profoundly powerful. It affirms that intellectual excellence continues to command international respect. Most importantly, it reminds aspiring leaders that authentic influence is built through discipline, vision, substance, integrity, and sustained contribution to humanity.

Ultimately, this appointment is not merely a personal victory for Professor Azaiki, but also a resounding triumph for the ideals of education, cultural diplomacy, African dignity, and global intellectual engagement. It stands as compelling evidence that the voice of Africa, when anchored in knowledge, character, and intellectual rigor, cannot be ignored on the global stage.

The Ijaw nation rejoices.
Nigeria celebrates.
Africa stands profoundly proud.

• ***Professor Mondy Selle Gold, FCILG, FEBS, INOH, MPA, CFP, PhD is Co-Chairman of the African Policy and Research Consortium. He is an American-based scholar and a distinguished recipient of several honors, including the United States President's Lifetime Achievement Award, the African Community Service Award, and the African Eagles Global Financial and Academic Icon Award.***

# Politics

## 2027: Ahmed Aliyu's Second Term Ticket And The Battle For Sokoto's Political Soul

From Tunde Omolehin, Sokoto

THE emergence of Governor Ahmed Aliyu as the governorship candidate of the All Progressives Congress (APC) for the 2027 governorship election in Sokoto State has set the stage for what may become one of the most politically intense contests in the state. The governor's political journey has been closely tied to the influence of former governor and current Senator Aliyu Magatakarda Wamakko, widely regarded as the undisputed political godfather of the APC structure in Sokoto State.

Since his victory in 2023, Aliyu has largely governed under the protective umbrella of Wamakko's political machinery, a factor that helped stabilise the administration during its early years and neutralise internal party resistance. The governor's successful acquisition of the APC second-term ticket therefore did not come as a surprise to many observers. Within Sokoto APC, there was hardly any visible opposition capable of confronting the combined authority of the governor and Wamakko. The absence of internal rebellion demonstrated the extent to which the APC leadership structure in Sokoto has become centralised around loyalty, continuity and political survival.

The challenge before Governor Aliyu is fundamentally different from the battle he fought in 2023. At that time, he campaigned as an opposition challenger seeking to reclaim power from the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) administration led by then governor Aminu Waziri Tambuwal. The APC successfully capitalised on public frustration, elite divisions and the influence of Wamakko's political structure to stage a dramatic return to power.

Today, Aliyu is no longer an opposition candidate promising change. He is now the incumbent governor whose administration will be subjected to direct public scrutiny. Elections involving incumbents are often determined less by promises and more by measurable governance outcomes.

But supporters of Governor Aliyu argue that his administration has made visible progress in infrastructure renewal, urban road rehabilitation, payment of inherited liabilities, rural interventions and social welfare support. The administration has consistently projected itself as people-oriented and committed to restoring governance after years of alleged neglect under the PDP.

The government's media machinery has aggressively amplified these achievements, portraying Aliyu as a governor focused on grassroots development and administrative stability. In many parts of Sokoto metropolis, residents acknowledge improvements in road construction and public sector responsiveness. These projects may provide the APC with tangible campaign materials ahead of 2027.

Senior Special Assistant to the governor on Inter-party Matters, Yakubu Maccido, said he was aware that opposition figures are of no march to the governor in the forthcoming election. According to him, those who were seeing themselves as the bigwigs of the African Democratic Party (ADC) or the Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP) today were at one point political followers of the APC leader in the state-Wamakko.

"Is it Aminu Waziri Tambuwal, Yusuf Suleiman, Faruk Malami Yabo, and the rest? They are of no march to either Senator Wamakko or the governor himself. So, there is no feeling of heat anywhere as far as the 2027 governorship election is concerned." Maccido asserts.

However, political observers said governance perception in Sokoto extends beyond talk shows or wordings alone. For the opposition, unresolved challenges such as the continuous socio-economic difficulties and insecurity in some rural communities are providing fertile political grounds for them to secure votes for victory.

The PDP, despite losing power in 2023, remains a formidable political force in Sokoto. The party still commands loyal structures across several local councils and maintains deep-rooted influence among traditional political blocs that have not fully aligned with the APC. More importantly, the PDP perhaps understands Sokoto's electoral psychology better than any other opposition party in the state.

Historically, Sokoto politics has rarely been a one-sided affair. The rivalry between the APC and the African Democratic Party (ADC) in the state is deeply entrenched and often fiercely competitive. Electoral outcomes are frequently shaped not only by party popularity, but also by elite negotiations, regional loyalties, religious influence and strategic alliances. This explains why the opposition cannot be dismissed merely because Governor Aliyu has secured his party's ticket.



One major threat to the governor's re-election ambition lies in the possibility of opposition unity. If the ADC succeeds in reconciling internal grievances and presents a strong, credible and energetic candidate, the 2027 governorship race could become highly competitive. The opposition's greatest advantage would be its ability to transform the election into a referendum on governance performance rather than political loyalty.

Although Wamakko remains enormously influential, there is an emerging demographic of younger voters increasingly questioning the long-standing dominance of traditional political structures. Many youths are becoming more issue-driven, particularly on matters relating to employment, education, transparency and economic opportunity.

This demographic shift may not completely dismantle established political networks, but it introduces a new electoral uncertainty. Younger voters are less emotionally attached to old political rivalries and may respond more to practical governance outcomes than party history.

Governor Aliyu's political survival, therefore, depends heavily on whether he can successfully redefine himself beyond the image of being merely Wamakko's political successor. To secure re-election convincingly, he must project independent leadership capacity and establish a governance identity that resonates personally with voters.

## APC In Nasarawa On Voyage To Self-Destruction, Ex-Spokesman Douglas Warns

From Adamu Abuh, Abuja

A former Publicity Secretary of the All Progressives Congress (APC) in Nasarawa State, High Chief Otaru Douglas, has warned that the ruling party is heading towards a major internal crisis following what he described as a manipulative primary election process that has triggered widespread discontent, resignations and defections among members.

Douglas, who also served as Chairman of the Conference of APC State Publicity Secretaries (CAPs), made the allegations in a strongly-worded statement in which he accused the state leadership of abandoning internal democracy and alienating key stakeholders.

According to him, the recent wave of defections and resignations witnessed across the state was a direct consequence of the conduct of the party's primary election and earlier congresses.

"Over the past week, we witnessed the burning of brooms, the symbol of the APC, in Lafia and several other local government areas. Foundation members and stakeholders of the party have been defecting en masse to other political parties in reaction to the injustices and manipulation that marred the recently held primary election," Douglas said.

He added: "That exercise negated democratic principles and violated the guidelines set by the National Working Committee of the party."

The former spokesman said he was not merely commenting as an observer but as one of the founding members of the party in the state who had served in several capacities.

"This wave of resignations does not exclude me. I am not a bystander. I was in the nucleus of the party from its foundation. I served the party as State Publicity Secretary and in various other capacities," he stated.

Douglas said the current crisis was avoidable, claiming that warning signs had been evident for years but were ignored by the party leadership.

"As the image-bearer of the party and especially as National Chairman of the Conference of APC Publicity Secretaries, I saw it coming. Ugly events during the e-membership registration, ward and local government congresses were hijacked by the overlords of the party."

He alleged that under the watch of Governor Abdullahi Sule, whom he described as the leader of the party in the state, party processes were compromised.



"Under the watch of the Governor, who is expectedly the leader of the party, the process was abused. That abuse is the genesis of the current debacle," he said.

Douglas further claimed that his attempts to alert the party leadership to the looming crisis were met with hostility.

"As a critical stakeholder, I raised the alarm in several press statements and petitions to the leadership of the party, pointing out the early warning signs. I was ignored. In fact, I was vindictively removed from office because of my critical stance against the State Chairman's cruelty and his disregard for stakeholders."

He alleged that his removal was connected to efforts to manipulate party structures ahead of the primaries.

The former spokesman warned that more party members could leave in the coming weeks unless the national leadership intervenes.

"In the coming days, the party will witness more resignations and mass defections by stakeholders and members if the President and the National Working Committee fail to move urgently to save the party from the high-handedness and insensitivity of Governor Abdullahi Sule and the State Chairman, Dr. Aliyu Bello."

Responding to claims that the defections were being orchestrated by powerful political interests, Douglas insisted that members were leaving voluntarily.

"One fact is clear: the decision of members to resign was neither forced nor influenced by anybody. We are dissenting voices who have been overwhelmed by the gross abuse of the electoral process and the mercantile posture of the party leadership."

A major source of grievance, according to him, was what he described as the arbitrary disqualification of aspirants during the primary election.

"The last primary election was marred by questionable disqualifications. Aspirants who paid millions of naira from their hard-earned resources were disenfranchised without refunds, while dissenting voices were silenced," he alleged.

He further claimed that some aspirants were cleared during screening exercises only to be disqualified later.

"It is fraudulent and immoral that after advertising the sale of nomination forms, many aspirants purchased them, went through screening and were certified as viable candidates, only to be later disqualified through questionable processes orchestrated by the State Working Committee."

According to Douglas, the development had weakened confidence in the party and could have electoral consequences. "This injustice does not only destroy internal democracy in the state. It alienates the very people who deliver votes in their respective wards and units. If left unchecked, it will certainly affect the President's chances of securing majority votes in Nasarawa State during the general election."

He also alleged that reports from across the state's 13 local government areas pointed to widespread dissatisfaction with the primary process.

"Credible reports across the 13 LGAs indicate that the Nasarawa APC primaries are mired in controversy, with allegations that results were manufactured from Government House to serve narrow interests. This erodes confidence and damages the credibility of the entire process."

Douglas accused the state leadership of treating the party as a private enterprise rather than a democratic institution.

"The State Chairman appears to be running the party machinery as a private enterprise rather than a platform for collective participation. A political party belongs to its members, not to any individual."

He also blamed what he described as inflammatory remarks by party leaders for worsening tensions within the APC.

"Nasarawa APC has become an opposition party to itself. Leaders speak garrulously without regard for public sentiment. Instead of mending fences through persuasion and internal conflict resolution, they engage in trends that de-market the party."

According to him, comments allegedly attributed to senior party figures have further alienated members. "The resultant effect is the bewitching wave of resignations by stakeholders and members," he said.

Douglas expressed concern that the national leadership appeared unconcerned about the developments. "Sadly, the National Chairman and the Presidency appear relaxed while these shenanigans deconstruct the party's chances ahead of the general election. The APC in Nasarawa is on a voyage to self-destruction."

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# Femi Osofisan At 80: Birthdays Are Not For Dying

By **Sola Adeyemi**

ON June 16, 2026, Femi Osofisan turns 80.

In a country where cultural memory is often fragile and where the arts struggle for institutional support, this milestone carries a significance that goes beyond personal celebration. It becomes a moment for national reflection. It becomes an opportunity to consider the meaning of a life spent in service to imagination, scholarship, and public conscience.

The phrase that best frames this moment comes from Osofisan himself. In 1982, he wrote a work titled *Birthdays Are Not for Dying* as part of *The Visitors* experimental television project for the Broadcasting Corporation of Oyo State Television in Ibadan and Ogun State Television in Abeokuta, in collaboration with the Unibadan Performing Company. The title is both a declaration and a philosophy. It suggests that a birthday is not a retreat into nostalgia but a renewal of purpose. It invites us to look at the living force of a writer who has shaped Nigerian theatre and letters for about six decades.

The question that naturally arises is simple. What is Femi Osofisan's legacy at eighty? What is the one enduring gift he offers to younger Nigerians who must now navigate a world that is more fractured, more impatient, and more cynical than the one he inherited? The answer is not a single achievement or a single text. It is a way of thinking about art and society. It is the conviction that art is a civic instrument. It is the belief that theatre and literature are tools for social repair, ethical reflection, democratic accountability, and compassion. Everything he has written, taught, staged, or fought for flows from this belief.

**A Life In Many Genres**

OSOFISAN as a playwright has written more than sixty plays, a body of work that stands among the most extensive in modern African drama. His plays have travelled across continents. They have been staged in Europe, North America, Asia, and across Africa. They have interrogated power, mocked tyranny, mourned injustice, and celebrated the resilience of ordinary people. His versatility is not a matter of restless ambition. It is a deliberate strategy. Osofisan has always believed that the writer must reach different publics and speak in different registers.

But to describe Osofisan only as a playwright would be to diminish the scale of his achievement. He is a novelist, essayist, journalist, critic, and poet. Under the name Okinba Launko, he has published poetry that blends lyricism with political insight. Whilst his poems allow for meditation, his novels allow for introspection. The essays rope all these together in an enduring debate with other world writers.

Long before he became a household name, Osofisan was already a prodigy of the academy. In 1963, he won the 1st T. M. Aluko Prize for Literature as a secondary school student at Government College , Ibadan, and two years later, won the 1st Western Nigeria Broadcasting Service (WNBS) Independence Prize with the essay "Five Years Ago". Little wonder then that he was awarded the Western State and Federal Government of Nigeria's Scholarships to study French at the University of Ibadan.

His intellectual journey took him from the University of Ibadan to the Sorbonne in Paris, where he conducted research for his doctoral thesis before submitting it at Ibadan. His supervisors were Abiola Irele and Dapo Adelugba, two giants of African literary criticism. Their influence is visible in the rigour, cosmopolitanism, and cultural depth of his work. What is remarkable is the quality of his scholarship; Osofisan taught in three departments at the University of Ibadan – Modern European Languages, English Literature, and Theatre Arts. Few scholars have moved so fluidly across disciplinary boundaries, and fewer still have done so with such authority. In 1980, at the age of thirty-four, he became a full Professor. This achievement placed him among the youngest in the university's history.

His academic career is a record of intellectual generosity. Generations of students have passed through his classrooms, with many of them now famous as playwrights, directors, critics, teachers, and cultural administrators. They carry with them the imprint of his discipline, his humour, and his insistence that art must always confront the world. His teaching style is remembered for its clarity, its energy, and its refusal to accept lazy thinking. He challenged students to read widely, to think critically, and to understand that the arts are not separate from society but deeply entangled with it.

**The Theatre-Maker: Kakaun Sela Kompany**

BEFORE the fame and before the awards, there was the stage. In the 1970s, Osofisan founded Kakaun Sela Kompany, a performing troupe created to produce his plays with artistic independence and communal energy. It was a bold experiment in ensemble theatre long before such models became fashionable in Nigeria. The troupe brought together some of the most gifted performers of the era. Among them were Jimi Solanke, whose voice could fill a room with warmth, Demola Onibonokuta, a master of physical theatre, Yinka Ige, Demola Adeyemi, Didi Unu Odigie, Irene Orubo, and John (Johnny) Nwaobi, actors of rare emotional intelligence, and Tunji Oyelana, the musician whose compositions became inseparable from Osofisan's dramaturgy.

Kakaun Sela Kompany was not simply a theatre group. It was a cultural movement. It staged plays in open spaces, experimented with music and dance, and treated theatre as a living civic ritual. Many of the ensemble practices now common in Nigerian theatre owe something to the innovations of this troupe. As Media and Public Relations guru Ohi Alegbe once remarked, the performance ethos was so simple that an entire play's cast and crew, in 1984, toured universities in the Southeast with a Volkswagen beetle car. They performed *The Oriki of a Grasshopper* and T*he Engagement.*

Osofisan's relationship with journalism is often overshadowed by his literary fame, but it is central to his identity. He began his career as a journalist and later became one of the first board members of *The Guardian* when the newspaper was founded in 1983. His involvement helped shape the editorial ethos of a publication that would become a cornerstone of Nigerian public discourse. Throughout his life, he has used essays and columns to interrogate governance, democracy, corruption, and civic responsibility. He writes with the conviction that the intellectual must speak truth to power, even when power is indifferent or hostile. In a media landscape increasingly dominated by noise and sensationalism, Osofisan's example is a reminder that journalism can still be a force for clarity and conscience.

**Leadership in the Literary Community**

BEYOND his writing and teaching, Osofisan has played a crucial role in shaping Nigeria's literary institutions. He served as President of the Association of Nigerian Authors and later as Vice President for West Africa of the Pan African Writers Association. These positions were not ceremonial. They allowed him to mentor younger writers, advocate for the arts, and strengthen the fragile infrastructure of literary production. His leadership style is quiet but firm. He does not seek the spotlight, yet he has been instrumental in creating spaces where others can shine. Many of today's prominent Nigerian writers across drama, fiction, and criticism trace their early encouragement and mentoring to him.

Over the decades, Osofisan has received numerous awards both national and international. Among them is the Thalia Prize for Theatre Critics in 2016, which made him the first African to receive the honour. His plays have been staged in major theatres around the world. He has held visiting professorships, delivered keynote lectures, and been celebrated in festivals and conferences. Yet he remains characteristically modest about these achievements. For him, awards are acknowledgements rather than destinations. The work itself, the writing, the teaching, and the mentoring, is what matters.

**The Yoruba Imagination**

ONE of Osofisan's most significant contributions is his transformation of Yoruba performance traditions into a global intellectual resource. His plays draw on Yoruba cosmology with its complex moral universe, on masquerade traditions with their fluidity between the living and the ancestral, on oriki with its celebration of identity through praise and memory, and on communal ethics where the individual is always accountable to the collective. He does not merely borrow from Yoruba culture. He reinterprets it and uses it to interrogate contemporary political realities. In his hands, Yoruba performance becomes a lens through which to examine corruption, tyranny, memory, and justice. This cultural grounding is not nostalgic. It is strategic. It allows him to speak to global audiences while remaining rooted in local histories.

**The One Enduring Legacy: Theatre As A Civic Instrument**

IF we must identify one legacy that captures the essence of Osofisan's contribution, it is the conviction that art is a civic instrument. In a society where the arts are often dismissed as entertainment or luxury, Osofisan insists that theatre is a public square. It is where citizens confront power, where communities negotiate memory, and where the nation rehearses its moral choices. His plays do not offer easy answers. They provoke and unsettle. They insist that ordinary people are not spectators in national life but actors who are responsible, implicated, and capable of change. This is the legacy he leaves to younger Nigerians. It is a theatre of conscience. It is a literature of resistance. It is a belief that storytelling can rebuild society. It is a commitment to truth, however uncomfortable. It is a refusal to surrender imagination to despair.

**Influence On Younger Generations**

OSOFISAN'S influence on younger writers and artists is profound. His students populate universities, theatres, media houses, and cultural institutions across Nigeria and beyond. His dramaturgical techniques, including satire, adaptation, mythic reframing, and ensemble performance, have shaped contemporary Nigerian theatre. But his influence is not merely technical. It is ethical. He has taught generations to see art as responsibility rather than ornament, as engagement rather than escape. He has shown that creativity is a form of citizenship.

**At 80, The Work Continues**

AND so we return to the line that opened this reflection: birthdays are not for dying. At eighty, Femi Osofisan is not a relic to be admired from a distance but a living force, a restless imagination, and a conscience that refuses to be quiet. His legacy is not a single achievement but a way of being in the world. It is a way of thinking that is curious, critical, compassionate, and committed to the belief that Nigeria can still imagine itself anew. As we celebrate him, we are reminded that the work continues. The stage is still open. The story is still unfolding. The next generation, armed with his example, must now step forward to write the chapters he has prepared them for.



Osofisan

# Broadcast Content Across Borders

Compiled by Shaibu Husseini

**Durban Filmmart Build Bridges With International Partnerships**

THE Durban FilmMart Institute (DFMI) continues to expand opportunities for filmmakers, film critics and industry professionals through strategic international partnerships that support talent development, industry access and cross-border collaboration announcements made during the 2026 Cannes Film Festival highlighted two significant initiatives that will further advance support for emerging African film critics and Palestinian filmmakers engaging with the international marketplace. At the Egyptian Pavilion during the Cannes Film Festival, a new collaboration between the Cairo International Film Festival (CIFF), the International Federation of Film Critics (FIPRESCI) and the Durban FilmMart Institute was announced during FIPRESCI's annual reception. The partnership will see FIPRESCI select an outstanding participant from the Talents Durban Press programme at Durban FilmMart 2026 to receive an award presented by CIFF. The selected critic will be invited to attend the Cairo International Film Festival, cover the festival's activities and contribute to its English-language daily publication. The initiative represents an important step in strengthening film criticism across the African continent and creating greater opportunities for emerging critical voices to engage with international film culture and discourse. Managed by DFMI since 2019 the Talents Durban forms part of the global Berlinale Talents network and supports emerging African filmmakers and critics through mentorship, skills development and industry engagement. The Talent Press stream provides a dedicated platform for developing film criticism and nurturing the next generation of African film journalists and critics. Speaking during the announcement, DFMI Director Magdalene Reddy welcomed the collaboration as a meaningful investment into film criticism, a fading art that the film industry desperately needs to revive. The Palestine Film Institute (PFI) has also announced the projects selected for its 2026 Showcase at Durban FilmMart, marking the fourth consecutive year of collaboration between the two organisations. Four Palestinian feature films currently in development will be presented to international producers, festival programmers, funders and industry representatives attending Durban FilmMart 2026. The Showcase forms part of PFI's broader mission to develop, promote and preserve Palestinian cinema while creating sustainable international opportunities for Palestinian filmmakers and producers. The selected projects for Durban Filmmart are Within Sight And Sound by Assia Boundaoui, What The Sand Remembers by Mahmoud Abu Ghalwa, On The Sea Road by Fitnat Waked and Echo From The Unsung by Raji Al Jaru, Sa'ed Al Jaru, Ash Moniz As Durban FilmMart 2026 approaches, these partnerships underscore the importance of building sustainable creative ecosystems that support storytellers, critics and industry professionals from Africa and across the Global South.



Lagos International Film and Cinema Convention founder, Theophilus Akatugba

Dr. Nnamdi Ndu

DFMI Director, Magdalene Reddy

**Mozambique Wins Big At The Pitcher Awards 2026**

THE Pitcher Awards, the pan-African benchmark for creative excellence, has announced the winners of its 2026 edition, celebrating groundbreaking work from across the continent and beyond. This year marks a historic milestone as the festival welcomed entries from Mozambique and the United States of America for the very first time, underscoring its expanding global reach and commitment to celebrating creativity without borders. Reflecting on this year's achievements, Dr. Nnamdi Ndu, Chairman of the Pitcher Festival, said: "The 2026 Pitcher Awards showcase the extraordinary evolution of African creativity. This year's winners demonstrate a boldness, cultural depth, and technical mastery that continue to elevate our region on the global stage. Welcoming new countries into the competition—and seeing them excel—reinforces our belief that creativity truly has no borders." Gold and Grand Prix winners were unveiled during the official streaming premiere, while all Shortlist, Bronze, and Silver recognitions are available on the festival website. The Grand Prix was awarded to Culture - Corporate Image & Reputation Management — NoVita by The Bar Africa for NuVita Biscuits, Kenya and Heritage - Outdoor Ambient & Installations — MozaMbique Has 2M by Create Mozambique for 2M Beer, Mozambique. The gold award winners include Care - Public Health & Safety — La caravane d'excision – The FGM Caravan by L'Agence X for Mouvement femmes et paroles, Côte d'Ivoire, Channel - Use of Media — MozaMbique Has 2M by Create Mozambique for 2M Beer, Mozambique, and Culture - Corporate Image & Reputation Management — Portrait of a Nation by Create Mozambique for Millennium Bim, Mozambique. The entertainment gold award was awarded to-Entertainment Film — First Beach by Dentsu Creative for Corona Africa, South Africa while the effectiveness gold award went to Business Impact — 2M SAMMA FRESH by Create Mozambique for 2M Beer, Mozambique. The 2026 special award winners include Digital Agency of the Year: digitXplus, Nigeria, Media Agency of the Year: PHD Nigeria and Advertising Agency of the Year: Create Mozambique. The 2026 edition highlighted the imagination, discipline, and creative excellence shaping the future of African storytelling. Full winners list can be sourced at www.pitcherfestival.com

**Lagos International Film And Cinema Convention To Hold In July**

LIFACC (Lagos International Film and Cinema Convention), founded by Theophilus Akatugba, holds between July 15 and 16 in Lagos, Nigeria. The yearly event is the premier platform for African filmmakers, cinema exhibitors, and investors to collaborate and drive the continent's creative economy. The convention features masterclasses, business networking, premieres, and awards, structured for the flexibility of participants. More information on the convention can be sourced at: www.lifacc.com

# At House Of Wingz, Inimfon Celebrates Black Excellence, Culture, Deepens Dance Aesthetic

A REVIEW of Inimfon Ekpenyong Iniama's Afrofusion Performance and workshop at Roots in the House 2025

By Gregory Austin Nwakunor

THERE are theatrics in performance where dance becomes more than movement: it becomes a celebration of identity, culture, and shared joy. That, perhaps, was the atmosphere at Roots in the House, an event held on October 26, 2025 at House of Wingz, to celebrate the Black History Month, and the cultural contributions of African and Caribbean communities in Blackpool.

The event brought together artists, creatives, performers, and community members for an afternoon of connection, culture, and celebration. It provided a powerful platform for Black excellence, highlighting the artists who are shaping the local cultural landscape, inspiring others and contributing meaningfully to the community.

Among the featured performers was Inimfon Ekpenyong Iniama, whose work stood out not only as a dance performance but as a vibrant cultural offering. Through movement, music, collaboration, and audience engagement, Inimfon presented a performance that celebrated African dance, Afrofusion, joy, and the beauty of artistic connection. Inimfon offered a performance that embodied all three.



Her performance was created in collaboration with another dancer, Franklin and the talented live violinist Melika Queeley. This combination of Afro dance and live violin created a striking artistic contrast: the rhythmic energy of African movement meeting the elegance and emotional texture of the violin.

Through her choreography, she showcased the richness of African movement; through her collaboration with Frank and Queely, she demonstrated the power of artistic unity; and through her workshop, she opened the door for others to participate in the culture she represented.

The choice to perform to violin version of Rema's *Baby Come Down*, played by Melika's violin, gave the piece a familiar Afrobeats foundation while also allowing it to feel fresh, layered, and theatrical.

Queeley, as a live violinist, added another layer to the performance. Her violin did not simply accompany the dancers; it shaped the mood of the piece. The dancers' decision to move around her with controlled, supportive energy showed respect for the live musician and created moments where the audience's attention shifted toward her artistry. This made the performance feel collaborative rather than dancer-centred, and it demonstrated Inimfon's awareness of how to share the stage meaningfully.

Inimfon also led a mini workshop that invited the audience to participate directly. This transformed her role from performer to educator, allowing her not only to showcase Afro dance but also to teach and explain aspects of the culture behind it.

The workshop was beginner-friendly and inclusive. Inimfon introduced participants to Afro movements, including some trending beginner friendly steps, like; *shoki, Azonto, power blow, Guda* etc before bringing them together into a simple routine.

This approach worked well because it allowed people with little or no dance experience to feel involved and successful. The workshop did not focus on perfection; instead, it focused on participation, confidence, rhythm, and enjoyment. This also gave the audience a taste of what Inimfon's Afro dance classes which is the only Afro dance classes currently in Blackpool, feel like and her ability to teach and lead.

One of the most meaningful parts of the workshop was the way it encouraged connection between participants. At certain moments, the audience members were invited to move around, greet one another, smile, shake hands if they wanted to, and then return to formation facing the mirror. This turned the dance session into a social and communal experience. It reflected the wider purpose of Roots in the House: bringing people together through culture, creativity, and shared celebration.

The workshop educated participants about Afro dance as more than a trend. By explaining aspects of the movement and culture, Inimfon gave people a deeper appreciation of what they were learning.

This was important because Afro dance is often enjoyed globally, but its cultural roots and meanings are not always fully understood. Through her teaching, Inimfon created a space where people could enjoy the movement while also respecting its cultural background.

Audience response suggested that both sections of Inimfon's contribution were successful. The performance brought energy, colour, and excitement to the event, while the workshop gave people the chance to participate, learn, and connect. Feedback from attendees was positive, with many expressing enjoyment and appreciation for the opportunity to learn Afro movements and experience the culture in an accessible way.



Inimfon introduces participants to some of Afro movement like shoki, Azonto, power blow and Guda.



Inimfon, Melika Queeley (violin) and Franklin

Inimfon's performance at Roots in the House was a confident and meaningful presentation of Afrofusion dance. It celebrated Black excellence, honoured African culture, highlighted collaboration, and created a bridge between performance and community participation.

Her contribution to Roots in the House was not simply a performance. It was a celebration, an educational moment, and a reminder that dance can bring people together across backgrounds, experiences and generations.

# Wale Awodiya And The Challenges Of Shaping Humanity

By Remi Oyeyemi

THE value of a philosopher isn't really about producing concrete things like a scientist or engineer might—it's about shaping how we think, which quietly influences almost everything else.

At the most basic level, philosophers question assumptions. Someone like Socrates built his whole method around asking, "How do you know that?" That habit—examining beliefs instead of just inheriting them—is foundational to critical thinking, science, law, and even everyday decision-making.

Philosophers also clarify ideas that people use all the time but rarely define. Think about concepts like justice, truth, freedom, or consciousness. Immanuel Kant, for example, reshaped how we think about morality by arguing that intent and universal principles matter more than outcomes alone. Whether you agree with him or not, that framework still underpins modern debates about ethics, human rights, and responsibility.

There's also a practical side. Philosophical thinking helps with our daily choices in terms of what we do amongst ourselves. It is difficult to clearly construct the role of conscience in "philosophizing", but evidently there had to be a body of values that would serve as framework for certain expectations. What appears to be inalienable variable of philosophy is the ability to ask questions about any belief. It is not intellectually safe to characterize some beliefs as "positive" or "negative", until such has been subjected to a body of variables that the community considers as acceptable.

Thus, decision-making (weighing values, process and not just outcomes) remains one of the areas that "philosophy" has influenced our daily trajectories. Tools for the task would include but not limited to argument analysis (spotting weak logic, bias, manipulation) and meaning and purpose (what makes a life "good" or worthwhile).

It is no-gainsaying that the entire existential concept in all ramifications had been influenced by philosophy. The social systems. The economic systems. The religious systems. The political systems and many other human systems are rooted in philosophy. Ideas from thinkers like John Locke influenced modern democracy—concepts like individual rights and government by consent didn't just appear; they were argued into existence.

That said, philosophy can feel abstract or disconnected. Its "merit" depends on whether you see value in reflection versus action. A fair criticism is that philosophy doesn't always solve problems directly—it often reframes them. But that reframing can be powerful: the way a problem is understood often determines what solutions are even possible.

Philosophers don't just give answers—they improve the quality of the questions. And better questions tend to lead to better thinking everywhere else.

The extent to which this has been responsible for the emergence of AWOISM, enunciated by Obafemi Awolowo, is open to debate. Awoism as a philosophy encapsulates the focus of all its tentacles on MAN. A philosophy that identifies the challenges of MAN in his environment. And how MAN could overcome such challenges to live a successful and fulfilling life. How Awolowo has been able to "philosophise" his ideas into existence is for the science of politics and philosophy to extrapolate and decipher. That many have been advocating for the emergence of "philosopher kings" or more appropriately, "philosopher Presidents", "philosopher Prime Ministers", or simply "philosopher leaders" is very instructive. It pre-supposes that there are embedded values in those types of leaders.

This is the task that Professor Olawale Awodiya has been doing all his life. He has been asking questions on various aspects of human endeavour, and creating better thinking humans all over. He has authored fourteen books, co-authored eight others, written several Journal articles, several papers, presentations and workshops. Professor Awodiya has been "philosophizing." He has been asking questions. He has been spreading the gospel of critical thinking. He has been shaking the tables. That some of his books have been adopted as Course books in some universities on merit, without any peddling of influence whatsoever, is a testament to his depth, extent of his horizon and the panoramic nature of his vistas

Obafemi Awolowo had met the challenge of "practicality" with his own "philosophy", and through that, impacted the lives of his people transformatively and pervasively over several generations. Olawale Awodiya has chosen to answer the connectivity of his own philosophy to humanity in a slightly different way. He is impacting the lives of many in several academic institutions across the continents. From University of Lagos, Nigeria, to the Delaware State University, Delaware, USA. From Suffolk County Community College in New York to Bowie State University in Maryland, USA. From Rowan University in New Jersey to the University of District of Columbia in Washington DC. From Nassau Community College in New York to Charles Community College in Maryland and to the College of New Rochelle, in New York. A member of University Senate in many institutions

Obafemi Awolowo in his 1968 book, My Early Life, reflecting on his dedication to intellectual work and public service over hedonism, stated as follows:

"While many men in power and public office are busy carousing in the midst of women of easy virtue and men of low morals, I, as a few others like me, am busy at my desk thinking about the problems of Nigeria and proffering solutions to them. Only the deep can call to the deep."

This is the principle that Prof. Wale Awodiya has lived by all these years. His love of solitude is amazing. His affection of solitary is intriguing. His love of seclusion is breathtaking. His need for mental space is insatiable. The mental space that guarantees his "inner focus" or "companionate solitude" (being alone with one's thoughts) even when physically in a crowded place. Solitude provides him peace, gets his mind engaged constructively and approbates his mental productivity. He fits the perfect characterization as a connoisseur of recluse.

He seldom appears at ceremonies. He is social but very disciplined. Eight out of ten times, you are likely to find him in the library than in a party. He is a bookworm. He projects a complex constitution, a remix of reticence and a glowing affability. He is a warm, polite, and courteous gentleman. He makes others feel comfortable in conversation. He is hypnotizing in his succulent mien. He exudes a calm countenance. His personality is a consummation of control and coolness. He radiates a deportment of gentility. His geniality is laced with refrained enthusiasm.

As could be seen from the above, he is a very successful academic, whose influence and tentacles stream across very many reputable institutions in Nigeria and the USA. But here is a man just like the sage Obafemi Awolowo who was also a journalist. He had gone through the grind in stride and marched through the mill to become a distinguished journalist.

He has combed the field of public relations and has also become a publisher.

One made efforts to see the confluence of philosophy and journalism. A journalist acting as a philosopher would be rightly described as "philosopher journalist." As a matter of course, he bridges lived experience with intellectual inquiry, often focusing on social justice and moral failures to provide context to societal events. He merges the investigation of immediate events with the search for deeper meaning, treating journalism as "philosophy practiced under exposure". He uses the tools of reporting—research, interviews, and narrative—to uncover universal truths and ethical implications rather than merely reporting facts, acting as both a guide and mirror of their age. This responsibility requires mastering judgments, discerning truth from propaganda, and maintaining a high standard of moral responsibility to the audience.

But when a philosopher decides to act as a journalist, the challenges become a little skewed. It behooves him to bring deep conceptual analysis, ethical rigor, and a focus on underlying principles to news reporting, transforming "what happened" into "what it means." He bridges the gap between abstract ideas and daily events, enhancing the depth of opinion pieces and providing context that identifies the core ethical or social failures in a story. It becomes his duty to clarify key concepts, cutting through jargon and buzzwords that often block political progress, ensuring precise, ethical language in reporting. It becomes his responsibility to analyze the ethical dimensions of crises, such as evaluating the justness of wars or identifying moral failures within criminal justice systems, focusing only on immediate facts, connecting current events to broader, often universal or eternal, questions about human existence. Most importantly, he brings structural discipline to argument-driven journalism (editorials), ensuring that arguments for policy or social change are sound and well-constructed.

This is what Professor Awodiya has brought to the table. The combination of these perspectives as his framework has gratified his trajectory as a journalist, authentic writer, public relations expert, communications guru and a publisher of note. From his earliest days as a Script Writer at Olu Holloway Limited, Lagos, to being the Sub-Editor at the Concord Newspapers in Ikeja, Lagos, and Regional Public Relations Officer to NITEL, he has trudged the thick forest of pristine professionalism, meandering through torn and roses. In fact, and indeed, many of his fourteen books are about communication in varied ramifications. He has examined the subject from every angle possible and has laid the foundation for the coming generation of intellectuals in that special field. As a publisher, his monthly publication of Nigeria University Times, has garnered qualitative reputation among those who seek to know the latest about the Nigerian tertiary education.

Prof. Wale Awodiya is authentically autochthonous to Ijesaland. There is no mixed blood in his veins. Chief James Esan Awodiya was his paternal grandfather and was the Odole of Ilesa from 1951 -1973. Chief Esan Awodiya was a two-time regent, the only person to have such honour in Ijesa history. He was regent 1956 – 1957 before Owa Obokun Ogunmokun Fiwajoye Biladu III was installed in 1957 and regent from 1963-1966 before Owa Obokun Adeniran Olatunji Agunlejika II, was crowned in 1966. Odole Esan Awodiya was married to Princess Aina Awodiya, (nee Fowowe). Odole Awodiya's chieftaincy compound at Ifofin till today is an ode to history and heritage. It remains a veritable rendition of our culture and tradition in real time.

Chief Oladeinde Awodiya was Prof. Wale Awodiya's father. He had a reputation for taste and class. Urbane and sophisticated. Genial and genteel. Always well-groomed with a carriage of nobility and aristocracy. He was also renowned as the General Manager of the Wesley Guild Hospital, Ilesa. He was the Hospital Administrator for 35 years, a record that still remains unbroken. His house at Omiiru, Ilesa, remains an edification of the dalliance of tradition and modernity. A direct expression of pride in Yoruba culture in the warm embrace of modernity. The house was the hive of European doctors who worked at Wesley Hospital then. He was the Baba -Ijo of Methodist Church, Ifofin, Ilesa.

Madam Bukola Abeni Awodiya (nee Fasugbe) was the mother of Prof. Wale Awodiya. She was a scion of Pa Joseph Fasugbe family of Okesa, Ilesa. Madam Ojuolape Fasugbe, wife of Pa Joseph Fasugbe, was herself, the daughter of Pa Amodu also of Okesa, Ilesa. Madam Abeni Awodiya was a very formidable business woman. She was intimidatingly successful. She had distributorship of the International Breweries, Ilesa and Ewekoro Cement Factory. She was wholesale marketer of Kerosene and Flower in Ibadan. An astute leader, Madam Abeni Awodiya was for several years, Iya-Egbe of Cement Sellers Association of Challenge, Ringroad and Jericho, Ibadan.

Coming from this kind of beautiful and very distinguished background to become a very sound philosopher is very interesting. As pinpointed above, Prof. Awodiya shares a lot of things in common, with the Sage, the greatest Yoruba son since Oduduwa, Chief Obafemi Awolowo in his trajectory. He also shares the same common trajectory with Friedrich Engels (1820-1895), a German philosopher, social and political theorist, journalist, and businessman. Prof. Awodiya has the same background of some wealth like Engels. Friedrich Engels authored or co-authored at least 25 to 30 significant works, including books, major pamphlets, and posthumously edited volumes. While the exact count varies by how historians categorize his numerous essays and long-form polemics, his most vital contributions are well-documented.

Professor Olawale Awodiya is in good companies. His quest to shape the minds, to shape humanity via the asking of vital and critical questions would outlive him. Unwittingly, he is enshrining his footprints in the sands of immortality.



Awodiya

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from the **Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary,**
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Ma, this distinguished honour recognises the faith, integrity, wisdom and commitment to service that define your life and leadership.

For those of us privileged to work with you, it is also a recognition of the values you bring to our organisation every day with grace, wisdom, and joy. You lead with compassion, humility, and an unwavering commitment to excellence. You remind us, and your leadership style demonstrate, that leadership is ultimately about stewardship and that success is most meaningful when it creates opportunities for others, strengthens communities, and contributes to nation building.

Thank you.

CONGRATULATIONS ON THIS WELL-DESERVED HONOUR.

*Signed:*

BOARD, MANAGEMENT AND STAFF

**Dr. Seinye O.B.Lulu-Briggs,**
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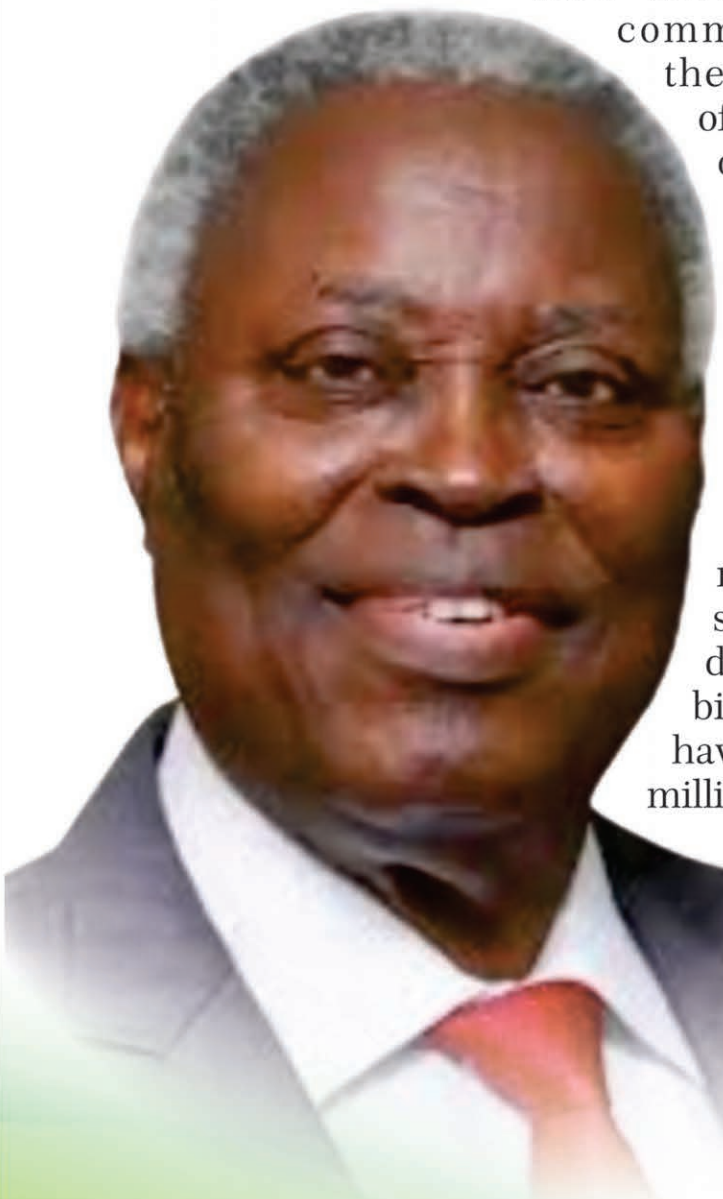
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# CONGRATULATORY MESSAGE TO PASTOR W. F. KUMUYI AT 85

On behalf of the Founding Fathers and the National Advisory Council (NAC) of the Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria (PFN), we heartily congratulate our highly esteemed father in the faith, Pastor William Folorunso Kumuyi, on the joyous occasion of his 85th Birthday Anniversary.

We give all glory to Almighty God for His faithfulness in preserving and sustaining you through eight and a half decades of a life devoted to holiness, integrity, discipleship, and unwavering commitment to the preaching of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.



Your exemplary leadership, profound teaching ministry, and steadfast dedication to biblical truth have impacted millions of lives across Nigeria and the nations of the world. Through your sacrificial service and unwavering passion for soul-winning, you have remained a shining light and a worthy example to generations of believers and ministers.

As it is written: "The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon." (Psalm 92:12).

As you celebrate this remarkable milestone, we join your family, the leadership and members of the Deeper Christian Life Ministry, and the global Body of Christ in thanking God for your invaluable contributions to the advancement of His Kingdom. Your life continues to inspire faith, discipline, humility, and total dependence on God.

We pray that the Lord will grant you renewed strength, divine health, abundant grace, and many more fruitful years of impactful service in His vineyard. May your latter years be filled with greater glory, deeper revelations, and increasing testimonies of God's goodness.

Congratulations, Sir, on this historic celebration.

Happy 85th Birthday, Pastor W. F. Kumuyi!



**His Eminence,**
**Bishop Francis Wale Oke**
**National President,**
**Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria (PFN)**



# Dissecting **NECO's 25 Years Of Persistence** In Exams Transformation

**The National Examinations Council (NECO) has lived up to expectations, examining over 35 million candidates in 25 years and proving itself as a reliable examination body with international recognition despite initial challenges and doubts. However, sustaining public trust will depend on its ability to maintain integrity, improve service delivery and adapt to emerging global trends in educational assessment, OWEDE AGBAJILEKA writes.**

A QUARTER of a century after it was established to provide credible and accessible examinations for Nigerian students, the National Examinations Council (NECO) has emerged as one of the country's most influential educational institutions, having registered more than 35 million candidates in 25 years.

The silver jubilee held recently in Abuja was not merely an anniversary ceremony, but a moment of reflection on the remarkable journey of an institution that has become central to the nation's educational development.

The colourful event attracted policymakers, academics, school administrators, examination experts and stakeholders from across the education sector. Vice President Kashim Shettima led dignitaries at the celebration, which also had in attendance the Minister of Education, Dr. Tunji Alausa; former Head of State, Gen. Abdulsalami Abubakar; Niger State Governor, Umaru Bago; Speaker of the House of Representatives, Tajudeen Abbas; Etsu Nupe and Chairman, Niger State Council of Traditional Rulers, Dr. Yahaya Abubakar; officials of tertiary institutions, heads of education agencies and former NECO leaders who gathered to celebrate the growth and resilience of the Council.

Established in 1999 by the Federal Government, NECO was created to address growing concerns about examination access and credibility in the country. Before its establishment, there had been widespread agitation for a national examination body that would better respond to Nigeria's educational realities and provide wider opportunities for students seeking secondary school certification. From its modest beginning, the Council gradually expanded its operations and influence across the federation and now conducts examinations in eight countries, including Benin Republic, Togo, Niger Republic, Equatorial Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire, Saudi Arabia, United Kingdom and Gabon.

Today, NECO conducts the Senior School Certificate Examination, the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) and the National Common Entrance Examination for admission into Federal Unity Colleges. Over the years, its certificates have gained recognition within and outside Nigeria, while millions of candidates have relied on the Council for academic progression into higher institutions and professional careers.

At the anniversary celebration, the Registrar and Chief Executive of NECO, Prof. Ibrahim Dantani Wushishi, revealed that more than 35 million candidates had participated in examinations conducted by the Council within its 25 years of existence. The figure, according to stakeholders, reflects the confidence Nigerians have continued to place in the institution despite the challenges confronting the education sector.

Many observers believe the Council's journey has been one of persistence and steady transformation. In its early years, NECO battled skepticism, operational difficulties and concerns over examination malpractice. However, through reforms and institutional strengthening, it gradually established itself as a credible alternative in the nation's examination landscape.

The achievements recorded under the current leadership of Prof. Wushishi have further strengthened the Council's reputation. Since assuming office in 2021, the Professor of Science Education has focused on modernising examination administration and improving operational efficiency. Under his leadership, NECO intensified the deployment of digital technology in registration, result processing and examination monitoring.

The Council also strengthened measures against examination malpractice through biometric verification and improved supervision systems. Stakeholders say these reforms have enhanced transparency and increased public confidence in the integrity of NECO examinations.

Another major achievement recorded during Wushishi's tenure is the improvement in the timely release of examination results. Candidates and parents who once complained about delays now receive results within a shorter period, thereby reducing anxiety and easing admission processes into tertiary institutions. The Registrar has also prioritised staff welfare and professional development, ensuring that workers are better equipped to handle evolving challenges in educational assessment.

Beyond administrative reforms, Wushishi has continued to advocate stronger collaboration among education agencies and stakeholders to improve standards within the sector. Under his leadership, the Council has expanded its visibility and reinforced its role as a national institution committed to fairness, integrity and innovation.

The current achievements of NECO are built on foundations laid by previous registrars and chief executives who guided the institution through different phases of growth. From the pioneer Registrar, Emeritus Professor Dibu Ojerinde, whose tenure (1999 to 2007) is widely remembered for stabilising the institution and establishing operational structures that helped it gain nationwide acceptance to Prof. Promise Okpala (2007 to 2014), Prof. Monday Joshua (2014 to 2018), Prof. Charles Uwakwe (2018 to 2020), Abubakar Gana (2020, acting), Prof. Godswill Obioma (2020 to 2021) and Ebikibina Ogborodi (2021, acting), each administration strengthened the credibility, reach and operational capacity of the examination body, paving the way for the reforms and expansion currently being witnessed under the leadership of Wushishi.

Speaking at the silver jubilee celebration in Abuja, Vice President Kashim Shettima urged the Council to deepen its commitment to integrity in examination administration and strengthen security mechanisms to safeguard the credibility of assessments.

Represented by his Senior Special Assistant on Legal and Compliance Matters, Bashir Maidugu, the Vice President also called for the transparent and timely release of results, stressing that NECO's services must remain accessible and affordable to every Nigerian child regardless of background.

Shettima further encouraged the Council to expand professional development opportunities for educators and examiners, while leveraging technology and strategic partnerships to drive innovation, especially in the era of Artificial Intelligence. He commended NECO's achievements over the last 25 years, describing the milestone as a reflection of national resolve and confidence in the potential of Nigerian children.

In his keynote address, the Minister of Education, Alausa, said NECO had performed exceptionally well in reducing examination malpractice by 90 per cent through deliberate reforms in examination administration and security. He announced that the Council would begin Computer-Based Examinations (CBE) in some schools later this year, with full migration by 2027 to further strengthen examination integrity and enable real-time monitoring of candidates.

> *With increasing emphasis on digital innovation, transparency and international collaboration, many education experts say NECO's next chapter will require even greater commitment to excellence to meet the aspirations of millions of Nigerian students who depend on the institution for academic and professional advancement.*

Alausa noted that NECO's focus on secure examination processes, reliable scoring and timely release of results had restored public confidence in national certification. He added that investments in examiner training, psychometrics, quality assurance and technology-driven systems had strengthened operational standards, while the expansion of examination centres and subject offerings had improved access and inclusiveness across the country.

Speaking earlier, Wushishi said the Council had grown from its early challenges of limited public trust and inadequate infrastructure to become an internationally recognised examination body. He attributed the progress to transparent procedures, online registration, internet-based result release and sustained collaboration with stakeholders within and outside Nigeria.

Wushishi also highlighted several infrastructural and technological achievements, including the construction of offices in 10 states, establishment of a standard science laboratory, procurement of operational vehicles and development of digital platforms such as the NECO e-verify application, e-library and data analysis studio.

He paid tribute to former heads of state, Ministers of Education, Governing Board members and past Registrars for laying the foundation for the Council's growth, while reaffirming NECO's commitment to enhancing security protocols, expanding e-services and improving access for learners in underserved communities.

While commending NECO for expanding educational opportunities and making meaningful contributions to national development through credible and reliable assessment systems, other speakers called for stronger collaboration among examination bodies across the country. They also stressed the need for sustained investment in educational infrastructure, technology and manpower development to ensure the Council remains competitive in an increasingly digital world.

As part of activities marking the celebration, a lecture titled 'Educational Assessment in a Changing World: Innovations, Challenges and Opportunities for Africa' was delivered by Emeritus Prof. Pius Augustine Ike (PAI) Obanya. A book titled 'Twenty-Five Years of NECO: Evolution, Challenges and Contributions to Nigeria's Educational Assessment System' was also unveiled.

For many Nigerians, the milestone of registering over 35 million candidates within 25 years represents more than a numerical achievement; but reflects the trust families, schools and institutions have continued to place in the Council as a reliable examination body capable of shaping the educational future of millions of young people.

The journey of NECO over the last 25 years reflects the broader story of Nigeria's determination to strengthen its education system through credible and inclusive assessment. From a modest national examination body established amid skepticism and operational challenges, the Council has grown into a major institution whose certificates are recognised beyond the country's borders. Its expansion in infrastructure, adoption of technology and commitment to reducing examination malpractice have continued to position it as a critical pillar in the nation's educational development.

As the Council looks ahead, stakeholders believe sustaining public trust will depend on its ability to maintain integrity, improve service delivery and adapt to emerging global trends in educational assessment. With increasing emphasis on digital innovation, transparency and international collaboration, many education experts say NECO's next chapter will require even greater commitment to excellence to meet the aspirations of millions of Nigerian students who depend on the institution for academic and professional advancement.

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SPECIAL FOCUS ON TEN DEFINITIVE CEOS OF PURPOSE-DRIVEN AND TRANSFORMATIVE PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS IMPACTING NIGERIA'S ECONOMIC GROWTH IN 2026: PART TWO)

# VINCENT OLATUNJI: A Professional par Excellence, An Epitome of Transformative Leadership, Driving Nigeria's Digital Economy Through Effective Data Protection at NDPC Background/Professional Trajectory

WITH over 36 years of experience in public sector services and operations, Dr Vincent Olatunji, CPPPS, CDPO, FIIM, the incumbent National Commissioner and Chief Executive Officer, Nigeria Data Protection Commission (NDPC), is a silent achiever and a household name in the African continent's data protection space.

He obtained his first degree in Geography from the erstwhile Ondo State University (now Ekiti State University), then earned a Master's degree and Doctorate in Geography and Planning from the University of Lagos, and later took an Advanced Diploma in Computer Studies at the Federal College of Education (Technical), Akoka. Additionally, Dr Olatunji is a Certified Public-Private Partnership Specialist (IP3), and a PECB Certified Data Protection Officer.

In 2002, he joined the National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA), working in various departments and rising to the position of Director in 2014 and Acting Director-General in 2016. He was the Director of e-Government Development and Regulations, where he successfully mainstreamed the development and launch of various policies, guidelines and frameworks, such as the Nigeria Inter-Operability Framework, Nigeria e-Government Enterprise Architecture, Cloud First Policy, Government Digital Service Policy, Nigeria Data Protection Regulation, and Smart Initiatives Framework to enhance Nigeria's digital transformation. He also chaired the implementation committees of some of them and remains a member of several expert committees.

Listed among the "100 Leading Telecom and ICT Personalities in Nigeria" by the Association of Telecommunication Companies of Nigeria in April 2018, Dr Olatunji earned further recognition as one of Nigeria's "Top 50 Digital Economy Enablers" in 2023 and 2025. He was appointed as Country Chief Data Officer Ambassador by the Massachusetts Institute of Information Management and enlisted as a member of the Forbes Technology Council in 2023.

In July 2024, he was nominated for the Giovanni Buttarelli Award through the Global Privacy Assembly; in December 2024, he was appointed as an ID4Africa Deputy Ambassador for Nigeria; and in April 2025, he was appointed Chair of the Anglophone Countries' Committee of the Network of African Data Protection Authorities (NADPA). He has also won several awards from public and private sector organisations.

His membership of professional bodies includes the International Association of Privacy Professionals (IAPP), Nigeria Computer Society, and the Information Technology Systems and Security Professionals. He is also a Fellow of the Institute of Information Technology Management (FIIM) and Director, Compliance Institute of Nigeria.




### Milestones and Institutional Impact

On the 4th of February, 2022, he was appointed as the pioneer National Commissioner/CEO of the Nigeria Data Protection Bureau (NDPB), which transitioned into the Nigeria Data Protection Commission in June 2023.

As the Chief Executive Officer of NDPC, Dr Vincent Olatunji has recorded key achievements, including successfully steering the enactment of the Nigeria Data Protection Act, 2023 (NDP Act), which provided a robust legal foundation for data governance in Nigeria. Furthermore, he developed and launched the Strategic Roadmap & Action Plan (2023–2027), built on five pillars, and expanded the data protection ecosystem to generate over $10 million within three years while creating over 27,000 jobs. He also pioneered human capital development initiatives, certifying over 500 Data Protection Officers, launching the Virtual Privacy Academy, and establishing youth awareness programmes.

Under his watch, compliance and enforcement have been strengthened through the registration of data controllers and processors, licensing of compliance organisations, and high-profile enforcement actions. By December 2025, the Commission had carried out about 250 investigations and registered approximately 40,000 Data Controllers and Data Processors of Major Importance (DCPMIs), demonstrating the growing scale of regulatory oversight, accountability and compliance monitoring within Nigeria's data protection ecosystem.

Similarly, his advanced stakeholder collaboration led to the signing of 41 Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) with key ministries, regulators, and other data protection authorities across the world, aimed at deepening sectoral compliance in areas such as health, trade, and ICT, and strengthening regulatory harmonisation across multiple jurisdictions. It also includes partnerships with development partners such as the European Union, World Bank, GIZ, Smart Africa, French Embassy, African Union, Meta, Microsoft, Google, and Huawei Technologies, among others.

These efforts have elevated Nigeria's global standing in data governance through active participation at the Global Privacy Assembly (GPA) and the Network of African Data Protection Authorities (NADPA), while strengthening regional leadership across Africa.

In further demonstration of this regional leadership, the Commission hosted delegates from 9 African countries during a cross-regional data protection study tour in May 2026. This is in addition to 8 countries hosted in 2025 in partnership with the African Union and the European Union.

The initiative was aimed at strengthening institutional capacity, fostering collaboration, and sharing Nigeria's data protection regulatory model with peer authorities across the continent.

Through these achievements, Dr Olatunji has positioned the NDPC as a critical driver of the Renewed Hope Agenda of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu in the areas of digital economy, job creation and innovation. This positioning is reinforced through sustained international engagements and strategic partnerships that continue to showcase Nigeria's progress in data governance.

### Strategies for Increasing Awareness

Speaking on Nigeria's rapidly expanding digital economy and citizens' limited understanding of their data privacy rights, Dr Olatunji emphasised the importance of sustained sensitisation and awareness creation. Following the signing of the NDP Act by President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, GCFR, he noted that widespread public awareness of data protection has become imperative.

According to him, *"In 2026, the Commission is intensifying a multi-layered awareness strategy to ensure inclusivity across Nigeria's diverse population."*

These strategies include: **General Application and Implementation Directives (GAID); Mass Sensitisation and Awareness Campaigns; Grassroots Engagement; Privacy Clubs & Digital Privacy Awareness Campaign (DPAC); Important Privacy Action Trends (IMPACT); Adopt A School Initiative; and the Nigeria Data Challenge.**

These initiatives are designed to foster a strong culture of privacy consciousness across Nigeria.

### Capacity Building

In furtherance of its mandate to strengthen professional capacity within Nigeria's data protection ecosystem, the NDPC initiated structured training and certification programmes for Data Protection Officers (DPOs). During the first edition held in 2025, the Commission successfully trained and certified 500 DPOs. The second edition, held in 2026, completed the training phase and proceeded to examination and certification with a target of certifying 1,000 DPOs. Additionally, the Commission onboarded 2,300 students into Cohort 1 of the Data Privacy Ambassador Programme under the Digital Privacy Awareness Campaign (DPAC), targeting tertiary institutions nationwide.

Other key capacity-building efforts include strengthening over 324 licensed Data Protection Compliance Organisation (DPCO) framework to ensure the delivery of high-quality compliance services; implementing public-sector training programmes to improve data protection practices within government institutions; and promoting youth and innovation engagement.

These initiatives also include educating secondary school students and undergraduates, supporting young professionals and tech innovators to integrate privacy principles into emerging technologies, and strengthening institutional compliance structures.

In addition, the registration of about 40,000 DCPMIs has significantly expanded the formal data protection ecosystem and strengthened regulatory visibility across sectors, reinforcing accountability and compliance within Nigeria's digital economy.

The Commission is equally advancing the establishment of Centres of Excellence (CoEs) to institutionalise knowledge and drive innovation in data protection and privacy management.

### Regulatory Outlook

Regarding the implementation of the NDP Act and the regulatory outlook for 2026, Dr Olatunji explained that the NDPC remains focused on consolidating a transparent, robust and enforceable regulatory framework.

The Commission is issuing sector-specific guidelines tailored to industries such as finance, healthcare, telecommunications and digital platforms; strengthening supervisory mechanisms through audits, compliance assessments and reporting obligations; and continuously assessing the technical competence of Data Protection Compliance Organisations (DPCOs).

Other measures include aligning with global standards, strengthening collaboration with sector regulators, executing MoUs to deepen compliance, and issuing guidance notices for employee privacy training and awareness.

### Thought Leadership

***White Paper on Privacy by Design in Early-Stage Innovation***

In November 2025, the Commission launched a white paper titled *"Privacy by Design in Early Stage Innovation: How Data Protection Advances AI-Driven DPI in Nigeria."* The paper documented the regulatory guidance framework adopted by the Commission in supporting innovators using Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) and Artificial Intelligence (AI) to address socio-economic challenges.

***White Paper on Effective Data Management Ecosystem in Nigeria***

In May 2025, the Commission also launched another white paper titled *"Effective Data Management Ecosystem in Nigeria."* The publication examined data lifecycle management across high-risk sectors including education, healthcare, SMEs and finance, while providing strategic recommendations for responsible data governance.

### Investigations and Enforcement

Recently, the NDPC launched investigations into companies that failed to comply with the provisions of the NDP Act. These investigations resulted in the issuance of remediation orders and compliance fees.

By December 2025, the Commission had conducted about 250 investigations as part of efforts to strengthen accountability and regulatory enforcement across Nigeria's digital ecosystem.

The Commission has also issued regulatory advisories and public notices aimed at promoting compliance, strengthening accountability and safeguarding the personal data of Nigerians.

According to Dr Olatunji, *"The NDPC remains committed to a balanced approach that combines guidance with firm enforcement."*

The Commission continues to strengthen compliance through DPCOs, scale monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, deepen investigative capacity, apply proportionate sanctions, and enforce remedial measures where necessary.

### Data Protection and Nigeria's Digital Economy

As Nigeria continues to attract investment in fintech, cloud infrastructure and digital services, the NDPC recognises that strong data protection frameworks are essential for economic growth and public trust.

The Commission views data protection as a driver of investment by providing regulatory certainty that attracts both local and foreign investment into sectors such as fintech, cloud computing and e-commerce, in alignment with President Bola Tinubu's Renewed Hope Agenda.

Strong privacy and data governance systems also build consumer confidence in digital platforms and position Nigeria as a trusted destination for data-driven innovation in Africa, while safeguarding fundamental rights and freedoms alongside economic development.

# CAPT. CHRIS ONAJEKE NAJOMO: Highly Cerebral, Thoroughbred Professional, Astute Aviator, Committed To Excellence In Nigeria's Aviation Industry

FOR over four decades, **Capt. Chris Onajeke Najomo, Director General/CEO, Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA),** had a remarkable career which is a testament to his professional acumen in piloting, regulatory expertise, purpose-driven leadership, and an exceptional dedication to the growth of the Nigerian Aviation Industry. His extensive qualifications, vast experience, and unwavering commitment to aviation excellence make him a valuable asset.

With about 24,000 flying hours from 30 years of career, Capt. Najomo has flown B727, BACI – II, SE210, CE550, EMB120, B737 (600-900s) and Airbus 330. He is the immediate past Director, Public Affairs and Consumer Protection, NCAA. Prior to that, he served as NCAA's Designated Examiner: B727; T.R.E, EMB120 (2007 to 2008), and Director, Air Transport Regulation (2022 to 2023).

Before joining the NCAA, Najomo was the Chief Pilot at Arik Air (2021 to 2022); Line Captain Arik Air, 2008 to 2017;, former Managing Director/CEO, Capital Airline (2005 to 2007); Director, FLTOPS, Al'Barka Airline, Abuja (2004 to 2005).

Highly cerebral and a thoroughbred aviation professional, he began his career with an Air Traffic Control Assistant Course in 1980 at the Federal Civil Aviation Authority Training School, Lagos and later obtained his C.P.L/IRMEL from the Airline Training Institute, California, USA.

Type rated on several aircraft, Capt. Najomo got a CE550 Rating in 1984 at American Eagle Aviation, California, USA; SF210 Type Rating, Aviation (1984) at the Point Airline, Orly, France, BAC I-II Type (1985); Dublin, Ireland, B727; Pittsburgh, USAIR, 1994, A.T.P.L, 1989; Pegasus Training Centre, Texas, USA; B737 NG-600-900 Type Rating, Luton, UK, 2006, B120; Paris, 2006 and AIRBUS 330 Type Rating, Aviation, 2013 AIRBUS Training Centre, Miami, USA, amongst many which have earned him several awards and recognitions, within and outside Nigeria.

### NCAA Under Capt. Chris Najomo

As the head of Nigeria's sole civil aviation regulatory body, Capt. Najomo has a well-crafted programmes - the nine-point agenda tagged "NCAA Project 2024" which clearly set out his administration policy directive. These include: **Staff Welfare, Training and Reorientation, USOAP, USAP Audit, Intensified Consumer Protection, ICT Digital, EMPIC and Change Management, Simplified Certification and Licensing Processes, Enhanced Surveillance, Intensified Revenue Drive, ISO 9001 Certification.**

However, underlying these are two clear mandates – the first being the Hon. Minister, Aviation and Aerospace Development, Mr. Festus Keyamo's 5-point agenda and ultimately, President Bola Tinubu's Renewed Hope Agenda.

### Staff Welfare, Training and Reorientation

The astute aviator assumed office when staff morale was at all-time low. Estacodes, DTAs and other allowances were unpaid, some of which had accumulated since 2019. NCAA management led by Capt. Najomo cleared the backlog of allowances owed to the staff, with salaries paid as and when due. With the support of the Honourable Minister, Najomo resolved the long-standing issue of staff stagnation on Grade Level 14.

### 2024 ICAO Universal Security Audit Programme (USAP)

In the aftermath of the ICAO's Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme (USOAP)–Continuous Monitoring Approach (CMA) of Nigeria's civil aviation system from 30th August to 11th September, 2023, Capt. Najomo promised to frontally implement realistic Corrective Action Plans (CAPs) that not only close the audit findings but also improve Nigeria's aviation system.

Recall that Capt. Najomo was appointed in December, 2023 while ICAO Universal Security Audit Programme was held between 11th and 22nd March, 2024. Under Najomo, NCAA effectively and efficiently collaborated with the Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria (FAAN) and other relevant stakeholders to ensure Nigeria had an excellent show during the aforementioned two-week ICAO USAP.

Nigeria successfully underwent ICAO's Universal Security Audit with zero Significant Security Concerns. Nigeria's positive audit results earned commendations from ICAO and regional aviation safety bodies, further cementing Nigeria's leadership in African aviation safety.

### 2026 ICAO Coordinated Validation Mission (ICVM)

Under Najomo, NCAA has effectively and efficiently collaborated with FAAN and other relevant stakeholders to ensure Nigeria had an excellent show in the just-concluded International Civil Aviation Organization Coordinated Validation Mission (ICVM) held in April, 2026. Nigeria recorded an impressive 91.4%. Effective Implementation (EI) score - the highest ever for Nigeria, and far above the regional average in West Africa (61.1%) and the global average (70.4%).

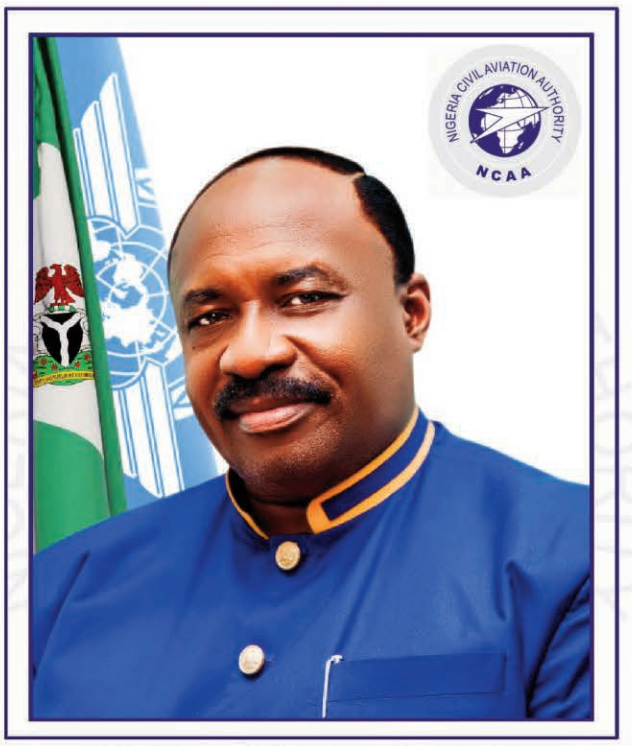
### Nigeria, Ghana Sign Cooperation Agreement On Search and Rescue Operations

On behalf of the Nigerian government, the NCAA boss signed a landmark Cooperation Agreement relating to Search and Rescue (SAR) Operations for Aircraft in Distress between Ghana and Nigeria. The MoU is to strengthen both countries collective aeronautical SAR architecture, and deepen operational cooperation between the two sister States.

In addition, NCAA also signed a MoU with the South African Civil Aviation Authority (SACAA) to establish cooperation and enhance the collective capacity and general performance of civil aviation in some specifically covered areas.

### Intensified Consumer Protection

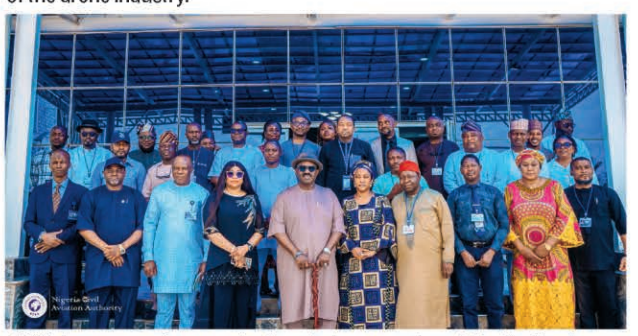
Beyond ensuring strict compliance with Part 19 of Nigerian Civil Aviation Regulations (Nig. CARs) 2023, the Consumer Protection Department (CPD) was rebranded. The CPD deepens collaboration with stakeholders through regular stakeholders' consultative engagement in addition to sustained sensitization and awareness campaigns in over 20 airports' terminals across Nigeria to enlighten air travellers and airport users about their rights and obligations.




**CAPT. CHRIS O. NAJOMO**
**Ag. DIRECTOR-GENERAL**
***NIGERIA CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY (NCAA)***



Capt. Najomo launched the drone digital registration portal, representing a major milestone in Nigeria's efforts to streamline and promote growth of the drone industry.



DGCA in a group photograph after the inauguration of the Quality Assurance Team and commissioning of Electronic Project Portfolio Management System to strengthen NCAA regulatory oversight I.




NCAA Digital Portal

The Department rolled out a new set of phone numbers dedicated to air passenger complaints (09055029506 or 01-2790426) and re-energized its zero tolerance for avoidable flight delays and cancellations with manifest results and wide commendations

NCAA CPD went a notch higher with the creation of a Consumer Protection Portal, marking the onset of digitalization of passengers' complaint resolution processes, protection of aviation consumer rights and welfare. The legacy project, generally acknowledged a game changer, was launched by the Hon. Minister, Festus Keyamo.

In the history of NCAA with Capt. Najomo as the helmsman, the CPD is achieving a monstrous 65% complaints resolution record!

Following the lead provided by Mr. Keyamo, the Najomo-led NCAA convened a meeting with major foreign airlines over the discriminatory practices against Nigerian travelers. This yielded fruits as foreign airlines unblocked their lower inventory fares culminating in making cheaper fares available.

### After Over 20 Years, NCAA Commissions Port Harcourt, Kano Regional Offices

While promising to continue to set new standards through proper planning and judicious use of resources to deliver conducive office accommodation across the regions, NCAA decentralized operations, bringing services closer to stakeholders and ensuring a seamless flow of communication and operations within these vital regions. This strategic step was the demonstration of Capt. Najomo's visionary leadership which resulted in the completion and commissioning of both the Kano and Port Harcourt Regional Offices after over 20 years of neglect!

### NCAA Reviews PPM for Regional Offices To Promote Operational Efficiency

The NCAA, under Capt. Najomo's watch, concluded a comprehensive review of Policy and Procedure Manual for the Regional Offices, (PPMRO), marking a significant milestone in the Authority's ongoing efforts to strengthen institutional efficiency and regulatory alignment.

This is with a view to delivering a document that not only aligns with the Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) of ICAO but also to promote efficiency, coordination, and consistency across all regional offices.

### NCAA Created A Dedicated Drone Unit, Launches Digital Regulation Portal

Capt. Najomo approved the creation of a dedicated drone unit under the Directorate of Aerodrome and Airspace Standard (DAAS) in NCAA as a central control for Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems certification, licensing, inspection and monitoring.

The formation of "UAS Integration Unit" is to enhance capabilities in overseeing the increasing demand in the field of Remotely Piloted Aircraft System (RPAS)/Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS) operations as well as contribute significantly to the mission of ensuring the safety and efficiency of civil aviation in Nigeria.

In addition, the NCAA, under Capt. Najomo's watch, on the sidelines of the 6th Africa International Drone Technology Conference and Exhibition (Dronetecx 2026) held in May, 2026 in Lagos, officially launched the Drone (Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS)/Remotely Piloted Aircraft System (RPAS) Portal, representing a major milestone in Nigeria's efforts to streamline drone regulation, promote safe drone operations, and accelerate the growth of the drone industry.

### NCAA Presented Aerodrome Certificate for Akanu Ibiam International Airport, Enugu

In a significant milestone in Nigeria's aviation sector, NCAA formally presented the Aerodrome Certificate for the Akanu Ibiam International Airport, Enugu to FAAN, which reflects NCAA's commitment to safety, regulatory compliance, and alignment with ICAO SARPs.

### ISO 9001 Certification, Simplified Certification and Licensing Processes

As a derivative of the ease-of-doing-business philosophy, Capt. Najomo's vision recognizes that facilitating seamless licensing processes is vital for the growth and safety of Nigeria's Aviation Industry. He has implemented reforms to make it easier for airlines and aviation service providers to operate by charging reduced processing timelines without any compromise to safety and/or security.

These include extending the Air Operator Certificate (AOC) validity for non-scheduled and scheduled operators from two years to three years, and to five years, respectively, thereby bringing tremendous relief to airlines having to frequently undergo certification process.

In addition, NCAA reduced the minimum requirements for post holders required in the issuance of AOC.

Resultantly, within just two years as the head of NCAA, no fewer than eight operators have issued AOCs, so far, without compromising regulatory and safety requirements. They include Mounthill Aviation, Heliconia–EAN Aero Nigeria Limited, Blue Dolphin Aviation Limited, MCM Jets Limited, Eastwind Aviation, Flints Aero Services Limited, Xejet, Vivajets, FlyBird Aviation Management Services Limited, Binani Air, and EnuguAir.

### NCAA Unveiled First Integrated Service Charter

Under Capt. Najomo, the NCAA unveiled its first Integrated Service Charter to support pursuit of ISO 9001: 2015 certification in line with the Federal Government's Ease of Doing Business agenda. It is a milestone designed to improve transparency, accountability, and service delivery in the Aviation Sector, placing passengers, airlines, and service providers at the heart of aviation regulations.

In compliance with ISO 9001 and ISO 45001 Certification, which the NCAA is striving to attain, Capt. Najomo has taken a crucial step to enhance Occupational Health and Safety Standards by formally receiving first aid boxes. This workplace safety project is the first of its kind in NCAA, and a part of the transformative agenda to awaken safety consciousness both at NCAA and in the entire aviation ecosystem. It also included the commissioning of the first muster point in NCAA's history.

### Enhanced Surveillance

Notwithstanding that there is no hundred percent safe aviation industry, we can say that Nigerian aviation is one of the safest in the world and NCAA is one of the most industrious. For no fewer than 11 years, there have been zero accident in commercial scheduled flight operations. Capt. Najomo did not only meet this enviable record but also actively contributed (still contributing) to it. To enhance surveillance and robust oversight, he adopted a multi-layer approach entailing keeping and increasing key drivers of the Authority's mission of providing aviation safety, economic regulatory services, increasing passenger confidence in the air transport sector, sustaining zero accident, ensuring continuous oversight, safety surveillance and strengthening superstructures of safety in civil aviation.

# Era Of Purposeful And Visionary Leadership: Some Milestone Achievements At Nafdac Under Prof. Mojisola Adeyeye





Prof. Mojisola Adeyeye signing MoU of partnership with the National Coordinator, National Counter Terrorism Centre, Office of the National Security Adviser (NCTC-ONSA).





Hon. Minister of Health & Social Welfare's Visit to NAFDAC and Commissioning of a New Office Building



Prof. Adeyeye during the joint exercise by the ONSA, Military, and the Police against Open Drug Markets





Pictures depicting destruction exercise at a dumpsite. Fake, expired, and

The National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC), established by Decree No. 15 of 1993 as amended, and now the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control Act Cap N1 Laws of the Federation of Nigeria (LFN) 2004, is saddled with the responsibility of safeguarding the health of the citizenry.

The Act mandates the agency to regulate and control the manufacture, importation, exportation, distribution, advertisement, sale and use of Food, Drug, Cosmetics, Medical Devices, Bottled Water, Chemicals and Detergents (all known as regulated products).

Prof. Adeyeye, upon her assumption of office as the Director-General of the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) in November 2017, was resolutely determined to make the agency a cynosure of all eyes. She came into the saddle with a clear vision of leadership to reposition, restructure, reform, and expand the country's food and drug regulatory authority to become one of the very best in the world.

Expectedly, Prof Adeyeye's tenure has been marked by transformative initiatives aimed at enhancing public health, ensuring regulatory excellence, institutionalising a highly motivated and disciplined workforce, and promoting local manufacturing in line with the renewed hope agenda of the President Bola Ahmed Tinubu administration.

With the commitment of a very purposeful management and a hard-working staff, NAFDAC has accomplished an unprecedented level of achievement since the appointment of Prof Adeyeye. Here is a cursory look at some of these attainments that position the agency as a model NRA in sub-Saharan Africa:

**Global Regulatory Leadership & Recognitions**

- International Council for Harmonisation (ICH) Full Membership (24th globally)
- Pharmaceutical Inspection Cooperation Scheme (PIC/S) Pre-Applicant Status
- World Health Organisation (WHO) Maturity Level 3 (ML3) status
- International Coalition of Medicines Regulatory Authorities (ICMRA) membership
- WHO GBT+ Assessment (Medical Devices)
- Africa Medicines Agency (AMA) engagement
- International Medical Device Regulators Forum (IMDRF) – Affiliate member

**Strengthening Regulatory Systems & Institutional Excellence**

- ML3 consolidation and ML4 preparation
- ISO 9001:2015 QMS recertification
- ISO 17025:2015 certification
- Alignment of In Vitro Diagnostics (IVD) regulation with global best practice
- Constitution of expert advisory committee across the various functions

**Advancing Local Manufacturing & Economic Growth**

- Local manufacturing initiatives – Presidential Executive Order to support Local Manufacturing
- Active Pharmaceutical Ingredient (API) capacity building
- Vaccine production readiness
- Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSME) support policies
- Local manufacture of Ready-to-Use Therapeutic Food (RUTF)

**Enforcement, Compliance & Public Health Protection**

8 Major raids on unregulated open drug markets in Kano, Lagos, Onitsha and Aba.

- Dangwauro Coordinated Wholesale Centre (CWC) has now replaced the Kano market. Construction of other CWCs across other geopolitical zones in progress
- Removal of counterfeit and substandard products
- Sachet alcohol ban and subsequent enforcement of ban
- Illegal drug factory shutdown
- Trans Fat Policy / Regulation
- Sodium salt reduction
- Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR); sensitisation on Antimicrobial Stewardship (AMS)
- Banning and reclassification of Highly hazardous Products

**Laboratory Capacity & Scientific Advancement**

- Central Drug Control Laboratory (CDCL, Yaba) upgrade/certification
- Expansion of certification to other NAFDAC laboratories
- Vaccine laboratory / development of a modern vaccine laboratory
- WHO prequalified pharmaceutical products (Afriject 0.5ml autodisable syringes by Afrimedical; paediatric zinc sulphate & sulphadoxine/Pyrimethamine by SWIPHA)
- Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) laboratory in Oshodi, Lagos.

**Digital Transformation & Innovation**

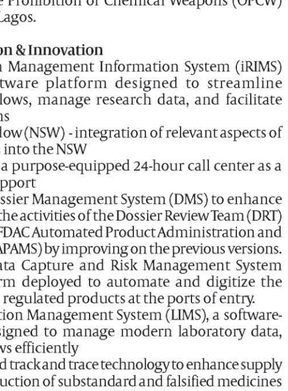
- Integrated Research Management Information System (iRIMS) deployment – a software platform designed to streamline administrative workflows, manage research data, and facilitate regulatory submissions
- National Single Window (NSW) - integration of relevant aspects of the agency's processes into the NSW
- Commissioning of a purpose-equipped 24-hour call center as a means of customer support
- Upgrading of the Dossier Management System (DMS) to enhance a seamless running of the activities of the Dossier Review Team (DRT)
- Upgrading of the NAFDAC Automated Product Administration and Monitoring System (NAPAMS) by improving on the previous versions.
- Ports Inspection Data Capture and Risk Management System (PIDCARMS), a platform deployed to automate and digitize the clearance of imported regulated products at the ports of entry.
- Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS), a software-based technology designed to manage modern laboratory data, samples, and workflows efficiently
- Adoption of GS1-based track and trace technology to enhance supply chain visibility and reduction of substandard and falsified medicines
- Clean Report of Inspection and Analysis (CRIA) scheme, a mandatory conformity assessment of pharmaceutical products (from China and India) prior to shipment to Nigeria

**Strategic Partnerships & International Collaboration**

- The agency is in partnership with such international bodies as the WHO, Gates Foundation, Global Fund, Expertise France, UNICEF, and others
- Collaborations exist between the agency and some foreign tertiary institutions in areas that further enhance and project the activities of the agency: Mississippi State University, Michigan State University, etc.
- ECOWAS, AU, ML3 consortium mutual agreement and global regulatory engagements
- Bilateral MOUs with some countries, for example South Africa, Egypt, South Korea, The Gambia, etc
- Mentorship and regional leadership (Uganda, Botswana, Gambia, Cape-Verde, Ghana)
- Strategic Collaboration with other MDAs and Government offices e.g Office of the National Security Adviser (ONSA), Pharmacy Council of Nigeria (PCN), National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), and Federal Ministry of Livestock Development (FMLD)

Human Capital Development & Organizational Growth

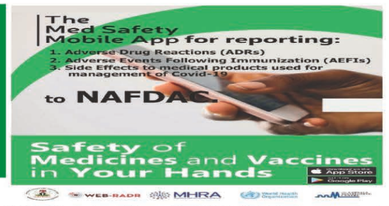
- Expansion within the agency has given room for timely promotion of hard-working staff members, a very important morale booster. Significant efforts are consistently made to recruit more staff into the agency
- Staff members are exposed to trainings that enhance employee skills, productivity, and retention through e-learning, workshops, and other training methods
- Development of staff performance system that enables monitoring, evaluation and improvement of employee work, aligning individual goals with organisational strategy
- Infrastructural development across all the states of the federation. Before this current administration, all NAFDAC state offices were housed in the respective federal secretariats of each state. This scenario is now changing, as state and zonal offices are being constructed to add some value to what the agency does.







NAFDAC often relies on information by the public (covert or otherwise). In this picture, acting on information, officers of the agency carried out an opera-




NAFDAC Med safety mobile app: The NAFDAC Med Safety App is an official, free mobile application launched to enable healthcare professionals and the public to report Adverse Drug Reactions (ADRs) and Adverse Events Following Immunization (AEFI). It acts as a digital, user-friendly tool for monitoring vaccine and medicine safety.














The current NAFDAC management under the leadership of Prof. Mojisola Adeyeye continues to engage MDAs of government in result-oriented collaborations. In these pictures, the DG signs pacts with the leadership of the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) and the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) at different times.









Procurement of Operational Vehicles: Over 120 operational vehicles (Sedan cars, Hilux and Busses) have been purchased by management to enhance operational efficiency.





DG NAFDAC with some staff members accompany some members of the NAFDAC Governing Council in inspecting some construction sites of the ongoing infrastructural development at the agency.







Ongoing Construction of Vaccine Laboratory, Oshodi, Lagos. The WHO ML3 status has conferred upon the agency all the requirements for vaccines manufacturing in the country.











With the 'five plus five' policy and the 'ceiling list' firmly being implemented (both policies are aimed at discouraging importation of medicines while encouraging local production), there have been commissioning of pharmaceutical factories as seen in this picture.



# JOSHUA MUWHEN: Savvy, Purpose-Driven Professional, Corporate Governance Strategist, Transformational Financial Leader, Turning The Tide At Delta Trust Mortgage Bank

WITH an exceptional and distinguished career spanning over twenty-six years in Nigeria's financial services and mortgage banking sector, **Ologogun Dr. (Barr.) Joshua Oghenejiru Muwhen,** *FCIAP, M.CioD,* stands out as one of the most experienced, resilient, and reform-driven mortgage banking executives of his generation.

A seasoned banker, Barrister & Solicitor of the Supreme Court of Nigeria, corporate governance expert, and transformational financial strategist, Barrister Muwhen currently serves as the **Acting Managing Director/CEO of Delta Trust Mortgage Bank Limited,** where he has continued to provide visionary leadership in navigating the institution through complex regulatory, operational, liquidity, governance, and industry challenges while positioning the Bank for long-term sustainability and national relevance.

Widely respected for his deep institutional memory, uncommon resilience, strategic leadership capacity, regulatory negotiation expertise, and governance discipline, Dr. Muwhen has played pivotal roles in virtually every transformational phase of the Bank's growth and evolution.

From operational restructuring and governance stabilization to recapitalization initiatives, institutional defense engagements, digital banking transformation, stakeholder confidence restoration, and strategic expansion initiatives, his leadership footprint remains indelible within the Mortgage Banking Industry.

One of his landmark achievements remains his instrumental role in the historic transition of the Bank from rented office accommodation to ownership of a befitting and strategically located corporate head office—a transformational milestone that significantly strengthened the Bank's asset base, enhanced corporate prestige, improved institutional stability, and reinforced long-term shareholder value.

Over the years, Dr. Muwhen has built a reputation as a tested financial sector reform advocate and strategic negotiator with extensive engagement experience across critical regulatory and oversight institutions including the Central Bank of Nigeria, Nigeria Deposit Insurance Corporation, Federal Mortgage Bank of Nigeria, National Pension Commission, Federal Competition and Consumer Protection Commission, and the Mortgage Banking Association of Nigeria.

An accomplished professional who holds a PhD in Business Administration, an MBA, LL.B Hons and a B.L, he is a Fellow, Chartered Institute of Public Administration of Nigeria; Member, Chartered Institute of Directors; Member, Nigerian Bar Association; Member, Mortgage Bankers Association of Nigeria.

Beyond banking and corporate leadership, Dr. Muwhen is a respected community leader who holds the traditional title of *Achoja of Udu Kingdom* (Defender of the People). He is also a Minister in the Redeemed Christian Church of God.

In reaction to his selection as one of *The Guardian's* **"100 Purpose-Driven, Transformative and Award-Winning Professionals of Excellence Driving Nigeria's Economic Growth In 2026", Dr. Joshua Muwhen** spoke about his professional cum career journey, the repositioning of Delta Trust Mortgage Bank, promotion of ethical business practices, amongst sundry issues. Excerpts ...




***Can you describe how professional training has shaped your worldview and journey in life, as well as the impact on day-to-day activities, especially as the Managing Director/CEO, Delta Trust Mortgage Bank Limited?***

Professional training has profoundly shaped my worldview by instilling discipline, integrity, resilience, strategic thinking, and an unwavering commitment to service. My background in law, corporate governance, and mortgage banking has enabled me to appreciate the delicate balance between profitability, compliance, stakeholder confidence, and sustainable economic development.

Over the years, I have come to understand that leadership is not merely about occupying a position, but about solving problems, inspiring confidence, and creating enduring value for institutions and society. This philosophy continues to guide my daily activities as the Acting Managing Director/CEO of Delta Trust Mortgage Bank Limited.

In practical terms, my professional training influences my decision-making process, risk management approach, regulatory engagements, staff mentorship, and customer relations. It has helped me remain calm under pressure, particularly within Nigeria's evolving financial and economic landscape. I strongly believe that institutions thrive when built on sound governance, professionalism, transparency, and innovation.

***What can you adduce to Delta Trust Mortgage Bank Limited's phenomenal progress, particularly how it has earned the trust of clients and stakeholders under your watch and measures being put in place to sustain this feat?***

The progress of Delta Trust Mortgage Bank Limited can be attributed to strategic leadership, institutional resilience, customer-centric policies, regulatory compliance, and the dedication of our workforce.

One major factor has been our commitment to maintaining stakeholder confidence even during challenging periods within the financial sector. We have consistently strengthened our operational structures, improved service delivery, deepened relationships with regulators and stakeholders, and embraced gradual digital transformation initiatives.

Under my leadership, emphasis has also been placed on transparency, accountability, staff inclusiveness, and strategic collaborations capable of expanding access to housing finance and mortgage solutions for Nigerians. We have worked tirelessly to reposition the Bank as a credible institution committed to financial inclusion and home ownership development.

Notably, I was instrumental in the strategic transition of the Bank from operating in a leased property to becoming a proud owner of its corporate Head Office, thereby significantly strengthening the Bank's asset base and institutional identity.

To sustain this progress, we are focusing on: Strengthening corporate governance structures; Enhancing digital banking and operational efficiency; Expanding strategic partnerships; Deepening regulatory compliance culture; Investing in staff capacity development; Improving customer experience and innovative mortgage products; Pursuing recapitalization and long-term institutional sustainability initiatives.

***Apart from integrity, what are other unique ways Delta Trust Mortgage Bank is promoting ethical business practices to impact the industry particularly, and the Nigerian economy as a whole?***

Beyond integrity, Delta Trust Mortgage Bank promotes ethical business practices through transparency, accountability, compliance consciousness, stakeholder engagement, financial inclusion, and responsible corporate governance.

The Bank maintains strong compliance mechanisms aligned with regulatory guidelines and industry best practices. We encourage ethical conduct across all operational levels while ensuring that staff and management remain accountable for their actions.

Additionally, we are committed to supporting economic development through accessible housing finance solutions, responsible lending practices, support for small businesses, and initiatives aimed at promoting affordable home ownership.

We also believe that ethical banking should contribute to social development as the Bank continually seeks opportunities to support community-oriented initiatives, employment generation, and sustainable development projects that align with national economic growth objectives.

# Rebecca Ebenezer-Abiola Leads LASUSTECH Students On Social Change Communication

By **Suliyat Tella**

STUDENTS of Lagos State University of Science and Technology (LASUSTECH) are being introduced to practical approaches that use communication as a tool for solving social problems, influencing behaviour and improving community development.

During a lecture on Communication for Development (C4D), development communication practitioner, Rebecca Ebenezer-Abiola exposed students to the processes behind designing communication programmes that go beyond information sharing to encourage positive social change.

Speaking during the session titled "C4D in Practice: Designing and Implementing Compelling Development Communication Programmes," held under the supervision of course lecturer, Dr Steven Adesemoye, Ebenezer-Abiola challenged students to rethink the way they view communication.

Rather than treating communication as the production of content alone, she explained that development communication is a deliberate and strategic process that begins with understanding people, their realities and the factors that influence their decisions.

"It is a process. It is not just a product," she said, stressing that effective communication starts long before audiences encounter a message.

The session exposed students to the principles that guide successful development communication programmes, from audience research and message design to storytelling, behaviour change strategies and the use of multiple communication platforms.

For aspiring communicators, journalists and media practitioners, the lecture offered practical insights into how communication can be used to address social challenges and improve lives.

Development communication differs from conventional communication because its goal extends beyond creating awareness. It seeks to influence positive social outcomes by encouraging people to adopt behaviours that improve their well-being and the well-being of their communities.

According to Ebenezer-Abiola, many communication campaigns fail because they focus solely on delivering information without considering how audiences receive, interpret and act on that information.

Effective communication, according to her, requires a clear understanding of the people being targeted.

Audiences are not homogeneous groups. They have different beliefs, values, cultures, experiences and motivations. A message that resonates with one audience may have little impact on another.

For that reason, development communicators must avoid assuming that everyone thinks the same way.

Instead, they must invest time in understanding the people they want to reach åbefore designing messages.

This audience-centred approach is one of the foundations of communication for development. It recognises that successful communication begins with empathy and understanding rather than persuasion alone.

The principle is particularly important when dealing with sensitive issues such as health, education, gender equality, environmental protection and community development.

In such situations, communicators are often asking people to reconsider long-held beliefs, habits or behaviours. Achieving that goal requires more than simply presenting facts.

According to her, communicators must help audiences overcome the barriers standing between intention and action.

"The job of the communicator is to bring in facilitators and help break those barriers," she said.

It requires understanding why people behave the way they do.

"One of the major themes discussed during the lecture was the importance of perspective. Ebenezer-Abiola encouraged students to place themselves in the position of their audiences and understand how people perceive issues from their own realities.

This approach allows communicators to develop messages that speak directly to people's concerns and motivations.

For example, a family planning campaign directed at young couples may require a different message from one designed for older adults, community leaders or healthcare workers.

Although the objective may be similar, the concerns, priorities and experiences of each audience group may differ significantly.

A young couple may be interested in financial planning and child spacing, while healthcare workers may focus on service delivery and public health outcomes.

Understanding such differences enables communicators to frame messages in ways that audiences find relevant and meaningful.

The approach also helps communicators avoid assumptions that could weaken the effectiveness of a campaign.

When people feel understood, they are more likely to engage with a message. When they feel misunderstood or judged, they are more likely to ignore it.

This reality explains why audience analysis remains a critical stage in development communication planning.

Another key lesson from the session focused on behavioural change.

Many development programmes aim to influence behaviour, whether encouraging people to vaccinate their children, adopt healthier lifestyles, report cases of abuse, improve sanitation practices or protect the environment.

However, behavioural change rarely happens immediately.

According to Ebenezer-Abiola, individuals often move through several stages before adopting new behaviours.

The process typically begins with limited awareness or knowledge of an issue. At this stage, people may know very little about a problem or may not recognise its importance.

Communication efforts first seek to increase awareness and provide information.

As individuals gain knowledge, they may begin to develop positive attitudes towards the message being promoted.

Over time, they may form an intention to act.

Yet intention alone does not always lead to action.

Many people understand what they should do and even agree that it is beneficial, but still fail to change their behaviour because obstacles stand in their way.

These barriers may be financial, social, cultural, psychological or practical.

Someone may understand the benefits of regular exercise but feel unable to afford gym membership fees.



Abiola

# JOSEPH OSANIPIN: A Portrait of Visionary Leadership, Inspired By Excellence, Driven By Innovation, Delivering Exceptional Results At NADDC



**OLUWEMIMO Joseph Osanipin, *FCA, CISA*, the Director General and Chief Executive Officer, National Automotive Design and Development Council (NADDC)** is a visionary leader with over 28 years of experience across different critical sectors like Finance, Transport and Automotive. An award-winning professional of excellence with remarkable versatility and strategic insight which have established him as an innovator, a master strategist and change-agent.

With an MBA from the University of Benin (UNIBEN) and a Bachelor degree in Accounting from the Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU), Joseph Osanipin's leadership philosophy is centered around leading by example, teamwork, openness, driving innovation and delivering exceptional results.

A highly respected executive with a proven record of success in each of the aforementioned professional roles, Osanipin is responsible for the overall strategy and direction to upload the NADDC's mandate, mission and vision, while promoting the manufacturers of the Nigerian Automotive Industry.

The Council's mandate include development and implementation of a National Automotive Policy; recommend incentives and protective measures for the development of the Automotive Industry in Nigeria; and develop programmes for the acquisition of technology for vehicles and component design, manufacture and assembly; etc.

Other areas of engagement are: to encourage the development and production of raw materials such as metal sheets, alloys and special steel needed by the automotive industry; ensure the continued improvement of skills in the automotive industry through technical training programmes; as well as research, design, develop and test low-cost vehicle prototypes.

In just over two years, Mr. Joseph Osanipin has led a transformative overhaul of the National Automotive Design and Development Council. Through his visionary leadership, the NADDC has made remarkable strides in accelerating Nigeria's automotive transition through local production, Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) adoption, and electric vehicle (EV) infrastructure development.

Furthermore, his key achievements which include establishment of 22 training centres, initiation of widespread CNG retrofitting, reflect a commitment to championing the President Bola Ahmed Tinbu's "Nigeria First" policy to boost local manufacturing, and making NADDC a world-class agency, contributing to national GDP, through improved public service delivery. For the purpose of this presentation, highlights of the DG Joseph Osanipin has been given here in no particular order.

### Electric Vehicle (EV) Bus Competition

The NADDC successfully launched and managed the maiden EV Campus Shuttle involving 12 Nigerian universities across the six geopolitical regions. Upon concluding the robust 3-month Design Phase, UNIBEN won the completion, and efforts are currently being made to effectively manufacture electric bus with Innoson (IVN) as the technical partner. The manufacturing phase will span January and June, 2026. To this end, the NADDC team visited the UNIBEN facility, as well as Innoson Plant to discuss preparations for development of the electric vehicle, including industrial attachment concerns.

### Biofuel Regulatory framework Development With NMDPRA

The NADDC established a collaboration with the Nigerian Midstream and Downstream Petroleum Regulatory Authority (NMDPRA) on the development of the E10 Biofuel Regulatory Framework as requested by the Authority. The NADDC has also designed/developed a holistic Vehicle Sourcing and Assessment Framework for the forthcoming E10 Pilot Project that begun in April, 2026 and to end in September, 2026. The Council through the VE Department, has contributed significantly to the drafting of the National Biofuel Regulatory Framework.

### EV Infrastructure and Maintenance

The Council has instituted an effective monitoring mechanism for all NADDC charge stations and deployed EVs, nationwide. The Council has successfully conducted the first comprehensive maintenance (since 2021) of the four Hyundai Kona EVs stationed strategically at UNILAG, UNN, UDUS, and NADDC headquarters, Abuja.

### Institutional and Industry Collaboration

The NADDC, through the VE Department has helped strengthen engagement with other MDAs and private market players within the EV and clean mobility value chain. These include:

**Oando Clean Energy:** The NADDC, through the VE Department, has helped guide Oando Clean Energy for the establishment of a dedicated EV Assembly Plant in Nigeria.

**NEMSA:** Deepening collaboration with NEMSA to ensure compliance and safety of EV infrastructure.

**NNPC Foundation:** The NADDC, through the VE Department is presently applying for external funding and equipment grants for the NADDC from the NNPC Foundation towards enhancing the NADDC's clean mobility.

**RMI & ETO:** The NADDC, through the VE Department, is partnering with Rocky Mountain Institute (RMI) Nigeria's Energy Transition Office (ETO) on policy formulation and initiatives around EV and Charge Station integration in Nigeria.

**GIZ:** The NADDC, through the VE and Compliance Departments, is in continuous partnership with GIZ and some other Nigeria's private sector players to expand VE adoption in Nigeria.

**EVN Expo 2025:** The NADDC, through the VE Department, attended a stakeholders' summit hosted by the EVN Expo in Lagos. This Summit brought together leading stakeholders across Nigeria's electric-mobility ecosystem to discuss EV innovations, infrastructure development, financing frameworks, and industrial opportunities. The Department's Director also participated in a panel session and delivered key insights on the National EV agenda, regulatory alignment, standards, incentives, and investment opportunities in Nigeria's Automotive Sector.

**SON EV Standards:** The NADDC, through the VE Department, is presently contributing (as part of the working committee) to the development/adoption of Nigerian Standards on Electric Vehicles.

**Egyptian Gas Investors In Nigeria:** Through the Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Ministry of Petroleum Resources, an Egyptian CNG investor indicated interest in participating in Nigeria's vehicle conversion ecosystem. For this, the NADDC, through the VE Department, hosted the delegation on the 11th March, 2026, to discuss and harmonise on National CNG Investment issues relating to: Nigeria's technical, operational and regulatory readiness; partnership and investment opportunities; standards and certification processes; hence, identifying potential areas for immediate collaboration and scaling-up.

Furthermore, on institutional and industry collaboration, the NADDC, through the VE Department, facilitated the training and development of a prototype Electric Vehicle. This training was targeted at engineers within the Council, spanning from various departments, including Vehicle Electrification, RD&D T&S, IID, Compliance, ICT, Zonal Office, the DG's Office and Procurement.

**CNG Development/Capacity Building:** This is an overview of the activities of the NADDC in providing industrial infrastructure programmes and projects in the Nigeria Automa-







tive Industry. These include: Local Content Promotion and Development aiming at infrastructures for industrial park, auto centralized production and service facilities; Skills Development to ensure that all lower-skilled and mid-skilled manpower are adequately developed to fill the gap existent; as well as the provision of technical support for appraising new models of vehicles to be introduced into the Nigerian market.

Others include coordination of efforts of Nigerian engineers and technicians in component parts development and modification to aid technology acquisition; implementation of the policy on component parts development (i.e., industrial profiles, etc); handling of matters dealing with the informal sector (i.e., curriculum, technical manuals, etc); handling of matters relating to the development of engineering infrastructure for use by the Automotive Industry; appraisal of technical technical aspects of Auto Development and Fund Loan project; and provision of industrial parks project, mechanic villages; training institute, etc.

**Strategic Industrial Partnerships**

In collaboration with Lanre Shittu Motors Limited, the NADDC has trained technicians on the conversion of petrol vehicles to compressed natural gas (CNG) powered vehicles. Forty-five technicians drawn from across the LGAs in Ekiti State participated in the training and they were empowered with modern tools/equipment at the end of the programme. Also, cars were converted for Ekiti State Government, Ekiti State University, amongst others. So far, about 300 workshops, across the country, have been accredited and licensed for CNG conversion.

On the Presidential Compressed Natural Gas Initiative (P-CNGi) where conversion kits for the programme were donated. The Initiative used the opportunity of the training programme to assess and approved NADDC Automotive Training Centre, Ado-Ekiti, as a CNG conversion centre.

As far back as 22nd October, 2024, the NADDC commissioned Automotive Training Centre, Kano by the then Honourable Minister of Industry, Trade and Investment, Dr. Doris Uzoka-Anite, in company of His Excellency, Alhaji Abba Yusuf, Governor of Kano State. Similarly, the Council conducted specialized mechatronics training in three States, viz: Cross River, Abia, and Ondo, while a heavy-duty training was held simultaneously in Adamawa, Kaduna, and the FCT from 3rd to 14th February, 2025.

From the 17th to 21st March, 2025, the NADDC conducted the training on conversion of petrol vehicles to CNG powered vehicles in collaboration with Omaa Motors in Owerri, Imo State. Sixty technicians drawn from across the local government areas of the state were empowered with modern tools/equipment at the end of the programme. The event featured the CNG Empowerment and Awareness Summit 2025 held at the Landmark Event Centre, Owerri.

Also, the final installation and equipment/tools testing was conducted at the NADDC Training Centres located in Lokoja, Kogi State and Abakaliki, Ebonyi State. The installation was carried out by CTS Automotive.

In order to align with the gender inclusion policy of the President Tinubu's administration, the NADDC conducted a National Conference on specialized training on the conversion of petrol-powered vehicles to CNG vehicles, specifically for ladies in the Automotive Industry in Edo State in collaboration with the Lady Mechanic Initiative ostensibly to ensure gender sensitivity – fifty female technicians were trained and empowered.

Meanwhile, as parts of efforts to strengthen the structure within the Industry, the election of the new executives of the Sector Skills Council (SSC) for the Automotive Industry was conducted on 27th February, 2025 in line with the SSC Policy Document following the expiration of the two-year tenure of the previous executive.

On 24th July, 2025, the Council organized the public presentation of National Occupational Standards (NOS) for conversion, calibration and maintenance of auto gas-powered vehicles and electric vehicles operation/maintenance in Nigeria, level 1-4, as well as, held the unveiling of CNG retrofitting guideline. The event featured the inauguration of the elected Executives of the Sector Skills Council for the Automotive Industry.

As part of efforts to ease students' mobility in different campuses across the country, the NADDC has commenced the award and construction of Solar-Powered EV Charging Station at the University of Abuja, Abuja, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Kaduna State, University of Ilorin, Kwara State, and the Federal University of Petroleum, Effurun (FUPRE), Delta State.




On the 10th of April 2026, The National Automotive Design and Development Council officially launched the National Vehicle Dealership Registration Framework, an nitiative designed to modernize, standardize and strengthen dealership operations across Nigeria.

Under the leadership of Mr. Osanipin, the NADDC successfully trained thirty quality assurance assessors. The training was conducted in collaboration with the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) whereby the Assessors are to ensure qualitative training of technicians. In the same vein, technical advisors (TAs) were deployed for the engagement of PPP managers of the NADDC Training Centres in Katsina, Kebbi, Niger, Ebonyi, Kogi, Ekiti, and Lagos States.

On 26th August, 2025, the NADDC officially commissioned its Automotive Training Centre Centre, Ikorodu, Lagos State by the Honourable Minister of Industry, Trade and Investment, Senator John Owan Enoh ably supported by the Governor of Lagos State, His Excellency, Mr. Babajide Sanwo-Olu.

For the repair and maintenance of tricycles/motorcycles, the NADDC in collaboration with Simba Group, Nigeria organized trainings for auto technicians in Ekiti, Benue, Kano, and Lagos States.

Likewise, the Agency partnered with Automotive and Locomotive Engineers Institute (AutoEI), a division of the Nigerian Society of Engineers in conducting the 15th National Conference, Exhibitions and Annual General Meeting of the AutoEI held fom 16th to 19th September, 2025. At the occasion the NADDC DG was conferred with a honourary fellowship of the Automotive and Locomotive Engineers Institute (AutoEI).

Not resting on his laurels, NADDC organized a mechanic training on the repairs and maintenance of petrol and CNG tricycles in Ibadan, Oyo State. The programme was a joint initiative of NADDC, DAG Industries Limited (makers of Bajaj Motorcycles), and the Office of the Special Adviser to the President on Youth Initiatives (Monitoring and Delivery).

The NADDC has also successfully coordinated the training on the conversion of petrol vehicles to Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) powered vehicles in collaboration with Portland Gas Limited held in Ibadan, Oyo State. Fifty technicians drawn across all the LGAs of the State were empowered with the tools/equipment at the end of the programme. This programme was jointly carried out with the Office of the Special Adviser to the President on Youth Initiatives (Monitoring and Delivery).

Ditto, the Agency coordinated the training on the conversion

of petrol vehicles to Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) powered vehicles in collaboration with ASG Limited and JSG Limited held in Lagos and Kano States, respectively. A total of 100 technicians drawn across the two States were empowered with modern tools/equipment at the end of the programme.

With an aim to improve on the knowledge base of Nigerians on the conversion of petrol vehicles to Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) powered vehicles, trainings were coordinated in Osun and Rivers States, respectively. A total of 100 technicians drawn across the two States were empowered with modern tools/equipment at the end of the programme.

This national training of technicians and youths on servicing, repairs and maintenance of electric and light vehicles were also conducted in Lagos and Adamawa States. A total of 100 technicians drawn across the respective States were empowered with modern tools/equipment at the end of the programme; and

Furthermore, the Council coordinated the development of combined Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) equipment workshop and Electric Vehicle (EV) Solar-powered charging hubs - the development of a combined energy facility comprising a CNG conversion workshop and a 65kW solar-powered EV charging station.

This project is designed to address the growing needs of Nigeria's evolving transportation sector, providing a dual-pronged solution for both fossil fuel transition and renewable energy solution. By integrating these two services, the facility will serve as a hub for sustainable mobility and skills development. The project is being implemented in University of Calabar, University of Benin, Bayero University, Kano, Kogi State Univeristy, Kabba, College of Education (Tech) Gombe, Nigeria Defence Academy, Kaduna, Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Federal University of Lafia, Nasarawa State.

Other notable key accomplishments of the NADDC under, Mr. Joseph Osanipin's watch include the **Unveiling of the SON-NADDC VehCAP**. Here, the NADDC in collaboration with the Standards Organisation of Nigeria (SON) on 31st August March, 2026, launched the Vehicle assessment Programme (VehCAP) – a strategic initiative aimed at improving vehicle safety, environmental compliance, and the overall quality of vehicles entering Nigeria.

**Secondly, the Launch of ELV Projects** which witnessed the NADDC pushing for the Automotive Recycling Agenda with ELV Regulations Sensitisation in Kano. The NADDC, under the Federal Ministry of Industry, Trade & Investment, hosted a sensitisation programme on End-of-Life Vehicle (ELV) Regulations in Kano on August 21, 2025.

**Thirdly, the Launch of AMDON Portal.** On 10th April, 2026, the NADDC officially launched the National Vehicle Dealership Registration Framework - an initiative designed to modernize, standardize and strengthen dealership operations across Nigeria. In addition to these laudable steps, it is worthy to note that the launch of the National Vehicle Dealership Registration Framework marks a significant milestone in Nigeria's Automotive Industry, setting a clear path toward transparency, standardization and sustainable growth. With strong collaboration between NADDC, AMDON and key stakeholders, the initiative is poised to redefine dealership operations, strengthen investor confidence, and position Nigeria competitively within the African automotive market.







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# From The Rector

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# Role Of The Church In A Decaying World (1)

*"You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men. You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven,"*

**Introduction**

THE Church is positioned to represent Christ and make the difference in all ages. Christ's metaphors of salt and light are rooted in the socio-religious context of Second Temple Judaism. Salt was indispensable in covenantal offerings (Leviticus 2:13): "And every oblation of thy meat offering shalt thou season with salt; neither shalt thou suffer the salt of the covenant of thy God to be lacking from thy meat offering: with all thine offerings thou shalt offer salt" this symbolised permanence and purity. It also preserved food from decay, a metaphor for the Church's vocation to restrain moral corruption. Light, equally, was a central biblical motif for divine revelation-

Isaiah 60:1–3: "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.

John 1:4–5: "In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not."

To be "a city set on a hill" recalls Zion theology, where Jerusalem was envisioned as the beacon of God's truth to the nations (Micah 4:1–2): "But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it. And many nations shall come, and say, come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem."

Thus, the Church's mission is not ornamental, but ontological: to embody holiness that preserves society and to radiate truth that dispels darkness. Paul's description of the Church as "pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Timothy 3:15): "But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou ought to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth;" this situates ecclesial identity within the architecture of stability and witness. John's assertion that "the whole world lieth in wickedness," (1 John 5:19) underscores the urgency of this vocation.




**Historical Witness Of The Church In Decaying Societies**

**Patristic Era**

• **City Of God** (5th century) responded to Rome's collapse by distinguishing the transient civitas terrena (earthly city) from the eternal civitas Dei (City of God). The Church was called to embody the eternal city amid political disintegration. The civitas terrena is driven by self love and earthly dominance, which is different from civitas Dei is defined by selfless love of God of which we are to represent.

**John Chrysostom** emphasised the Church's prophetic rebuke of imperial excess, insisting that bishops must be "watchmen" (cf. Ezekiel 33:7).

**Medieval Christendom**

The Church preserved literacy, moral order and social cohesion during the so-called Dark Ages. Monastic communities became centres of ethical formation and social stability.

Reform movements (e.g., Cluniac, Cistercian) arose precisely when corruption threatened ecclesial witness, reminding us that renewal is intrinsic to the Church's identity.

**Reformation And Post-reformation**

Reformers like Luther and Calvin denounced ecclesial materialism and called the Church back to holiness. Calvin's Geneva became a model of moral discipline, where civic and ecclesial life were intertwined.

The Catholic Counter-Reformation (Council of Trent, 1545–63) reaffirmed the Church's role as guardian of truth, emphasising catechesis, liturgical purity, and pastoral accountability.

**Modern Africa**

**Kenya (2017):** Anglican leaders sparheaded anti-corruption campaigns.

• **Malawi:** Bishops denounced electoral malpractice, framing corruption as a spiritual disease.

• **Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC):** Catholic leaders mobilised against systemic injustice.

• **Nigeria:** Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria (CBCN) communiqués and Caritas Nigeria initiatives exemplify institutional advocacy.

This historical trajectory demonstrates that the Church's prophetic role is perennial: to stand as conscience, rebuke and guide in times of decay.

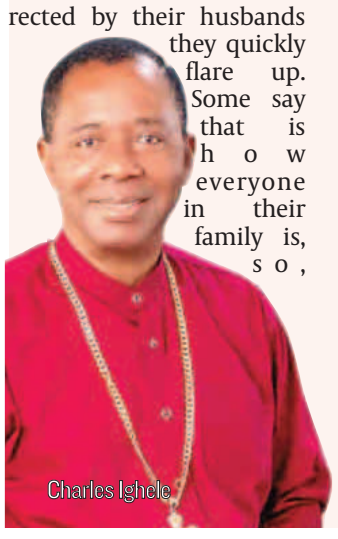
• **The Ven. Stephen Wolemonwu, Rector, The Ibru Ecumenical Centre, Agbarha-Otor stephenwolemonwu@gmail.com, 08035413812.**

# That Is How I Am

By **Charles Ighele**

WHEN some spouses put up some bad behaviours, instead of apologising they simply retort and say, "that is how I am" or some even say "that is how we are in our family o." Some ladies are quick to getting angry. They flare up at the slightest thing. Some men shout and raise their voice at any little issue even when the issue does not warrant shouting. When men like this shout and their partners tell them they are shouting they growl saying, "leave me alone that's how I am," "that's how my voice is and I can't change it."

When some women are corrected by their husbands they quickly flare up. Some say that is how everyone in their family is, so, the man should not try to change her as it is going to be a futile effort. When as a woman you keep telling your husband that "that is how I am," each time he raises an observation or he corrects you, you are simply telling your husband that you are not mature enough. It must, however, be stated here that this attitude does not in any way build a relationship. Rather, it triggers the collapse of a relationship or union.




Both the man and woman should know that there is always opportunity to improve and become a better husband and better wife. When your partner tells you that you have a particular habit or character that is bad and inimical to your relationship, the onus now "lies" on you to see how you can work on yourself and improve on that part of your life. If your spouse does not love you he or she won't tell you that you have that particular habit. The improvement of that habit might be what will increase the degree of the love your spouse will have for you.

• *Bishop Charles Ighele is the General Superintendent of Holy Spirit Mission, Lagos.*

# PFN Seeks Divine Intervention Over Rising Insecurity, Kidnappings

By **Isaac Taiwo**

DISTURBED by the worsening security situation across the country, particularly the recent kidnapping of a group of schoolchildren and teachers in Oyo State, the Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria (PFN), Mainland Province, Lagos Chapter, has called on Nigerians to seek divine intervention through prayers.

The call was made during a prayer programme titled, "Help From Above" held at the Bariga Primary School Complex, Bariga, Lagos.

Organised against the backdrop of the recent abduction of over 72 pupils and teachers in the Oriire axis of Ogbomoso, Oyo State, where a teacher was reportedly beheaded by the kidnappers.

Speaking at the gathering, Chairman of PFN Mainland Province, Lagos Chapter, Pastor Chinedu Momah, said the alarming state of insecurity in the country has made it imperative for citizens to turn to God for help.

Represented by the General Secretary of the fellowship, Pastor Moses Mboso, Momah lamented that despite efforts by political leaders, security agencies and other stakeholders, the nation has continued to grapple with kidnappings, killings and other forms of criminality.

Saying righteousness remains the foundation for national peace and progress, he urged Nigerians to humble themselves before God, repent of their sins and seek divine mercy.

Delivering his message at the event, Lead Pastor of International Miracle Service (IMS), Andrew Umoru, described the prayer meeting as timely, noting that the nation was currently passing through a period of pain and uncertainty .

"There could be no better time for this programme than now that the nation is bleeding. People are being kidnapped, students are being abducted from schools and citizens are desperately looking for solutions," he said.

Umoru stressed that addressing the country's challenges should not be left to politicians alone, insisting that religious leaders also have a responsibility to intercede for the nation.

He noted that while prayers remained important, genuine repentance and a change of attitude were necessary for divine intervention.

# Family Holds Thanksgiving Service In Honour Of Amos Olomola

By **Chris Irekamba**

FAMILY members and friends, last Sunday, gathered at the Archbishop Vining Memorial Church Cathedral (AVMCC), GRA, Ikeja, Lagos, for a thanksgiving service to mark the 10th remembrance anniversary of the late Dr Amos Oluwafemi Olomola and also to celebrate God's blessings on the family. The late Olomola died in 2016 at the age of 65.

The Dean of the Cathedral, The Venerable Ariire Kolawole, who presided over the service, said the family has continued to experience God's faithfulness and preservation since the passing of its breadwinner.

Kolawole prayed for continued protection and long life for members of the family, urging God not to forsake them.

Addressing the widow, Mrs Kunbi Olomola, the cleric prayed that she would continue to witness greater blessings over her children and grandchildren.

Speaking with *The Guardian*, Mrs Olomola described her late husband as a caring and exceptional man who positively impacted many lives.

She said: "My husband was a fantastic man, wonderful and amazing. He carried everybody along. He was very good socially, materially and career-wise. He was an excellent man and a pacesetter. We all miss him."

She disclosed that the family has continued to benefit from the legacy the husband left behind, which informed the decision to commemorate his 10th remembrance anniversary.

After the thanksgiving service, the family hosted a reception at Strong Tower Event Hall, Ikoyi, Lagos.

Meanwhile, in his sermon titled, "The Mystery of the Godhead," Dr Tosin Isaiah, said the message was aimed at helping believers understand God's divine nature and its relevance to Christians.

The Bible readings were taken from Proverbs 8:22–29 and John 14:8–17.

# Behold The Saviour Of The World

*John 3:16-18: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. 17: For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. 18: He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."*




THE creation of man was both unique and well thought out as God's intention was to create man and empower him as His representative here on earth. There is no other creature that God created in his image and likeness except man. Not only that, He also gave man dominion over all other creatures of His. Man was empowered to be fruitful, multiply, replenish and subdue the earth. Adam, the first man created by God, was placed in the Garden of Eden where everything was provided for his comfortable living.

The earth according to God's plan was to be the colony of heaven with man at the head of the government, while God the King rules in heaven with the earth full of His glory. Man was to rule the earth according to God's will by being in total obedience to the will of God. Man, made in the image and likeness of God, was to function like God as the Bible reveals in Genesis 1:26-28, saying: "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. 27: So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. 28: And God blessed them, and God said unto them, be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth."

The earth would have been like heaven, with residents manifesting the culture of heaven in their daily activities and lives, but the Devil, the pretender, represented by serpent came in his subtle way to deceive man. The serpent led man into the sin of disobedience. Man disobeyed God's word by eating the fruit he was instructed not to eat and with this, sin entered the earth and the kingdom was lost to the Devil.

Man was ejected from his comfort zone in the Garden of Eden to fend for himself. The Devil having taken over the rulership of the earth, death, sin, desperation, murder and many other evils came into being, leading to depravity of man. Nevertheless, it is not the will or desire of God that man should perish forever, so, he made a provision for man's redemption through our Lord Jesus Christ. 1 Tim 2:3-4: "For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour. 4: Who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth," (NKJV). God promised the coming of the seed of man who will bruise the head of the serpent at the appointed time. This seed of man is our Lord, Jesus Christ, the saviour of mankind, which the Bible presents in the lead scripture above. God loves the man He created to represent Him on the colony of heaven on earth. The saviour of the world our Lord, Jesus Christ, came to reclaim the lost kingdom. He brought back the culture and government of heaven to earth, using the church as an outpost for the spread of heavenly culture on the earth, as colony. The people of the earth who will live their lives according to the legacy, the Saviour has come to propagate, will live everlasting life with Him, as they will be raptured when He comes back in His glory and whosoever will live his or her life according to God's will would be raptured when the Lord will come to rapture the saints and they will be with Him forever. The people who will remain with the sin, which the Devil has put into them through Adam, will not be part of this rapture and the glory that will accompany it. That is why the Bible warned in Romans 3:23-24 saying: "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God. 24: Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."

Through the sin of Adam in the Garden of Eden, we all have sinned, but there is redemption through our Lord, Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world. Sin, whose definition comes in various ways, is a transgression against the law. It is an overstepping of the law, the divine boundary between good and evil; it is a departure from the right or failure to meet the divine standard; it is also a trespass, which is the intrusion of self-will into the sphere of divine authority. It is also defined as lawlessness or spiritual anarchy, unbelief or an insult to the divine veracity. All sins originated from the Devil and the only remedy is to accept the Saviour, our Lord, Jesus Christ, Who was crucified on the Cross of Calvary for the salvation of mankind.

Christ came to redeem the people under the bondage of sin imposed on them by the Devil. Redemption is to deliver someone through payment of a price (the price here, is the blood of Jesus Christ). Our Lord, Jesus Christ, bought mankind with His blood shed on the Cross of Calvary. He is, therefore, the saviour of the world. He has come for the salvation of mankind. His kingdom and government will be made manifest in the life of the people who will abide by His word and teachings of the kingdom truth. He has come to seek all for everlasting life with Him, according to Luke 19:10: "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

Our Lord, Jesus Christ, is the seed of man, which God promised that would bruise the head of serpent, has come for the salvation of the world. He has come to reclaim and restore the kingdom lost to the Devil. Your role in this whole exercise is to believe in the redemption work of the saviour of the world. Sin has entered the world through Satan, the devil and can only be purged through the blood of Jesus Christ. When you accept Jesus Christ, you start the race in preparation for His second coming to rapture the saints who will reign with Him forever.

Today, as you read this message, reject everything about the Devil in your life, ensure that God's spirit rules in your life through the acceptance of our Lord Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour, then you are qualified for the second coming of the master and when the trumpet shall sound. You will make the rapture of the saints in Jesus' name.

## Testimony Of The Lord's Doing

# '13-year Sorrow Rolled Away With The Birth Of Twin Babies'

BRETHREN, our God is a great God, indeed. He does what no man can do. He is the Almighty God, the Omnipotent God, the great Jehovah, the Alpha and Omega, the Author and Finisher of our faith. He is the One, Who has made it possible for us to be here today.

Our names are Sister Esther Chigozie Ihuoma, my husband's name is Stanley Ihuoma, our twin babies are Brother Blossom Chikamso Ihuoma and Sister Blessed Chizaram.

We are here to testify and appreciate God for breaking the yoke of 13-year barrenness in my marriage. We got married in this (The Lord's Chosen Charismatic Revival Ministries) in May 2010. Like every other couple, we were eagerly expecting the fruit of the womb; one year passed, two years, three, four and so on. At a point, we knew that it has gone beyond "be careful," but we encouraged ourselves in the Lord and continued because our G.O. says steadfastness in serving God brings freedom. Because of this we went to hospitals, where medical doctors said different things ranging from hormonal imbalance to fibroid, and fallopian tube blockage.

In fact, it was all sorts of things. Medically, there was no hope for me, but I held on to God of Chosen and reminded Him of one sister whose fallopian tube was cut off, yet God still made her to conceive and gave birth to five children.

I told God that my own case is a small one, then I promised that whether God gives me a child or not, I will continue to serve Him. I was having over bleeding every month, but I was not bothered. I continued to serve this God, believing that one day He will visit me and, today, He has done it for me.

After doing all the tests prescribed, the doctor in the last hospital I visited requested to see my husband, but when I told him that my husband was not in Lagos, he said: "Going by the result of the tests I conducted, there was no way I could be pregnant, but since I am a believer I should hold on to God because there is nothing He cannot do."

He gave me my result and I went to my branch pastor to give him feedback on what the doctor has said about my case. This is because, I told him about the test before going. So, when I came back to him in tears, he said to me that he would dedicate my babies before leaving the branch for another on transfer.

I continued to visit him, then, one night, in the dream, I saw myself amid some sisters kneeling before the pulpit for prayers. While praying there, I heard the angel of our pastor scolding a particular girl, suddenly, I opened my eyes and saw that the girl that was being scolded was my sales girl. Pastor was telling her to go away from amid the sisters in front of the pulpit. After that, he came back to the altar and told me to stand up, as I stood, he passionately prayed to God to forgive me of my sins and also to deliver me from the evil people of the world have done against me.

Suddenly, I awoke. From that moment, my situation changed, God rolled away all the complications and manipulations of the enemy and made me a mother of not just one child, but two children. God of Chosen is, indeed, very great. May His name be glorified in Jesus' name ... Amen!




Brother Alex (middle) who was healed of prostate-induced paralysis he suffered for five years sharing his testimony at the Abuja 2026 Crusade of The Lord's Chosen Charismatic Revival Ministries held at Abiola National Stadium, Abuja.

# Jesus, The Eternal Prophet And Priest (2)

CHRIST is the reigning Prince with supreme majesty, ordained by God the Father. He wants to reign without a rival in every believer's heart, family and His Church. He does not want Satan, society, self, opinions, unbelievers and backsliders to reign in His Church. Therefore, we must give Him the liberty to reign over us in all things. God had proclaimed to "raise them (the children of Israel) up a Prophet… and will put (His) words in his mouth…." Those who reject Christ's words are false prophets, preachers and pastors.

As believers, God wants us to accept, believe, surrender and submit to Christ and have His word written in our hearts. If we confirm and affirm His word, we shall have the blessedness of eternal life. Christ is the "Prince of Peace." He brings us inner peace and reconciles us to God through His crucifixion. Now being justified by faith, we have peace with God. He unites Jews and Gentiles, opposing people, religions and tribes of the world. He would also bring peace when He sets up His millennial reign.

God commands that we hear Him "in all things whatsoever he shall say unto (us)." We are not to have another doctrine, idea, opinion or message contrary to the word of Christ. Refusal to obey Him will bring judgment. "And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people."

In Christ's day, religious leaders refused to acknowledge Him, despite His teachings and miracles. They rejected the prophesied Prophet, blocked their minds, closed their ears and blindfolded themselves "lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted...."

The Pharisees refused to accept the fact that Christ had healed the man who was born blind. Therefore, they interrogated his parents about how he was healed, but they could not confess it openly because of fear of being thrown out of the synagogue. As believers, Christ has given us gifts, talents and commission to preach repentance that all may be saved.

However, many disobeyed due to fear. If we fail to occupy till He comes, we will be disobeying the words of Christ. Those who refuse Christ's reign in their hearts are His enemies and will eventually face judgment on the final day.

Our Lord Jesus Christ is the Redeeming Priest, faithful and final Mediator. He is the priest who does the Father's will and desires. "And I will raise me up a faithful priest, that shall do according to that which is in mine heart and in my mind…." Ordained by the Father, Christ makes "reconciliation" for everyone. As the "High Priest" of our profession,
He forgives our sins through the power of His shed blood, which serves as our propitiation before God.

Professing Christ as Lord demands that we yield our hearts and lives to His authority, recognising Him as our Sovereign ruler and controller. When temptation arises to prioritise our will over the Scripture and Christ's words, we must resist it and steadfastly "hold fast (to) our profession." He became "the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him," not for those who merely pay lip service, follow their own desires, or elevate their opinions above His message. He is at the right hand of God, the heavenly Father, making intercession for us.

Springs Of Wisdom

By Pastor W. F. Kumuyi



Having been sacrificed for us, Christ purges, purifies and perfects us. As Prophet, He makes prophets of us, as Prince, He makes princes of us and as high Priest, He makes priests out of us. He has transformed our lives, giving us a new and eternal life. As new creatures, He sets a standard for our living. He heals our souls, mends our broken hearts and restores our bodies, empowering us to live a righteous life.

Now, all that remains is for us to surrender and submit to Christ, our Prophet, Prince and Priest, who reveals, reigns and redeems. This surrender should be evident in the way we live, which in turn, will draw others into the Kingdom.

• **Further reading (King James Version): Deuteronomy 18:15,18,19. Deuteronomy 18:15,18,19; Acts 3:22,23,26; Hebrews 1:1,2; 2:1-4; John 8:24,28,29; 12:49,50; 4:25,26. Deuteronomy 18:18,19; Psalm 2:6-8,12; Isaiah 9:6,7; Acts 3:22,23; Matthew 13:13-15. John 8:42-44; John 9:27,28; Luke 19:12-14,27. 1 Samuel 2:35; Psalm 110:4; Hebrews 2:17; 3:1-6; 4:14; 5:4-6,9; 6:18-20; 7:25,26; 13:11-14; 1 Peter 2:9,21,24.**

# One Word From God

RESTORATION HOUR

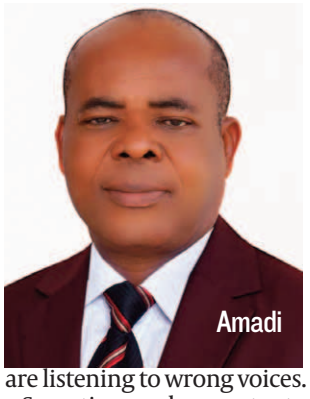
Text: Luke 7:1-10

By Abel Ukachi Amadi

*Key Verse: Luke 7:7: "I am not even worthy to come and meet you. Just say the word from where you are, and my servant will be healed," (NLT).*

WE are in the days and times so many voices speak to us. We hear many voices and many words; all speaking to us at one time or the other. We have human voices speaking to us, speaking over our challenges and speaking over our needs. There are challenges every human beings on earth grapple with. We have medical voices speaking to us over our health challenges and many strange voices speaking to us that we need to be aware of. Voices are powerful because they shape our lives. But listening to the wrong voice can impact your life negatively. Words have power; they can build or break one!

We also have satanic and demonic voices speaking to the people. The Bible said in Job 1:6, as the Angels of God were meeting with God, that Satan was also in their midst. When God asked Satan where he was coming from, he replied that he was coming from all over the world (Job 2:2). The devil roams about throughout the world, going back and forth speaking fear, hopelessness and confusion into the lives of many people. There are confusion in so many minds because people




are listening to wrong voices.

Sometimes, when we try to seek solutions from medical experts, their voices create fear and hopelessness in us. God does not intend that the believer in Christ be bound by these voices that we hear. It is not God's intention for us to run with these voices. He wants us to run with His own voice, what He tells us is what prevails; what He says is what comes to pass and what He says proffers solutions to our problems.

God intends to regularly drop His words in our hearts and make us know His mind concerning our situations. A word from the Lord will enable you excel and operate above all forces around you. Just one word from the Lord will help you fulfill your purpose. Our complete confidence should rest on the authority of the Word of the God. In Luke Chapter 7, the centurion, a high ranking soldier, whose servant was sick and about to die expressed his absolute confidence in Jesus' authority when he said to Jesus: "Don't trouble yourself, Sir! I am not important enough for you to come into my house — I didn't even think I was fit to come to you in person. Just speak a word please, and my servant will recover," (Luke 7:6-7). When the men, which the centurion sent to meet Jesus returned to the house, they found sick servant healed (Luke 7:10). Jesus was greatly impressed by this soldier, not by his high ranking position or material generosity, but by the quality and magnitude of his simple faith.

The centurion said to Jesus: "Just speak the word!" Jesus was astonished! The centurion was like a king in his own territory and there he was authorised to speak for a higher king, Caesar and so he knew what authority was. Dallas Willard said concerning the centurion: "He knew what it was to command an event. He knew that Jesus was doing the same kind of thing, so it was a simple matter for him to step into the situation by faith," (Hearing God, p. 130). Be still and quiet in trying moments to hear just one word from God. Just one word from God will settle your case.

*• Today's nugget: One word from God will settle the matter. Prayer: Lord speak a word to me. Prayer lines: 08033299824. E-mail: amadiabelukachi@gmail.com, Rev. Abel Ukachi Amadi, General Superintendent, Assemblies of God Nigeria.*

# Adoration (65)

Biblical Womanhood

By Emeritus Prof. Mercy Olumide



The Benefits Of Adoration (Cont)

THE verb "seek" implies being continually absorbed in a search for something or making a strenuous and diligent effort to obtain something (cf. 13:45). Christ refers to two objects of our seeking: (1) "The kingdom of God" — we must seek earnestly to have the rule and power of God demonstrated in our lives and assemblies. We must pray that the kingdom of God will come in the mighty power of the Holy Spirit to save sinners, to deliver people from demonic bondage and strongholds, to heal the sick and to magnify the name of the Lord Jesus.

(2) "His righteousness"— through the Holy Spirit we must seek to obey the commands of Christ, possess Christ's righteousness, remain separated from the world and show Christ's love toward everyone (cf Phil 2:12-13).

"Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble," (Mat 6:34).

Planning for tomorrow is time well spent; worrying about tomorrow is time wasted. Sometimes, it is difficult to tell the difference. Careful planning is thinking ahead about goals, steps and schedules, and trusting in God's guidance. When done well, planning can help alleviate worry. Worriers by contrast are consumed by fear and finds it difficult to trust God. They let their plans interfere with their relationship with God. Don't let worries about tomorrow affect your relationship with God today.

Paul's Teaching On 'Not To Worry'

"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; [7]and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus," (Phil 4:6, 7).

Imagine never being "anxious" about anything! It seems like an impossibility — we all have worries on the job, in our homes, at school, among others. But Paul's advice is to turn our worries into prayers. Do you want to worry less? Then pray more! Whenever you start to worry, stop and pray.

4:7 God's peace is different from the world's peace (see John 14:27). True peace is not found in positive thinking, in absence of conflict or in good feelings. It comes from knowing that God is in control. Our citizenship in Christ's kingdom is sure; our destiny is set; and we can have victory over sin. Let God's peace guard your heart against anxiety.

Apostle Peter Teaching On Not To Worry

"Casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you," (1 Pet 5:7).

Carrying your worries, stresses and daily struggles by yourself shows that you have not trusted God fully with your life. It takes humility, however, to recognise that God cares, to admit your need, and to let others in God's family help you.

*• Email: ymolumide@gmail.com. Facebook: Yetunde Mercy Olumide*

# Foursquare Women Hold Rally On June 24, Organise Vocational Skill Training

By Chris Irekamba

FOURSQUARE women will from June 24 to 27 hold their yearly June Rally programme at Foursquare Camp in Ajebo, Ogun State. With "Finger of God," as theme, the event will also feature vocational skills training sessions on June 22 and 23 at the same venue.

The National President of Foursquare Women International, Elder Margaret Udoh, who disclosed this at a Pre-June Rally Retreat organised to prepare participants spiritually for the yearly gathering, assured women of adequate security and provision.

Speaking at the retreat, the National Secretary of the Foursquare Gospel Church in Nigeria, Rev'd Samson Alawode, urged women to embrace transformation, avoid unhealthy competition and division and pursue excellence, while maintaining integrity and humility.

Urging women to intensify prayers, strengthen teamwork, encourage one another, maintain spiritual vigilance and shun negativity, Alawode noted that anyone seeking to experience the "Finger of God" must remain a holy vessel dedicated to God's service.

The Chairperson of the Retreat Planning Committee, Deaconess Funke Oga, urged members to reflect on the encounter of Moses at the burning bush as recorded in Exodus 3, noting that the theme, "Finger of God" symbolises divine intervention against forces challenging faith, family, businesses, marriages and ministries.

The chairperson enjoined all those involved in prayers, planning and execution of the programme to remain committed and ensure successful delivering.

Oga expressed confidence that testimonies of God's intervention would become evident in the lives of participants, their families and the organisation at large after the retreat.

INCLUSIVE BASIC SERVICE DELIVERY AND LIVELIHOOD EMPOWERMENT INTEGRATED PROJECT
BORNO STATE PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION UNIT
No 1 Airport Road, Maiduguri
Tel: +2348063056261, 8033307085
bornoibsip@gmail.com

## PUBLICATION OF AWARD OF CONTRACT FOR WORKS INFORMATION NOTICE

**Publication date**: 6TH JUNE, 2026
**Country**: NIGERIA
**Executing Agency**: BORNO STATE IBSIP
**Name of Project**: INCLUSIVE BASIC SERVICE DELIVERY AND LIVELIHOOD EMPOWERMENT INTEGRATED PROGRAMME
**Loan/Grant Number**: ADB-2000200000701
**Name of Tender**: SUPPLY OF 500 LENGTHS OF 12 M X 8'' API CASINGS AND 1000 LENGTHS 12 M X 6'' API CASINGS

**Procurement mode**: NATIONAL COMPETATIVE BIDDING (NCB)
**Domestic preference** (Yes or No): NO
**Regional preference** (Yes or No): NO

**Borrower's Tender Number**: BO/IBSIP/2026/GOODS/02
**Date of receipt by the Bank of the draft Tender document**: 30th January 2026
**Date of approval by the Bank of the Tender Document**: 09th February 2026
**Tender issuing date**: 11th of February 2026
**Closing date of the Tender**: 11th March 2026
**Date of Tender opening**: 11th March 2026
**Date of receipt by the Bank of the Tender evaluation report**: 19th May 2026
**Date of approval by the Bank of the Tender evaluation**: 03rd June 2026

**Name of the winning Bidder:** Messrs. IMSY NIGERIA LTD
**Nationality**: NIGERIAN
**Address:** 22 Lateef Jakande Crescent, Gudu/Apo District, Abuja, Nigeria.
**Contract Award Price**: N998,000,000.00

**Contract Start date**: 17th June 2026
**Contract Duration**: 4 MONTHS
**Summary of Scope of Contract Awarded**: Supply Of 500 Lengths Of 12 M X 8'' API Casings And 1000 Lengths 12 M X 6'' API Casings

**Total Number of Bidders** : 2 (TWO)
**For each Bidder:**
**Name**: Messrs. IMSY NIGERIA LTD
**Nationality**: NIGERIAN
**Address**: 22 Lateef Jakande Crescent, Gudu/Apo District, Abuja, Nigeria.
**Bid Price as Read-out**: - N998,000,000.00
**Evaluated Price**: N998,000,000.00
**Bid Accepted / Rejected**: ACCEPTED

**Name**: Messrs. PAMI INFRASTRUCTURES LIMITED
**Nationality**: NIGERIAN
**Address**: 4th floor, wings A Nigeria Reinsurance Cooperation Building Abuja
**Bid Price as Read-out: -** N1,060,000.000.00
**Evaluated Price**: N1,060,000.000.00
**Bid Accepted / Rejected**: REJECTED

***N.B.**: Any bidder who wishes to ascertain the grounds, on which its proposal was not selected, should request an explanation from the Executing Agency. In any event, the Bank reserves the right to review any complaint of a bidder at any time following the award.*

***Engr. Dr. Mohammed Musa Aliyu.***
*Programme Manager.*
*Borno State IBSIP*

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## PUBLICATION OF AWARD OF CONTRACT FOR WORKS INFORMATION NOTICE

**Publication date**: 6TH JUNE, 2026
**Country**: NIGERIA
**Executing Agency**: BORNO STATE IBSIP
**Name of Project**: INCLUSIVE BASIC SERVICE DELIVERY AND LIVELIHOOD EMPOWERMENT INTEGRATED PROGRAMME
**Loan/Grant Number**: ADB-2000200000701
**Name of Tender**: SUPPLY OF 747 LENGTHS OF STAINLESS-STEEL SCREENS
**Procurement mode**: NATIONAL COMPETATIVE BIDDING (NCB)
**Domestic preference** (Yes or No): NO
**Regional preference** (Yes or No): NO

**Borrower's Tender Number**: BO/IBSIP/2026/GOODS/03
**Date of receipt by the Bank of the draft Tender document**: 30th January 2026
**Date of approval by the Bank of the Tender Document**: 23rd February 2026
**Tender issuing date**: 25th of February 2026
**Closing date of the Tender**: 23rd March 2026
**Date of Tender opening**: 23rd March 2026
**Date of receipt by the Bank of the Tender evaluation report**: 12th February 2026
**Date of approval by the Bank of the Tender evaluation**: 03rd June 2026

**Name of the winning Bidder:** Messrs. ALWAKALI GLOBAL CONCEPT LTD
**Nationality**: NIGERIAN
**Address:** No. 28 Alhaji Usman Alkali Street, Airport Road, Maiduguri
**Contract Award Price**: N 519,165,000.
**Contract Start date**: 17th June 2026

**Contract Duration**: 4 MONTHS
**Summary of Scope of Contract Awarded**: Supply of 747 Lengths of Stainless-Steel Screens

**Total Number of Bidders** : 2 (TWO)
**For each Bidder:**
**Name**: Messrs. ALWAKALI GLOBAL CONCEPT LTD
**Nationality**: NIGERIAN
**Address**: No. 28 Alhaji Usman Alkali Street, Airport Road, Maiduguri
**Bid Price as Read-out**: - N519,165,000.
**Evaluated Price**: N519,165,000.
**Bid Accepted / Rejected**: ACCEPTED

**Name**: Messrs. ADMAL DESIGN CONSTRUCTION LTD
**Nationality**: NIGERIAN
**Address**: No. 2 Polo Road, Old GRA, Maiduguri, Borno State
**Bid Price as Read-out: -** N526,635,000.00
**Evaluated Price**: N526,635,000.00
**Bid Accepted / Rejected**: REJECTED

***N.B.**: Any bidder who wishes to ascertain the grounds, on which its proposal was not selected, should request an explanation from the Executing Agency. In any event, the Bank reserves the right to review any complaint of a bidder at any time following the award.*

***Engr. Dr. Mohammed Musa Aliyu.***
*Programme Manager.*
*Borno State IBSIP*

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**PUBLICATION OF AWARD OF CONTRACT FOR WORKS INFORMATION NOTICE**

**Publication date**: 6TH JUNE, 2026
**Country**: NIGERIA
**Executing Agency**: BORNO STATE IBSIP
**Name of Project**: INCLUSIVE BASIC SERVICE DELIVERY AND LIVELIHOOD EMPOWERMENT INTEGRATED PROGRAMME
**Loan/Grant Number**: ADB-2000200000701
**Name of Tender**: SUPPLY OF SUBMERSIBLE PUMPS AND INVERTERS FOR DEEP BOREHOLES
**Procurement mode**: NATIONAL COMPETATIVE BIDDING (NCB)
**Domestic preference** (Yes or No): NO
**Regional preference** (Yes or No): NO

**Borrower's Tender Number**: BO/IBSIP/2026/GOODS/01
**Date of receipt by the Bank of the draft Tender document**: 27th January 2026
**Date of approval by the Bank of the Tender Document**: 30th January 2026
**Tender issuing date**: 07th of February 2026
**Closing date of the Tender**: 09th March 2026
**Date of Tender opening**: 09th March 2026
**Date of receipt by the Bank of the Tender evaluation report**: 19th May 2026
**Date of approval by the Bank of the Tender evaluation**: 03rd June 2026
**Name of the winning Bidder:** Messrs. MANTATILI NIGERIA LIMITED
**Nationality**: NIGERIAN
**Address:** Plot 469, Damboa Road, GRA, Maiduguri, Borno state.
**Contract Award Price**: N 328,348,400.00
**Contract Start date**: 17th June 2026
**Contract Duration**: 4 months
**Summary of Scope of Contract Awarded**: Supply of Submersible Pumps and Inverters for Deep Boreholes
**Total Number of Bidders** : 2 (TWO)
**For each Bidder:**
**Name**: Messrs. MANTATILI NIGERIA LIMITED
**Nationality**: NIGERIAN
**Address**: Plot 469, Damboa Road, GRA, Maiduguri, Borno state.
**Bid Price as Read-out**: - N328,348,400.00
**Evaluated Price**: N328,348,400.00
**Bid Accepted / Rejected**: ACCEPTED
**Name**: Messrs. BELLSON INTEGRATED SERVICES LTD
**Nationality**: NIGERIAN
**Address**: No. 241, Gomari Airport, Bus-stop, Maiduguri, Borno State
**Bid Price as Read-out: -** N329,495,000.00
**Evaluated Price**: N329,495,000.00
**Bid Accepted / Rejected**: REJECTED

***N.B.**: Any bidder who wishes to ascertain the grounds, on which its proposal was not selected, should request an explanation from the Executing Agency. In any event, the Bank reserves the right to review any complaint of a bidder at any time following the award.*

***Engr. Dr. Mohammed Musa Aliyu.***
*Programme Manager.*
*Borno State IBSIP*



# Why NYSC Merits National Support In A Changing Nigeria

*More than five decades after its establishment, the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) has remained one of Nigeria's most enduring nation-building institutions. Though beset with numerous challenges, experts want the Scheme to be reformed rather than scrapped. They also urge the inclusion of entrepreneurship skills development as part of its core activities rather than parades, drills and other exercises that no longer reflect the prevailing socio-economic realities of the country,* ***ERNEST NZOR*** *reports.*

OVER the years, millions of graduates have participated in the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) programme, serving in schools, hospitals, government agencies, private establishments and rural communities across the country.

But despite its historic role, the future of NYSC has become a subject of national debate. Questions bordering on insecurity, unemployment, relevance, cost implications of running the programme as well as national cohesion have triggered calls for either reform or outright scrapping of the scheme.

However, beyond the frustrations and anxieties surrounding the programme, a stronger argument continues to emerge: though reforms and modernisation are required to meet the prevailing realities, the scheme deserves national support.

The debate is not merely about a compulsory one-year service programme but fundamentally about how Nigeria intends to build unity, prepare graduates for employment, deploy youthful energy for development in line with its vision and mission.

Established in 1973 in the aftermath of Nigerian Civil War, the scheme was designed to promote national unity, reconciliation and integration among young Nigerians from different ethnic, religious and cultural backgrounds. In such an environment, institutions designed to encourage interactions and cooperation across divides are not optional luxuries but strategic necessities.

Yet, one of the most common criticisms of the NYSC scheme is that despite its goals and objectives, the country is still confronted with ethnic suspicion, political polarisation and regional tensions 50 years after.

For many Nigerians, the scheme presents the first meaningful encounter with citizens from another part of the country, an experience believed to have greater impact than imagined.

Former NYSC Director General, Major General Johnson Olawunmi (rtd), recently defended the relevance of the scheme, describing it as a continuing instrument of national integration and development. His position reflects an important reality: national cohesion is not built once and completed forever but requires constant renewal.

Over the years, there have been reports of corps members involved in road accidents while travelling, kidnapped and attacked in conflict-prone areas. There have also been cases of unsafe accommodation or poor welfare conditions. These incidents have understandably increased parental anxiety and have left some graduates wondering if the risks outweigh the benefits of the scheme.

In spite of its challenges, pundits argued that scrapping the scheme is not a better option as the security situation collectively permeates every segment of the country.

They rather canvassed a more security-driven operational framework that comprises data-based posting decisions, avoidance of volatile areas, secure transit arrangements, emergency response systems, insurance coverage, rapid relocation procedures and stronger collaboration with security agencies and state governments.

During a recent visit to the residence of former NYSC Director General, Major General Suleiman Kazaure (rtd), the current D.G, Brigadier General Olakunle Nafiu, called for stronger stakeholder engagements to protect corps members and officials during future national assignments.

Kazaure also commended the contributions of the scheme to national unity, development, youth empowerment, mentorship and job creation.

Meanwhile, the former NYSC boss urged the current leadership to strengthen collaboration with relevant stakeholders to ensure the security of corps members and officials who may serve as ad hoc personnel during and after the 2027 general election.

The growing insecurity in parts of the country has undoubtedly shaped public perceptions about the scheme. Parents increasingly worry about where their children are posted while potential corps members sometimes seek redeployment immediately after orientation camp for security reasons.

Another recurring criticism is that the scheme has become overly ceremonial. Critics held that the parades, drills and bureaucratic routines during the three-week orientation camping are often contrasted with the difficult economic realities confronting graduates.

Many corps members report being posted to offices with little or no work; schools without teaching materials; or institutions where they are unable to effectively utilise their skills. In a country beset with unemployment, critics argued that one year cannot be wasted on unproductive assignments.

The National Coordinator, Coalition of Northern Groups (CNG), Jamilu Charanchi, said the programme requires redesign to better prepare graduates for productivity and economic relevance.

According to him, while the scheme achieved substantial results after the civil war, present day Nigeria faces entirely different realities, including unemployment, technological disruption and economic stagnation.

Charanchi believed that entrepreneurship should become central to the scheme rather than optional, stressing that corps members should leave service with viable income pathways and practical digital skills such as coding, digital marketing, graphic design, remote work capabilities and data management.

He added that Nigeria could no longer afford to treat NYSC merely as a transition period between graduation and unemployment. "Instead, the programme can be transformed into the largest structured youth employability platform in the country," he said.


NYSC DG, Brig. Gen. OO Nafiu

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# Global Hitmaker, **Patoranking**, Back With Summer Anthem, ***Shake That***


Patoranking

By **Daniel Anazia**

FOLLOWING his critically acclaimed roots reggae collection, *African Soldier,* a collaboration with Grammy Award-winning legend, Buju Banton, global afro-dancehall star Patrick Nnaemeka Okorie, well known as Patoranking is back with a dancefloor-ready summer anthem, titled, *Shake That*.

The new offering, which has earned praise from major platforms including Billboard Africa, *Jamaica* Observer, The Tropixs, and GRM Daily, marks another creative shift in Patoranking's evolving sound, arriving after his earlier release, *No Jonze*.

Featuring afrobeats favourite Ruger, the vibrant new single is off his forthcoming fifth studio album and serves as third single. Driven by a catchy call-and-response hook, the track celebrates attraction, movement, and the magnetic confidence of a woman who commands a room the moment she steps onto the floor.

Built for dancefloors and outdoor celebrations, the track celebrates movement, attraction, and the magnetic energy of a confident woman who instantly commands attention on the dancefloor. Patoranking brings his signature patois-inflected bounce and effortless melodic charm, while Ruger delivers a playful, charismatic verse that sharpens the track's swagger and chemistry. Together, both artistes create a dynamic exchange that blends Afro-dancehall and Afrobeats seamlessly.

Produced by Grammy Award-nominated beatsmith Yungwillis and Dwillsharmony — a production duo whose combined credits span Davido, Asake, Wizkid, and Olamide. The accompanying video was directed by Forbes 30 Under 30 listed filmmaker, Dammy Twitch, whose credits include Davido, Yung Bleu, and DaBaby.

Speaking on the single, Patoranking said: "After *African Soldier*, I wanted to give my fans something for the summer. Shake That is that energy. Ruger brought the vibes, and it was great linking with Ikel Marvelous again. This summer, we are dancing — I'm back on the road, hitting the UK and Europe. Catch me and the band; we're outside."

The track also arrives as the *Alubarika* hit maker announces his 'Fire 2026 European Summer Tour,' taking him and the acclaimed Fire Republik Band across the UK, Germany, the Netherlands, and Belgium, including a headline slot at London's prestigious Barbican later this month.

# Brymo, Adekunle Gold, Faveszn Light Up Maiden Lagos Acoustic Experience

By **Eniola Daniel**

RAW vocals, stripped-down artistry and pure musical connection defined the maiden Lagos Acoustic Experience held at the Balmoral Event Centre, Federal Palace Hotel, Victoria Island, Lagos.

The carefully curated evening brought together some of Nigeria's most compelling live performers for an intimate showcase that proved great music needs no production excess. The event offered a refreshing departure from heavily produced concerts, instead focusing on live instrumentation and emotional connection between artistes and audience.

Leading the night was Lagos-born prince and afrobeats star, Adekunle Gold, who showcased his musical evolution in a warm, acoustic setting that highlighted the depth and maturity of his artistry. Fans experienced a refined version of his catalogue, delivered with clarity and emotional precision.

Alternative music star Brymo during his set, delivered a powerful and soul-stirring performance that was marked by his signature vocal depth and poetic expression. His performance reinforced his reputation as one of Nigeria's most unique and thought-provoking voices.

Rising star Faveszn impressed the audience with a stripped-down performance that brought her songwriting strength and vocal clarity to the forefront. Her delivery of fan-favourite tracks carried emotional weight and authenticity, earning strong audience reactions.

Afrobeats sensation Fola rounded out the lineup, adding a vibrant spark to the evening, thrilling music lovers with energetic moments that balanced the acoustic mood with lively rhythm and excitement.

Speaking after the event, co-organiser, Oluwafemi Abegunde, a Principal Consultant at Arch Raphael Limited, explained the vision behind the concert. "Africa language is music and dance, and we export our talents globally but it's important to bring the talents home to connect with others," he said.

"Lagos is not all about 'Detty December'. There are other activities and Ileya holiday is one of the best times to stage an experience like this — have beautiful original African sounds. The artistes that performed tonight are the representatives of who we are.

"This is the maiden edition of many editions. We are not rookie when it comes to entertainment. Africans love music and we will continue to curate experiences for the audiences," Abegunde added.

Speaking on how to improve the creative industry, the CEO said: "There must be continued deliberate efforts. More investment is needed to make music contribute and be beneficial to everybody."

# The Trybe Unveils Short Film, 'I Find The Defendant…'


Ajayi

THE Trybe, an emerging Nigerian film production company, has announced the completion of its debut short film, 'I Find the Defendant…,' a tense courtroom drama set in the heart of Lagos.

Directed by Michael Ajayi, 'I Find the Defendant…' follows a Grammy-nominated Nigerian jazz star accused of rape by his girlfriend, sending his career into a free fall. In a tense Lagos courtroom; fame, power and consent collide as the nation struggles to defend the truth.

The film stars Belu Ogbuka, Empress Allen, Precious Onyekwelibe, Aaron Ayo Akinyemi, Benedict Emmanuel Tochukwu Odoh, Constance Nnenna Izuogu, Nisola Martins and Joy Ozichi – a cast that brings raw and compelling performances to one of the most pressing conversations of our time.

'I Find the Defendant…' is a bold, uncompromising body of work that examines how institutions, celebrity culture and public opinion influence and shape the pursuit of justice. The film arrives at a moment when consent, accountability and the power of fame have never been more urgent in Nigeria and across the world.

"IFTD is a Rashomon effect that explores a separate amount of the same incident: is a young woman sexually abused or is the man falsely accused?" says the Director, Ajayi.

The film has been submitted to major festivals and is being prepared for submission to international festivals with news of screenings and other announcements to follow.

The Trybe is a film production company passionate about telling authentic African stories. They aim to tell stories that spark conversation, question the norm and overall provide premium entertainment. 'I Find the Defendant…' is their debut short film. Ninety-five per cent of members are from Ebonylife Creative Academy 2025 third intake.

# Davido, Ayra Starr, Odumodublvck Get Spot On World Cup Album Project

By **Daniel Anazia**

AFROBEATS superstar David Adedeji Adeleke Jnr, professionally known as Davido, has been confirmed as a feature artiste on the official 2026 FIFA World Cup album. The development further solidifies his standing among the global names selected to soundtrack football's most prestigious tournament.

The award-winning singer will appear on a track titled, *No Place Like Home*, alongside internationally acclaimed electronic music collective, Major Lazer and Canadian pop icon, Nelly Furtado, a collaboration that signals just how far African music has travelled on the world stage.


Ayra Starr Davido

Davido's inclusion reinforces his growing reputation as one of Afrobeats' most influential global ambassadors, as African music continues to gain stronger representation on the world stage, particularly within major international sporting events.

Over the past decade, the self-proclaimed *Omo Baba Olowo* (O.B.O) crooner has delivered chart-topping hits and forging collaborations with artistes across multiple continents. Landing a spot on a World Cup album — one of music's most globally visible platforms — marks another landmark in a career already rich with international recognition.

In addition to the album feature, the *Assurance, Timeless* hitmaker has also been confirmed as one of the performers at the World Cup countdown concert, scheduled to take place at the Crypto.com Arena in Los Angeles.

The 2026 FIFA World Cup album is being developed as one of the most musically diverse in the tournament's history, with organisers drawing artistes from across continents and genres. The organisers are said to be curating a global soundscape that reflects the cultural diversity and unity of football's biggest competition.

Davido's participation in the World Cup Album also places him among a select group of African artistes contributing to the project, further highlighting the increasing influence of African sound on global pop culture.

With football and music continuing to serve as universal connectors, *No Place Like Home* is expected to stand out as one of the key records on the soundtrack, blending global sounds with emotional and celebratory energy.

# Excitement Mounts As BBNaija Season 10 Reunion Premieres June 8

By **Eniola Daniel**

MONTHS after the cameras stopped rolling and the grand finale crowned its winner at the Big Brother Naija Season 10, unresolved tensions and unanswered questions still linger among several ex-housemates.

From heated confrontations to unexpected alliances and viral moments that dominated social media, the season left behind a trail of stories fans have continued to debate long after the show ended.

Anticipation is building once again as the ex-housemates prepare to return to the spotlight in a Reunion Show set to premiere on Monday, June 8. With plans for a new season already in motion, the reunion show is set to officially close conflicts, encourage clarifications and allow the housemates to lay it all bare to the viewers and themselves one last time.

Among the key talking points during the show will be the disqualification of the medical doctor turned reality star, Faith Adewale, known on the show as Faith, who was removed in the final week following a physical altercation with fellow contestant Sultana.

The season also delivered viral highlights that dominated social media, including a widely discussed "spoon incident" that trended on X for days, alongside several romantic entanglements that divided fan opinions across the continent.



# Pretty Mike: The Raid, The Grief, And The Man Behind The Spectacle

By Daniel Anazia

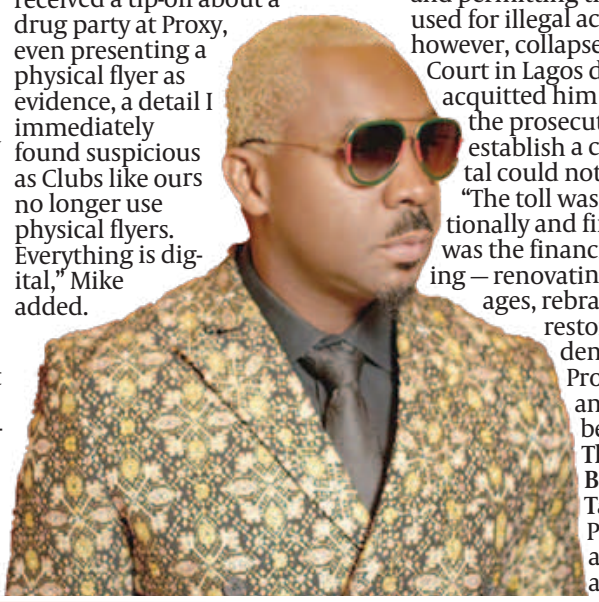
THERE are few figures in Nigerian nightlife quite as theatrical or as misunderstood as Mike Eze-Nwalie Nwogu, better known as Pretty Mike. The owner of Proxy Club on Victoria Island, Lagos.

But behind the spectacle lies a story far more layered than the headlines suggest. In a rare candid conversation, Pretty Mike opened up about an NDLEA raid that nearly broke him, the grief he was carrying when it happened, and his surprisingly traditional views on love, marriage, and God.

**When The World Came Crashing Down**

The October 2025 raid on his Proxy Lounge did not arrive at just any moment. It arrived at the worst one. "I had just returned from the burial of my father and was still trying to pull myself together emotionally and mentally. Then, around 2am, over 100 military officers alongside about 30 to 40 Nigeria Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) operatives stormed the building. Everybody was ordered to sit on the floor," he said.

"Honestly, it felt like the world was crashing down on me. The operatives claimed they had received a tip-off about a drug party at Proxy, even presenting a physical flyer as evidence, a detail I immediately found suspicious as Clubs like ours no longer use physical flyers. Everything is digital," Mike added.



According to him, he was arrested, with instructions reportedly coming directly from Abuja, and later arraigned alongside the club's supervisor on charges of conspiracy, unlawful possession of hard drugs, and permitting the premises to be used for illegal activities. The case, however, collapsed. A Federal High Court in Lagos discharged and acquitted him after ruling that the prosecution had failed to establish a case. But the acquittal could not undo the damage.

"The toll was enormous — emotionally and financially. There was the financial cost of rebuilding — renovating, repairing damages, rebranding the space to restore people's confidence in the club. Proxy is back open and grander than before," he stated.

**The Name, The Brand, The Path Not Taken**

Pretty Mike did not arrive at nightlife by accident; he arrived by choice, and it was not the easy one. Coming from a family that prized academic achievement, with a father who was an engineer and later earned a doctorate, medicine was practically a household tradition.

"I think life is sometimes divine. Not everybody in one family can follow the same path. Someone has to step outside that structure a little bit. I believe that is what happened with me," he spoke on his decision to embrace the glitz and glamour of showbiz life rather than following his family's academic legacy.

According to him, the name Pretty Mike was born long before the dramatic entrances. It started in the United States, where, as a young man who loved parties and grew up surrounded by four beautiful sisters became the guy everyone associated with a good time.

"People started jokingly calling me 'Pretty Mike' because I was always surrounded by pretty girls. The name stuck. Whenever there was a party, people would say, 'Oh, Pretty Mike is throwing a party, there are going to be beautiful women there.' Over time, the name became a brand," he recalled, as he sees his controversial appearances as part of performance art and entertainment.

**Art, Controversy, And A Very Thick Skin**

His event appearances — elaborate, provocative, and impossible to ignore — have made him one of the most talked-about figures in Nigerian pop culture. But the creative process, he insists, is far simpler than people imagined.

He said, "I see it as part of the business. I do not have a creative team sitting down to plan these things. Sometimes I just wake up with an idea. Before I do anything, I already know it can go either way, so I prepare myself mentally."

"Over the years, I have developed a thick skin. Some stunts go viral positively, some attract criticism, but I never let it affect me psychologically. I always tell myself that after a few days, the noise will fade," he declared.

# Dulles, Inspiro Unveil 'The Uncommon Jazz Experience' In Lagos

By Daniel Anazia

A NEW era of elevated live music is redefining the Lagos nightlife as Dulles Restaurant & Lounge, in partnership with Inspiro Productions, has unveiled the LIJF/NAIJAZZ 'Super Sessions' Jazz Residency — a high-prestige cultural series curated for the city's most discerning audiences.

The initiative, branded 'The Uncommon Jazz Experience,' and held every last Saturday of the month at the upscale culinary haven, located on Bishop Oluwole Street in Victoria Island, is designed to cater to a refined audience seeking a blend of live music and luxury hospitality.

Spearheaded by Ayoola Sadare, founder of the Lagos International Jazz Festival (LIJF), whose decades-long involvement in Nigeria's jazz ecosystem, the residency fuses jazz, Afrobeat, Highlife and contemporary sounds, positioning it as a premium cultural offering within Lagos' vibrant entertainment landscape.

The inaugural edition which was held on May 30, with the theme: 'Do You Jazz?' featured performances from Afro-jazz guitarist Kunle Ayo and saxophonist SaxoQueen, alongside other guest artistes. The inaugural night sets the tone for what the organisers describe as a 'high-prestige cultural series'.

Unlike conventional weekly nightlife programming, the Super Sessions adopt a monthly schedule, taking place on the last Saturday of every month. The format, organisers say, is aimed at building anticipation and maintaining exclusivity around each event.

Speaking on the development, Dolapo Akinpelu, CEO of Dulles Lounge, described the residency as a strategic move to elevate live music experiences in Lagos. He noted that Dulles Lounge, already a staple within Lagos' elite social circuit, evolves through this partnership into a definitive destination for sophisticated live music.

He said, "By integrating the institutional weight of LIJF/NAIJAZZ, the residency introduces a distinct sonic identity —urban, African, and unapologetically modern— positioned as 'The Uncommon Jazz Experience. This residency is a cultural movement.

"We are not just a venue hosting events; we are answering the question: 'Do You Jazz!?' We are inviting Lagos to engage with live music as a lifestyle — backed by the pedigree of Nigeria's premier jazz institution," Akinpelu added.

Blending upscale hospitality with great music, delicious cuisine, signature cocktails and an elegant ambience, Dulles Lounge creates the perfect atmosphere for business meetings, social hangouts, celebrations, networking

# Zik Zulu-Okafor, Adedoyin Commend HS Studios, Pledge Collaboration

LEADING Nollywood filmmaker, Zik Zulu-Okafor, and renowned public relations strategist and Fellow of the Nigerian Institute of Public Relations (NIPR), Ademola Adedoyin, have expressed strong confidence in HS Studios following a tour of the facility and discussions on future collaboration.

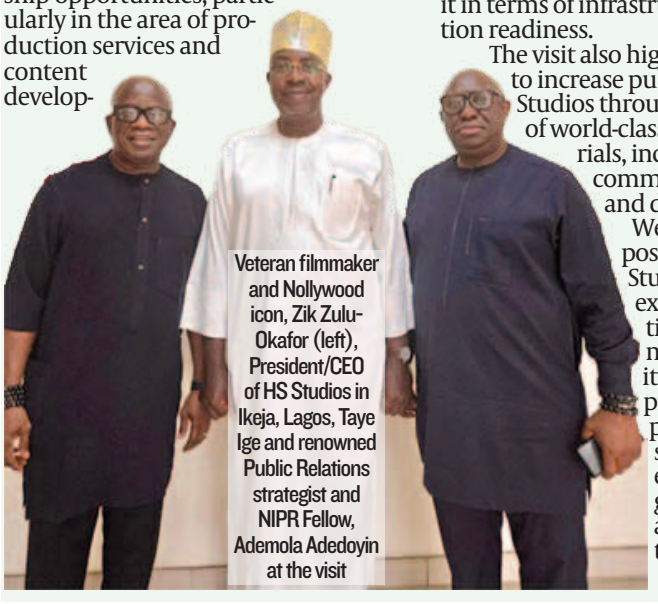
The duo visited the Lagos-based production complex and held extensive discussions with management on partnership opportunities, particularly in the area of production services and content development.

During the tour of the four-floor, five-studio facility located on approximately two acres in Ikeja, Lagos, Zulu-Okafor described HS Studios as one of the most impressive production facilities he had encountered in Nigeria.

Drawing from decades of experience in the Nigerian film and entertainment industry, he commended the scale, sophistication and elegance of the facility, noting that few studios compare with it in terms of infrastructure and production readiness.

The visit also highlighted the need to increase public awareness of HS Studios through the deployment of world-class promotional materials, including television commercials, brochures and digital content.

Welcoming the proposed collaboration, HS Studios management expressed appreciation for the endorsement and reaffirmed its commitment to providing premium production infrastructure and services for Nigeria's growing creative and media industries.



Veteran filmmaker and Nollywood icon, Zik Zulu-Okafor (left), President/CEO of HS Studios in Ikeja, Lagos, Taye Ige and renowned Public Relations strategist and NIPR Fellow, Ademola Adedoyin at the visit

# MasterChef Nigeria: Eliminated Contestant, Fads Stages Stunning Comeback, Wins N2m

By Daniel Anazia

DRAMA, pressure, and redemption took centre stage on the latest episode of MasterChef Nigeria as previously eliminated contestants — Fads, Pearl, and Margaret — returned to the kitchen for a rare second chance at the coveted title and the life-changing N73 million grand prize.

In a surprising twist, the trio faced a high-stakes Redemption Challenge, battling for a spot back in the competition. The task was deceptively simple: master three egg fundamentals in just 10 minutes — a perfectly poached egg, a boiled egg, and an omelette.

Simple in concept but brutal in execution; the task is designed to test their speed, precision, and technical skill especially under the intense pressure of a MasterChef kitchen. Fads rose to the occasion with precision and composure. She impressed the judges with her execution and earned a dramatic return to the MasterChef Nigeria kitchen.

For Pearl and Margaret, however, the challenge marked the end of their culinary journey as they exited the competition for good. But the drama did not stop there. Fresh from her comeback, Fads joined the Top 8 contestants in another demanding challenge themed "Staples of Success," with an impressive 2 million prize at stake.

The arrival of the returning white-apron cook, sparked excitement among contestants, but the competition quickly separated the strongest from the struggling. Derry's hopes suffered a setback after the judges found her Chicken undercooked, while David's Red Chilli starter and roasted Chicken failed to impress. Favy, overwhelmed by pressure, battled a dessert disaster when her Panna Cotta refused to set, forcing her to improvise.

## TEETH 4 TEETH ... With Justin Akpovi-Esade

### Now, Who Did Tiwa Savage Offend?

AFRO pop star, Tiwa Savage, was under fire from the 'soro soke' X generation during the week. There was nothing she did not get. In fact, her entire life was almost laid bare on X, Facebook and Instagram. T4T was curious as to what may have caused this brutal attack on her personality that he had to do some quick searching, and the only thing that came up was that she was seen on the streets of London celebrating the recent Arsenal win of the 2025/2026 English premier league title. For any Arsenal fan, a 22 year old wait to lay hands on the trophy again was worth celebrating. In fact, but for public decorum, men and women, fans of the club, should have stripped naked on the streets of not only London but across the world.

But then, our dear own Tiwa did not do any of that. Her bra strap did not even pop out of her dress. So, why are some Nigerians demanding her head on a tray the way Herod's daughter demanded for the head of our beloved John the Baptist, as told to us in the holy bible?

Wait for it.

Tiwa's mortal sin was that she dared to publicly celebrate Arsenal's victory in faraway London when some Oyo State school children and their teachers are still in the captivity of some terrorists here in Nigeria!

Really? That was all?

Anyways, if you are not a Nigerian, or even if you are and you just came back from Mars, let T4T fill you in here.

About two weeks ago, some evil men (maybe some women are among them too, we don't know yet) stormed a school in an Oyo village and took as hostages, students, pupils and some teachers. Very heartless men(and women). This development has unsettled not only the community but the entire country with the combined security system all running round the clock to seek the rescue or negotiated release of the hostages. Nigerian president, Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu appears to be doing what needs to be done to bring the victims back unhurt. The army, police, navy and even boy's scout are all on red alert. So, T4T wondered what the mob that descended on Tiwa Savage wanted her to do under this circumstance. Should she organise a music show at Onikan Stadium and begin to sing for Tinubu and the hostages or make she wear sack clothes instead and be walking around Yaba market inside Lagos to display her empathy for the victims? Oh, what the angry mob probably wanted the popular singer to do to endear her to this angry generation of uncouth and abusive small adults and some *agbaya* adults is to go on X(formerly Twitter) and begin to run Nigeria down before the world, call the president unprintable names and use the now popular phrases: "Nigeria is bleeding" or "Nigeria is finished" or "may Nigeria not happen to you" etc. Then, she will automatically transform into a heroine.

While T4T sympathises with the victims and their families for the gruelling ordeal they are passing through, one question T4T wants to ask this morality policemen and women online baying for people's blood is; since the kidnappers took their victims in Oyo, which one of them has missed a meal in sympathy?



# Talent Building, Culture, Innovation Takes Preeminent At Epic Fashion Week 2026

By Maria Diamond

SUSTAINABILITY, creativity, innovation, and cultural storytelling was the preoccupation of the runway presentations by over 20 designers who reinforced the potentials of African fashion in the global space through their showcased collections at the Epic Fashion Week 2026.

The two day event produced by Fashions Finest Africa and Mahogany International, took place at The Podium, Lekki, Lagos recently, bringing together fashion enthusiasts, emerging designers, industry stakeholders, creatives, influencers, celebrities, and key players within the African fashion ecosystem for an immersive celebration of style, culture, and the future of fashion.

Day-one of the event featured the Business of Fashion Conference, an insightful symposium designed to equip emerging fashion creatives with the knowledge and conversations needed to build sustainable and commercially viable fashion businesses.

The conference featured two engaging panel sessions. The first session, themed "Authenticity vs Commercialisation: Staying True While Appealing to Wider Markets," featured contributions from Folake Kuye Huntoon, King David, Praise Anaba, and Vivian Umoh, with Hadassah serving as moderator.

The second session, themed "Fashion Without Borders: Positioning for Export," was moderated by Scott Itepu and featured speakers including Nkiru Anachukwu and Rhoda Agunigho, who shared valuable insights on scaling African fashion brands for international markets.

Day-two spotlighted the highly anticipated Design for the Future (D4DF) competition, a platform dedicated to encouraging young designers to embrace sustainability and timeless fashion practices in their creative process.

The competition attracted over 2,000 entries, with 25 designers selected for a six weeks incubation and mentorship programme.

Following several stages of assessments and showcases, 10 finalists emerged, including Judy Signature, Light Alta Moda, Jiri, Arig Atelier, Kush Atelier, Luke Smart, Melagante, Tomi Ifebogun, Iwari, and Mina Christian.

At the end of the competition, Iwari emerged winner, receiving 1 million in seed funding alongside a one-year mentorship opportunity designed to support the growth and development of the brand within the fashion industry.

Respected industry figures were the panel of judges for the competition including Tosin Ogundadegbe popularly known as The Style Infidel, Sola Oyebade, Gift Olohije, and Tolulope Omoyeni.

Founder of Fashions Finest Africa and Epic Fashion Week, Sola Oyebade, noted that the platform, formerly known as Epic Show, was created specifically to provide emerging African fashion creatives with a dedicated platform capable of projecting their talents onto the global stage.

# How Carnival Calabar And Festival 2026 Is 'Rethinking Our Collective Destiny'

By Maria Diamond

TO the spectators home and abroad constantly wondering how the biggest cultural and tourism showcase in Africa, Carnival Calabar And Festival, made it to the global carnival rankings undisputed, attracting over a hundred thousand visits yearly? It is 24/7 strategic planning, year in and out, through 20 editions, a clear definition of 'no leave, no transfer', as the state government and the entire organising committee and band of the carnival clearly put in the work round the clock just to make Nigeria stay great.

This fact was again made clear last Sunday when the Governor of Cross River State, Senator Prince Bassey Edet Otu and the carnival committee and band unveiled the 21st edition theme of the Africa's Biggest Street party, Carnival Calabar and Festival tagged 'Rethinking Our Collective Destiny' at the Eko Hotels And Suites Victoria Island Lagos.

Without mincing words, the governor who delved into the business of the day said: "This unveiling of Carnival Calabar theme marks the beginning of the 2026 activities, an important event in the Tourism calendar of Cross River State. It was barely a few months ago that we concluded the activities of the 20th Anniversary of the Carnival Calabar And Festivals and here we are, gathered to kick-start those of the 2026 edition; the 21st in the series. However, irrespective of the fleeting times, the pleasant memories of last year's event of uninterrupted 32 days display of creativity in all art forms remain etched in our hearts.

"Carnival Calabar and Festival theme unveiling goes beyond the symbolic ceremonial commencement of carnival activities, it is rather the opening of a vista of opportunity for the development and expansion of businesses, especially the informal sector; the creation of an enabling environment for homecoming and family bonding."



# National Tourism Safety And Security Technology Conference Set To Hold In July

By Maria Diamond

TOWARDS strengthening safety, security, and resilience within Nigeria's tourism ecosystem through the deployment of modern technologies, policy dialogue, and stakeholder collaboration, Travel Marketing Partner (Nigeria) Limited, organisers of the forthcoming National Tourism Safety and Security Technology Conference and Trade Show, has revealed the partnership of top tier sector stakeholders in staging the inaugural edition of the conference scheduled to hold between July 6 and 7, 2026 at the Army Headquarters Command Event Centre, Asokoro, Abuja.

The CEO of Travel Marketing Partner, Mr Shola Ilupeju, a seasoned tourism expert and promoter of trade shows, disclosed that the Federal Ministry of Arts Culture Tourism and Creative Economy (FMACTCE), Federation of Tourism Associations of Nigeria (FTAN), Nigerian Tourism Development Authority (NTDA), among others will be partnering with the conference.

Ilupeju noted that the conference, which is a broad-based event, requires the partnership of allied sectors and Ministries, Departments and Agencies of the government, hence array of partners extending support to the event, including the Nigeria Military and other security agencies.

With the theme: Safe and Secure Destination: Key to Sustainable Tourism Development, Ilupeju said the conference is designed to provide a national platform for discussing tourism safety and security challenges; showcase modern security and safety technologies relevant to tourism destinations; promote inter-agency collaboration among MDAs, security institutions, and the private sector; and support government efforts to position Nigeria as a safe and attractive tourism destination.

# CORA Deepens Culture Narrative With Podcast Station Launch

THE Committee for Relevant Arts (CORA) — Nigeria's foremost consortium of writers, journalists, artists and literary enthusiasts, was officially 35 years old on Tuesday June 2, 2026, having been founded and staged its first public outing on June 2, 1991. The leading advocate for the arts and culture of the nation and the continent, on Saturday June 6, 2026, at 4:00pm, will commemorate the milestone with the formal launch of its podcast station tentatively named "Voices from the CORAVille."

The station is located in its secretariat office space at the CORA Library & Resource Centre, CORAVille, Freedom Park, Lagos Island. It is manned by its Programme Directorate peopled by its cohorts of Associates and Volunteers drawn from the CORA Youth Creative Club. The new Podcast initiative, which expands the organisation's diverse range of activities is designed to deepen conversations around the creative and cultural industries through insightful interviews, critical commentaries and engaging dialogues.

Courtesy a donation by its long-standing patron and support, David Awam Amkpa, professor of Culture Aesthetics with the Tisch School of Art, New York University, NY, and Vice Provost, New York University, Abu Dhabi, the podcast station aims to serve as a platform for thought leadership, knowledge sharing, and advocacy, helping to catalyse transformational change within the creative ecosystem.

Toyin Akinosho, CORA's visionary founder and Secretary-General, will be the special guest on the podcast's maiden edition, which will take listeners back to CORA's formative years, when the dream was crystallising, and yet take a firm grip.

Right from the first Arts Stampede and other baby-step activities that took place in Akinosho's residential courtyard in FESTAC Town, Lagos, the podcast launch will help relive memories and remember early contributors to the development of CORA.

# LLF 9th Edition Set For Strategic Shift Beyond The Hide

By Maria Diamond

HAVING mapped out a strategic evolution in the leather industry from inception in 2017 to its current status as West Africa's primary vehicle for economic advancement in local manufacturing, the Lagos Leather Fair (LLF), Africa's premier leather platform has unveiled the 2026 edition theme: "Beyond the Hide: Scaling Value. Building Industry. Driving Growth".

According to the organisers during a press conference in Lagos recently which served as a blueprint to the main event scheduled to commence on June 27th and run till June 28th, 2026, at the Ecobank Pan African Centre (EPAC) in Victoria Island, Lagos, this year's LLF focus highlights a critical industry transformation, transitioning raw creative potential into a structured, globally competitive African leather value chain.

Reflecting on the 9-year evolution of the fair and the intentional direction behind the 2026 theme, Convener, Lagos Leather Fair and Creative Director of FemiHandbags, Mrs Femi Olayebi said: "The 2026 focus moves beyond raw materials to strengthening market value, infrastructure, and creating pathways for sustainable cross-continental growth within Africa's leather and creative industries."

On her part, Simisola Olaseinde, EcoBank SME Partnerships & Collaborations Manager, revealed the bank's strategic business alignment with the fair's ecosystem and commitment to scaling MSMEs through tailored financial frameworks and structural support: "EcoBank's framed support beyond sponsorship enables SMEs with market access, financing, digital solutions, and cross-border scaling via our 30+ African market footprint.



www.guardian.ng **NewsExtra**

# LASUSTECH, Dataphyte Academy Partner To Train Journalism Students

By Opeyemi Babalola

THE Department of Mass Communication, Lagos State University of Science and Technology (LASUSTECH), Ikorodu, has partnered with Dataphyte Academy to equip 300-level students with essential skills in data journalism.

According to a statement signed by the Course Representative, Data Visualisation and Infographics , Department of Mass Communication, LASUSTECH, Oshuniran Sheriff Ola : "The intensive two-day training, held on May 21 and 22, 2026, at the university's ICT Centre, provided students of the department with both theoretical foundations and practical skills in data-driven storytelling, infographics, and data visualisation."

The Head of Department (HoD), Dr. Zannu Prosper, said the programme was initiated in response to the rising demand for data-literate journalists in the evolving global media landscape.

Mr. Kehinde Ogunyale, who represented Dataphyte Academy as the lead facilitator, underscored the increasing importance of data skills for journalists and media professionals. He emphasised the need for future media practitioners to master data interpretation, pattern identification, and the visual presentation of complex information to meet the demands of modern journalism.



Dr. Steven Anu' Adesemoye (left); Ms Khadijat Kareem (Dataphyte); HoD, Mass Communication, LASUSTECH, Dr Zannu Nonenyon Prosper; and Kehinde Ogunyale of Dataphyte at the training event.

Also commenting on this perspective, the course lecturer, Dr. Steve Anu' Adesemoye, highlighted the transformative power of these skills. "Learning infographics and data visualization in Nigeria is not just a technical skill, it is a power multiplier. It equips you to make sense of chaos, influence decisions, advance your career, and contribute to national development in an increasingly data-driven world. Whether you are a student, entrepreneur, civil servant, or professional, these skills help you move from 'we have data' to 'we know what to do with it'." He concluded.

The largely successful training saw participants introduced to the fundamentals of data visualisation and the strategic use of infographics to transform complex datasets into compelling, accessible stories. It also featured hands-on practical exercises covering the full data journalism workflow: sourcing, verification, cleaning, analysis, and visualization using real-world datasets. Students also explored ethical considerations in data reporting.

At the closing ceremony, the department presented an Award of Excellence to Dataphyte Academy in recognition of its valuable contribution to advancing data journalism education among students.

**ShortStory**

# Seven Days To Golgotha! (3)

By Segun Durowaiye (08055356855)

Continued from GUARDIAN WEEKEND, May 30-31, 2026

AFTER the Prophet's statement and spiritual revelation, Seun was completely lost for words and obviously overwhelmed with shock and bewilderment. Deep down within Seun Atolagbe's mind, he was afraid, really afraid. To be on the same spot for seven odd days was suicidal to say the least. Come rain, come shine, under the heavy dew of the early morning, night and day will break and he must not leave the spot, on a strange mountain! All these terrorised his mind and he became more worried, hopeless and afraid that death was actually playing tricks on him. This, he thought, was a big sacrifice to pay for his freedom and survival, but he wondered what would happen to him during those seven odd days he would be alone with his God and destiny.

It was a great trek to the mountain called Okeigbala. It was a long and bushy path they trudged. The path was also very windy. There were tall trees and thorny shrubs surrounding the path, which bore the footprints of animals such as monkeys and other wild beasts of the jungle. Birds of different species perched on trees, chirruping and twittering in an ominous manner. The Prophet of God was leading in front, while Seun followed behind with his heart filled with fear and anxiety. "God, where is your face?" he mumbled in desperation.

About 40 minutes later, they were now at Mount Okeigbala. Seun was extremely tired and weak. The two people climbed up the rugged mountain. The Prophet was chanting and reciting some powerful spiritual quotes when they ascended the high mountain, and the weather was getting colder. A couple of minutes later they got to the top of the mountain. Seun was really fagged out.

"Seun, kneel down here and let me anoint you with the Holy Spirit," the Prophet said. Seun knelt down instantly, but with trepidation.

"I'll do your bidding holy one," he replied in total submission and obedience. The Prophet stretched his hands wide apart and raised it towards the sky.

He then placed his right hand on Seun's head and repeated some Psalms while gazing at the sky. Seun, all the while, was just saying, "Amen! Amen!! Amen!!!" repeatedly.

"Now, Seun, lie down on your belly on this spot. This is where you'll stay for the seven days of the great dry fasting. You must not leave this spot, no matter what," the Prophet warned, "I'll take my leave now, Seun. Don't leave this spot, no matter what, I repeat.""I heard you, holy one. . .It's okay," Seun replied gently, tears almost dropping from his eyes. The prophet took three steps backward and walked out of sight, leaving Seun all alone. The first day went by on Mount Okeigbala, and so was the second. Seun was still on the same spot. Then, on the third day something spectacular happened! It was around 1p.m. The scorching sun was very harsh on Seun's skin. Suddenly, smoke started coming out and oozing from the mountain, very close to where Seun placed his head. It was a thick smoke that engulfed the whole area. And like a bolt out of the blue, an albino man emerged from the ground. The albino man was putting on a black clothe. Seun was transfixed and electrified with morbid fear! "Ha! Haa!! Haaa!!!" the albino erupted in an evil-foreboding and ominous laughter.

"You think by doing this, the curse I placed on your great, great grandfather would be lifted? Take a look at my hands. This is your Success and Joy! I am the one who has been tormenting your generation with troubles. Your great, great grandfather by name Chief Atolagbe II ordered me to be sacrificed to the gods just because I was apprehended by his team of cultists and ritualists during their procession. And I was buried alive despite the fact that I begged and pleaded for mercy and leniency! I was buried alive! That very day I placed a terrible curse on his family and generation yet unborn, that they will continue to suffer untold hardship. There's nothing you can do; even the Prophet has no power over me! Ha! Haa!! Haaa!!!" the evil albino continued to roar with frightening laughter…

To be concluded.

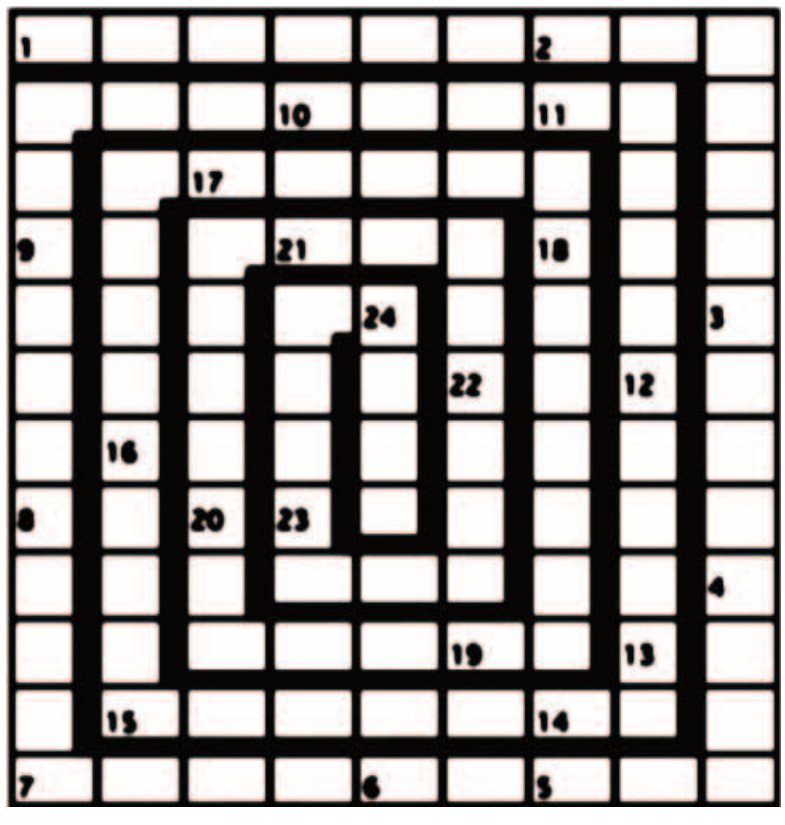
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# Overlapping Word Game

with OLULANA KAYODE 08023183727
olulana3@yahoo.com

## Solution

1 Kam Salem
2 Eminent
3 Trader
4 Erratic
5 Ice
6 Entice
7 Cease
8 Endure
9 Restive
10 Verse
11 Sensible
12 Bleed
13 Dust
14 Stature
15 Recede
16 Desert
17 Trivial
18 Alternate
19 Terrible
20 Blemish
21 Shock
22 Kinetic
23 Close
24 Even



## Overlapping Word Game

1 State in north eastern Nigeria, (7).
2 Ijebuland's king title, (7).
3 LGA in Akwa Ibom state, (7).
4 The language of Canada, (7).
5 Have in common, (5).
6 An enclosed area, (5).
7 LGA in Anambra state, (6).
8 Gov. Agbu Kefas state, (6).
9 LGA in Kano state, (6).
10 Passage leading into a cavity, (5).
11 Conforming to accepted standards, (7).
12 The power to attract, (6).
13 Thrust out, (5).
14 Succeed in something, (7).
15 Animal that prey on game, (6).
16 Draw in air into the lungs, (6).
17 Tending to arouse sexual desire, (6).
18 Animal that eat meat, (9).
19 Going in the opposite direction, (7).
20 Kept hidden, (6).
21 In accordance with the latest trend, (6).
22 Series of rulers from one family, (7).
23 Light ship for making pleasure, (5).
24 Tedious undertaking, (4).

## Word Search

**States in Nigerian -1**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Imo | Delta | Kaduna |
| Edo | Enugu | Gombe |
| Ekiti | Lagos | Bayelsa |
| Abia | Borno | Jigawa |
| Osun | Ebonyi | Adamawa |
| Benue | Bauchi | Cross-River |

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| N | A | W | A | M | A | D | A | E | A | E |
| U | R | S | O | B | O | S | K | S | W | K |
| S | D | E | L | T | A | I | O | O | A | I |
| E | D | B | V | D | T | Y | L | G | G | A |
| U | G | O | O | I | F | G | E | A | I | N |
| N | D | N | N | R | R | E | V | L | J | U |
| E | E | Y | Y | C | N | S | G | T | S | D |
| B | L | I | I | U | V | O | S | U | N | A |
| E | T | F | G | D | M | V | M | O | D | K |
| U | S | U | A | B | I | A | G | I | R | A |
| G | U | N | E | I | H | C | U | A | B | C |

(c.) Olukayode Olulana

## Birthdays

**BILIAMIN**, Mansur Mosan, (Mr. Number), empirical Astrologer/Numerologist of note, will be 61 on June 10 2026.

Born in Oshodi, Lagos, he is a complete Abeokuta man, whose father hailed from Owu-Totoro, while his mother is of Gbagura-Ido descent.

He was enrolled into St. Peters Anglican Primary School, Mosan, Ewekoro Local Council, Ogun State, 1971-1976 and later attended the College of Art and Science, CAS, Remedial Class, Kano, Kano State where he sat for the West African School Certificate Examinations in October 1994.

He had Diploma in Mass Communication in 1997 and also a graduate of Advance Diploma in Public Administration-ADPA, 2002, from the Bayero University, Kano.

He thereafter enrolled into the astrology field of study and was well trained under various Nigerian notable astrologers. He understands and interprets astrology in Nigerian context. He has been a practicing astrologer for over 25 years now.

He is one of the leading authorities in Nigerian Astrology. He teaches, writes, speaks and consults through the science of numbers. Severally, he had been a guest on Radio shows, discussing Astrology. Also, he had a powerful Numerology and Astrology articles published in *Tell Magazine, Benchmark Magazine, The Point Newspaper,* social media, and delivered numerous Astrology papers at seminars and conferences. His topics are specially loaded for the benefits of those unfamiliar with Astrology/Numerology. Some of the topics include – Life Cycles and You; Planning Your Projects; Who



Biliamin



Faromoju

are you? And Know yourself!

He practices Nigerian Astrology and Numerology as a professional. He had been to many seminars and conferences and with ease commands the respect of the professional colleagues and other audience in attendance.

In addition to private practice, Mansur lectures and conducts workshops and seminars on the application of Astrology/Numerology to human and business matters. He is the proprietor, Mosan Astrology Academy.

He is the author/publisher of the popular annual- Right Time Calendar. Right Time Business Guide, a Diary, is his second annual. He is the pioneer Secretary, Federation of Nigerian Astrologers and a practicing Muslim; he operates from Abeokuta, Ogun State, Nigeria.

**FAROMOJU**, Johnson Teniola will be 72 on June 12, 2026. Born on Saturday, June 12, 1954 at Ilutitun Osooro community in Okitipupa Local Council, Ondo State to the family of Mr. and Mrs. Amos Faromoju, he had his elementary education at L. A. School, Sogbon.

Afterwards, he attended Manuwa Memorial Grammar School, Iju-Odo in Ondo State from 1969 to 1973. After his secondary school, he moved to Lagos to stay with his uncle. He worked as a clerk with the Bank of the North and worked there between 1973 and 1977.

He later moved to the then International Bank for West Africa (IBWA) a French owned bank operating in Nigeria. He was in the bank for three years. He later got admission into the Institute of Bankers and graduated as an Associate of the Bankers' Institute. He also studied at City Banking College London, where he became Associate of the Chartered Institute of Bankers of England.

Upon his return to Nigeria, he observed the mandatory one year National Youth Service in Lagos State in 1984. While waiting to be posted for his primary assignment, he landed a job with Centre Point Investment Limited where he observed his one year mandatory Youth Service. He also became a chartered stockbroker and a Dealing Clerk in the Nigerian Stock Exchange one year after his youth service.

Faromoju worked with Centre Point in various capacities to become a General Manager with Centre – Point Merchant Bank and Head of Centre-Point Securities Limited up till December, 1995.

*Compiled by Gbenga Akinfenwa, oluwagbenga.akinfenwa@guardian.ng or gbengaherkin@yahoo.com*

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## Events



Regional Manager, Julius Berger Plc., Oliver Berger (right); Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Minister, Nyesom Wike; Project Manager of Julius Berger, Johnny Houchan; Executive Secretary, Federal Capital Development Authority (FCDA), Richard Yunana Dauda and Director, Engineering Services, FCDA, Emmanuel Chukwuma Udey, during the Minister's inspection of ongoing redesign of the Abuja City gate ...on Thursday




Business Development Director, DKT International Nigeria, Titilayo Ajayi (left); Special Adviser to the Governor of Lagos State on Health, Dr. Kemi Ogunyemi; Country Director, DKT International Nigeria, Debo Satapathy and Professor of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, University of Lagos and Chairman, Medical Advisory Committee, Lagos University Teaching Hospital, Prof. Ayodeji Oluwole, at the official launch of Avibela Hormonal IUD in Lagos ...on Tuesday



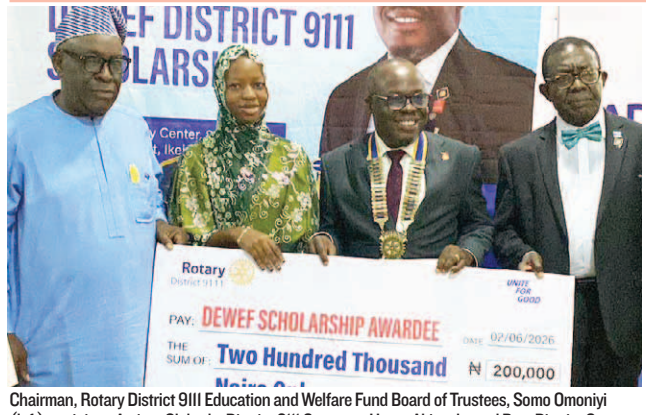

Director of Programming and Reporting, The Wellbeing Foundation Africa, Dr Osinachi Onyeoziri (left); Deputy Director, Lagos State Ministry of the Environment and Water Resources, Tayo-Badru Mobolaji; Brand Manager, Dettol, Reckitt West Africa, Toluwase Abikoye; Principal, Eko Akete, Aka Sheriff; and ACEO, Ministry of Basic & Secondary Education, Olorunfemi Taiwo at the flag-off ceremony of Phase 3 of the Dettol Hygiene Quest Initiative recently held in Lagos.



Executive Secretary, Nigerian Society for Chemical Engineers (NSChE), Anthony Ogheneovo; past President, Dr. John Erinne; National President, Bayo Olarewaju-Alo; and past President, Babajide Soyode, during a press briefing on the inflationary impact of the USA- Israel and Iran War on Nigerian economy held at Chemical Engineering Dept, University of Lagos, Akoka- Yaba, Lagos ...on Monday.



Wife of Ogun State Governor, Mrs. Bamidele Abiodun (left); President/Vice-Chancellor, Babcock University, Prof. Afolarin Olutunde Ojewole; Inaugural Lecturer, Prof. Olutayo Sunday Shokunbi; and Vice President, Advancement and Strategic Development, Babcock University, Niyi Arije during Babcock University's 62nd inaugural lecture presented by Prof. Shokunbi, held at Babcock University, Ilishan-Remo, Ogun State ...on Thursday.




Chairman, Rotary District 9III Education and Welfare Fund Board of Trustees, Somo Omoniyi (left); recipient, Aminat Olabode; District 9III Governor, Henry Akinyele; and Past District Governor, Richard Giwa- Osagie at the presentation of scholarships to undergraduates in Lagos.

## WOSORD, Partners Empower Delta Women For Sustainable Livelihood

By **Eno Bassey**

WOMEN for Social and Rural Development Initiative (WOSORD), in partnership with UN Women and other development stakeholders, has empowered women in Ughelli, Delta State, through a community outreach programme aimed at promoting economic inclusion and sustainable livelihood.

The outreach, with the theme: "Empowering Women for a Sustainable Future," was held recently, at the Palace of the Ovie of Ughelli Kingdom, Otovwodo, Ughelli, and brought together representatives of government, traditional institutions, development organisations, the private sector, and women from underserved communities.

Speakers at the event emphasised the importance of women's economic empowerment as a catalyst for stronger families, resilient communities, and sustainable development.

Participants were encouraged to embrace entrepreneurship, financial discipline, and skills development as pathways to financial independence and long-term prosperity. The programme provided practical knowledge, inspiration, and support to women seeking to improve their economic well-being and contribute meaningfully to their communities.

Stakeholders also commended the Founder of WOSORD, Helen Majemite, for her commitment to advancing opportunities for women and creating platforms that support inclusive community development.

Speaking after the event, Majemite reaffirmed the organisation's dedication to empowering women, particularly those in rural and underserved communities, noting that sustainable development can only be achieved when women are equipped with the resources, knowledge, and opportunities needed to thrive.



Chief Meg Atano (left); Vice Chairman, Ughelli North Local Council, Olorogun Fred Majemite; Founder WOSORD, Helen Majemite; UN Women GEWE representative, Eris Jewo; and Ezomo of Ughelli Kingdom, Chief Ogheneovo Adams at the event.

## Funeral Rites For Oxone Biosah Begin June 10



Biosah

FUNERAL rites for Chief Oxone Ogodiuno Biosah, who died recently at the age of 100, begin on Wednesday, June 10, 2026, with a service of songs and wake at his residence, Umuolo Quarters, Onicha Ugbo, Aniocha North Local Council, Delta State, at 4.00p.m. On Thursday, June 11, there will be a brief stopover /lying-in-state at No. 4, Akpenyi Street, Agbor at 8.00a.m. Funeral service holds at Onicha Ugbo Girls' College, to be followed by interment at noon, at his residence. Traditional rites continue on Friday, June 12 while a thanksgiving service holds on Sunday, June 14, at 10 a.m. at Onicha Ugho (venue to be communicated.)

## Rental Professionals Of Nigeria Holds Confab

RENTAL Professionals Society of Nigeria (RPSN), the umbrella organisation for event rental companies and practitioners in Nigeria, will hold its yearly conference in Lagos between June 8, 9 and 11, 2026.

RPSN National President and Chief Executive of Jason Davids Rental and Events Ltd., Mrs Taiwo Oderinlo disclosed that the theme of " The Events Rental Expo 3.0" is "Legacy, Luxury and Longevity "

She said activities include media parley on June 8; corporate social responsibility with donations to Lagos Food Bank on June 9; yearly conference and Ojude RPSN the grand ethnic dinner on June 11; and the exhibition between September 21 and 22,2026."

# Tinubu's Ambulance Push: Putting Healthcare Access On The Front Burner

By **Tajudeen Kareem**

MANY Nigerians were appalled seeing the emergency response provided to Anthony Joshua on 29 December, last year when his SUV collided with a truck on the Lagos-Ibadan Expressway.

But with the recent rollout of ambulances under the National Emergency Medical Service and Ambulance System, the Federal Government is projecting a clear policy message: quality healthcare must be reachable by Nigerians in cities, rural communities and riverine areas alike.

For decades, access has been one of the deepest fault lines in Nigeria's healthcare system. The problem has never been only whether hospitals exist, but whether patients can reach help in time. In medical emergencies, the distance between a home and a hospital, a flooded creek and a clinic, a highway crash and a tertiary facility, can mean the difference between life and death.

It is that gap the Federal Government says it is now moving to close more deliberately through the National Emergency Medical Service and Ambulance System (NEMSAS), presenting emergency transport not as a peripheral service, but as a core part of healthcare access.

That policy direction came into sharp focus last week when President Bola Ahmed Tinubu flagged off a NEMSAS fleet consisting of 145 tricycle ambulances, six boat ambulances and 79 emergency ambulances for federal tertiary hospitals. The same official context stated that he also later flagged off CNG-powered ambulances for all 73 federal tertiary health facilities in Nigeria.

"We are determined to give Nigerians the kind of care that, for too long, only those who could travel abroad enjoyed. From the rivers of the Delta to the streets of Lagos, from rural Sokoto to tertiary Maiduguri, our emergency response system must work as one. Today, we put another major piece of that system in place", said the President.

More than a ceremonial launch, it signals the Federal Government's policy insistence that healthcare must be accessible in practical terms, not just available in principle.

Indeed, a functioning health system is no longer being described simply as one with hospitals, doctors and equipment, but one with a coordinated means of getting patients to care quickly, especially when time is critical.

The mix of tricycle, boat and conventional ambulances points to an attempt to design emergency response around Nigeria's realities. Tricycle ambulances speak to congested urban environments and communities with poor road access. Boat ambulances recognise the special challenges of riverine areas. Standard emergency ambulances strengthen referral capacity for major health institutions.

Together, they suggest a Federal Government approach built around inclusion: healthcare access must extend beyond city centres and major highways to places where geography has too often shaped survival chances.

The "one national structure" is central to the government's current healthcare language. It speaks to a model in which emergency care is coordinated across the country rather than left fragmented by locality, terrain or institutional weakness.



Chief Medical Director, Lagos University Teaching Hospital, Prof. Wasiu Lanre Adeyemo, flanked by others during the unveiling of the new ambulances in Lagos.

This is also consistent with the broader official position that emergency ambulance services should be available nationwide as part of an integrated national system, including rural, riverine and hard-to-reach areas, so that Nigerians can obtain timely emergency care regardless of where they live.

The operational face of that vision was presented in Lagos, where the Chief Medical Director of Lagos University Teaching Hospital, Prof. Wasiu Lanre Adeyemo, on behalf of the President, commissioned 79 advanced ambulances for distribution to tertiary healthcare institutions across Nigeria.

The ceremony, held as part of activities marking the third anniversary of the Tinubu administration, was described as reflecting the Federal Government's resolve to translate healthcare promises under the Renewed Hope Agenda into visible improvements in emergency medical response and access to quality care.

That framing is important. It places emergency transport within the wider debate about healthcare reform. Access to healthcare, under this view, is not fulfilled merely by building facilities. It also depends on whether patients can physically reach treatment in time to benefit from it.

Prof. Adeyemo said the initiative, facilitated through NEMSAS under the Federal Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, is a practical demonstration of the administration's commitment to building an integrated emergency care network across the country.

He said the ambulances would boost the capacity of tertiary hospitals to respond more quickly and effectively to medical emergencies, improving survival outcomes and reducing avoidable deaths.

The emphasis on avoidable deaths is especially telling. It reflects a policy understanding that one of the biggest failures in public health is not simply the absence of care, but delayed access to it.

Prof. Adeyemo stated this directly: "Healthcare facilities must be accessible when emergencies occur. These ambulances will improve the movement of patients from homes, schools, markets, highways, and other locations to hospitals where they can receive timely medical attention.

This will significantly reduce avoidable deaths and complications arising from delayed access to care."

That sentence could well serve as the clearest summary of the Federal Government's access-to-healthcare argument. The issue is not only whether services exist, but whether they are reachable when emergencies occur.

The government is also placing the ambulance initiative within a larger reform agenda associated with the Coordinating Minister of Health and Social Welfare, Prof. Muhammad Ali Pate. According to Adeyemo, the health sector renewal being pursued must combine stronger infrastructure, better emergency care systems and measurable progress toward Universal Health Coverage.

By that logic, ambulances are not merely vehicles. They are links in a national care chain — connecting homes to hospitals, communities to tertiary centres, and local emergencies to specialist intervention.

The Ministry of Health's own language pushes that point even further. It described the NEMSAS ambulance rollout as reflecting "a bold national vision where no Nigerian should lose their life because structured medical help could not reach them in time."

It also said quality healthcare must reach Nigerians "whether in our urban centres, riverine communities, or the most remote rural parts of the country."

That is the heart of the policy story.

For many years, quality healthcare in Nigeria has often been discussed in terms of buildings, personnel, funding and equipment. All are important. But the Federal Government is now making a more direct access argument: healthcare cannot be said to exist meaningfully for citizens who cannot get to it in critical moments.

Seen in that light, the ambulance rollout becomes part of a broader effort to redefine access as a matter of reach, response and equity.

There is also a domestic production angle that adds another layer to the policy narrative. Prof. Adeyemo said the ambulances were entirely assembled in Nigeria, including the emergency medical equipment installed in them, demonstrating the country's growing capacity in local manufacturing, healthcare technology and automobile engineering.

He described the vehicles as evidence that Nigeria can produce world-class emergency response units locally, while also stimulating local industry, creating jobs and strengthening confidence in indigenous capacity.

That claim allows the government to connect health access with economic policy. Expanding healthcare reach is being presented not only as a social good, but as something that can be supported by stronger domestic manufacturing and reduced dependence on external systems.

Adeyemo also noted that the ambulances have dual-fuel capability, using both Premium Motor Spirit and Compressed Natural Gas, reflecting the administration's wider emphasis on sustainability and energy diversification.

Still, the central issue remains access.

The Federal Government's underlying message is that a patient in a remote village, a riverine settlement, a roadside emergency or a crowded urban neighbourhood should not be left outside the circle of urgent medical help because of location alone.

That is why the NEMSAS framework matters. It is meant to coordinate ambulance operations nationwide, widen emergency coverage through different transport models, improve referrals and enable timely treatment.

In one sense, the rollout is about vehicles. In another, more important sense, it is about the type of health system the Federal

Government says it wants to build — one that treats access to emergency care as a national obligation, not a postcode privilege.

Whether that ambition is fully realised will depend on implementation, maintenance, staffing, response coordination and sustained funding.

But as a statement of policy, the message from the latest launch is unmistakable: the Federal Government wants healthcare access to mean more than the presence of facilities; it wants it to mean that help can get to Nigerians, and Nigerians can get to help, wherever they are.

In a country where distance has too often been deadly, that may be the most important promise of all.

• ***Kareem is a public policy analyst in Abuja.***

# FUHSI Holds Coat Ceremony For Part IV Medical Students

From **Rotimi Agboluaje**, Ibadan

THE Federal University of Health Sciences, Ila-Orangun (FUHSI), Osun State, has held a white coat ceremony for its Part IV medical students, with the Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Akeem Olawale Lasisi, and senior academics charging the students to embrace ethics, compassion, dedication and professionalism as they commence the clinical phase of their medical training.

The ceremony, which marked the culmination of a one-week preceptorship programme, formally ushered the students into clinical medicine following their successful completion of the pre-clinical stage and passage of the First Professional Examination.

Speaking at the event, the Vice-Chancellor described the white coat ceremony as a significant milestone in the academic journey of the students.

According to him, the first three years of medical education are devoted to the study of basic medical sciences such as Anatomy, Physiology and Biochemistry, while the clinical years focus on direct patient care and practical hospital-based learning.

"The white coat ceremony is an occasion to celebrate the success of students who have completed their pre-clinical training and are now crossing into the clinical phase of medicine. For the next three years, they will be exposed to ward rounds, clinics, theatres and bedside teaching," Lasisi said.

He explained that the one-week preceptorship programme was designed to introduce the students to the ethics of clinical medicine, patient care, medical hierarchy and the various career opportunities available within the profession.

Lasisi urged the students to remain conscientious, disciplined and committed to the values of the profession.

"They must understand the differences between the pre-clinical and clinical years and demonstrate evidence of imbibing the lessons and values they have been taught during the programme," he added.

Delivering the keynote lecture titled: "The Requirements for Surviving Clinical School," a Professor of Neurosurgery at the University of Ibadan and Director of the College of Medicine Education Unit, Prof. Augustine Adeolu, emphasised the importance of ethics, dedication and compassion in medical practice.

Adeolu urged the students to understand and comply with the ethics and traditions of medicine, remain hardworking and studious, engage in sincere self-evaluation and maintain a healthy balance between academic, social and religious activities.

"Medicine is not just about treating patients; it is about compassion. Students must see medicine as a vocation. That is the only way they can become impactful and successful doctors," he said.

The neurosurgeon noted that the students were being introduced to the realities of clinical medicine, where they would interact directly with patients and work alongside senior colleagues and other healthcare professionals.

He urged them to cultivate good relationships with patients, teachers, seniors and members of the healthcare team while maintaining the highest ethical standards.

# Yenagoa: An Administrative Outpost

By **Chris Ide**

ACROSS many developing regions, what pass for state capitals are often little more than enclave capitals—administrative enclaves that function as glorified villages, hosting government houses without evolving into the productive urban engines described in economic and urban development theory. Yenagoa, in the heart of Nigeria's Niger Delta, offers a compelling illustration of this paradox. Established on October 1, 1996, amid the high-stakes political calculus of the Abacha era, Yenagoa was never conceived as a peripheral local council town or a quiet riverside settlement. Its designation as the capital of Bayelsa State was a strategic intervention, intended to consolidate the aspirations of the Ijaw people and serve as a developmental anchor for an oil-rich territory. Nearly three decades on, however, that ambition remains largely unrealized. Unlocking Bayelsa's full economic potential now requires policymakers and citizens alike to move beyond the reductive "one-road city" narrative and to re-embrace the original logic of Yenagoa's creation. The deliberate transformation of Yenagoa into a functional, competitive urban center is not merely a matter of physical infrastructure; it is an economic necessity grounded in the science of urban advantage and the unfulfilled foresight of its founders.

The creation of Bayelsa State was not merely an administrative reorganization; it was a corrective measure intended to address decades of ethnic agitation and demands for resource control within the Niger Delta. At the time, the selection of a capital city was a decision fraught with political pressure and competing interests from various Ijaw subgroups, including the Kolokuma, Sagbama, and Ogbia. While external critics at the time derided Yenagoa as a modest rural settlement lacking even the most basic urban infrastructure, the Committee for the Creation of Bayelsa State—an elite group of regional insiders—possessed a much more nuanced perspective.

For many, the story of Bayelsa State's wealth begins and ends with its vast natural resources, a narrative in which prosperity is a matter of extraction. This perspective, however, dangerously overlooks a more powerful and sustainable engine for growth: the unrealized potential of its capital city, Yenagoa. The true key to a durable and diversified economy lies not just underground, but in the emergence of a thriving urban center that would act as the hinge that connects a people to national and global flows of capital and ideas. This is not a new idea, but a return to an original vision born from strategic foresight as was envisioned and articulated by the Committee for the Creation of Bayelsa State group.

Among the original visionaries of the Committee for the Creation of Bayelsa State were distinguished leaders of Epie Atissa extraction, including His Royal Majesty B. L. W. Mabinton, His Royal Majesty King Frederick Abiye Agama, His Royal Majesty King Malla Sasime, Honorable Professor Steve Azaiki, Senator Emmanuel Paulker, Chief G. M. Odumgba, Chief Boma Spero-Jack, PhD., Mr. Obed Ben Walson, Honorable Markson Fefegha, and Chief M. P. N. Ogbara, among others. These statesmen and thought leaders did not perceive Yenagoa through the narrow lens of a rural settlement. Rather, they discerned the early contours of a city system in formation, a strategic urban nucleus poised for institutional growth, economic acceleration, and regional integration. In their collective imagination, Yenagoa was not awaiting discovery; it was awaiting deliberate activation. They recognized that the old Yenagoa Local Government Area, which was then a peripheral outpost of Rivers State, already possessed the fundamental components of an "administrative skeleton". This skeleton consisted of pre-existing local governance frameworks and a nascent administrative bureaucracy that had been operational since the area's reorganization into Rivers State in 1967. By selecting a site with this functional foundation, the committee effectively reduced the catastrophic risks associated with state formation in the challenging, swampy terrain of the Delta. The move allowed for the immediate centralization of governance, spurring the rapid construction of the Government House and key ministerial buildings needed to house the state's new bureaucracy.

This selection was preferred over other potential candidates such as Amassoma and Kaiama, specifically because Yenagoa offered a more robust administrative starting point. The committee's foresight meant that Bayelsa did not have to start from a total vacuum; instead, it could leverage a "skeleton" to build a complex urban body. This foundational blueprint—the understanding that a well-built city is the cornerstone of regional prosperity—is more relevant today than ever.

The historical derision of Yenagoa as a site of "visible deprivation" ignores the empirical evidence presented by the visionaries of the Yenagoa capital city project. The visionaries, although of Epie-Atissa extraction, did not defend Yenagoa out of sentiment alone; they understood that urban development is a product of social and institutional "glue," not just concrete and steel.

Professor Steve Azaiki, for instance, has long argued that the foundation of a prosperous state requires an intellectual and institutional approach rather than a purely extractive one. His contribution to the city's development, including the establishment of the Azaiki Public Library and Museum, reflects a vision in which Yenagoa serves as a center of knowledge and cultural preservation for the Ijaw nation. Similarly, the traditional leadership of King Malla Sasime has been instrumental in providing the social stability and consensus needed to transform a collection of traditional clans—the Epie and Atissa kingdoms—into a unified urban entity. Senator Paulker Emmanuel's legislative focus on lands, housing, and the creation of ICT centers illustrates the ongoing effort to flesh out the "skeleton" identified in 1996 with the modern systems required for a 21st-century city. Truly, the construction of the city is not something that the city imposes, but is built through consensus.

This consensus-driven approach was the "X factor" that external critics missed. While they saw mud and mangroves, the vision bearers saw a functional hub that could mediate the complex social and political relationships of a new state. This foresight secured Yenagoa's designation as a functional center of governance, a role it has occupied with increasing intensity as the built-up area expanded from 9.59% in 1989 to over 60% by 2016.

To move Yenagoa from an administrative headquarters to a true economic engine for the prosperity of all Bayelsans, we must apply the concept of "urban advantage" as theorized by Jeb Brugmann (urban development expert and founder of ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability). Urban advantage is the superior efficiency and productivity that a city offers compared to non-urban areas, achieved through the clustering of people, businesses, and institutions. This clustering reduces the costs of interaction and transportation while accelerating the exchange of ideas.

Yenagoa's current challenge is its "linear" development pattern—the "one-road city" narrative—which creates bottlenecks and limits spontaneous interaction. To fulfill its original purpose, the city must transition to a complex, integrated unit where physical infrastructure, social organizations, and economic processes function together creating its own "urban advantage" of a self-reinforcing cycle where density and scale make innovation cheaper and faster. Brugmann notes that successful cities optimize three types of density: spatial density (economic activity per acre), colocation density (clustering researchers, traders, and residents), and network density (maximizing the use of transit and utility grids).



HRM King B.L.W Mabinton, Ogbotom Edede V



HRM King Frederick Abiye Agama, Ogbotom Edede VI

Economic historian Norman Gras theorized that every successful metropolis must progress through four distinct phases: commerce (phase 1), industry (phase 2), transport (phase 3), and finance (phase 4). Most state capitals in Nigeria are stuck between Phase 1 and Phase 2. They facilitate trade and some industry, but they fail to become transportation hubs or financial centers. The selection of Yenagoa as the state capital comes with the added advantage of Yenagoa as a natural Phase 3 candidate—a geographical center capable of connecting the riverine Ijaw territories. If Yenagoa remains an "underdeveloped capital," it is because we have focused too much on Phase 1 (bureaucratic spending) and ignored the strategic necessity of Phases 2 and 3. However, the current administration's focus on the Glory Drive Phase II and Phase III is a step toward this urban advantage. By connecting the city center to the airport and other LGA headquarters, the state is building the "system density" needed to optimize infrastructure. The current multi-billion naira investments in the New Yenagoa City and international partnerships with firms like CCECC represent the best opportunity in a generation to complete the work started in 1996. But physical roads are only half the battle. Reclaiming the vision requires "civicism"—a love for the city that transcends political regimes. It requires a leadership that sees the Committee for the Creation of Bayelsa State blueprint not as a historical artifact, but as a living strategic document. Every great city has a spirit: New York has ambition, Oxford has learning, and Paris has romance. What is the spirit of Yenagoa?

The very name "Yenagoa" is a construction of Yen (home) and Oguo (the founder), reflecting its origins as a modest settlement of the Atissa Kingdom along the Epie Creek. This spirit of "home" is a powerful asset. In Yenagoa, this spirit is deeply intertwined with the Ijaw struggle for self-determination and the Boro revolution of 1966.

Consequently, Yenagoa's unfinished promise carries a striking political dimension, and any attempt to understand its strategic vision for Bayelsa's prosperity must be situated within the political context and convictions of those who have defended and shaped its destiny. Historically, the Epie-Atissa people occupied a unique role as hinterland dwellers in relation to other coastal Ijaw groups. While coastal groups often had first contact with European trade, the Epie-Atissa developed a mastery of the riverine-hinterland trade corridors along the Ekole Creek and Nun River. This made them natural "synthesizers" of regional interests. Therefore, when the Committee for the Creation of Bayelsa State group articulated and defended the long-term vision of Yenagoa, they were drawing on a heritage of maintaining connectivity. Their vision for the capital was not just a seat for the governor, but a "city-system" that could integrate the diverse nationalities of the Delta into a coherent economic whole.

Although the Committee for the Creation of Bayelsa State was composed of eminent sons and daughters from across the state, it was leaders of Epie-Atissa extraction who emerged as the most deliberate and effective advocates for the designation of

# Or An Economic Engine?



HRM King Malla Sasime, Obenibe XI



Prof. Steve Azaiki, The Yenagoa Boy

Yenagoa as the state capital. Through sustained persuasion and strategic foresight, they secured Yenagoa's place as the administrative heart of the new state. Yet, in a striking historical irony, none of these architects of the capital has occupied the state's highest executive office since Bayelsa's creation in 1996.

Since the restoration of civilian governance in 1999, the governorship has rotated across several local government areas: Chief Diepreye Solomon Alamieyeseigha of Southern Ijaw, Dr. Goodluck Jonathan of Ogbia, Chief Timipre Sylva of Nembe, Senator Henry Seriake Dickson of Sagbama, and the incumbent, Senator Douye Diri of Kolokuma Opokuma. Notably absent from this lineage of leadership is a son or daughter of Yenagoa, the city conceived to serve as the political nerve center and developmental compass of the state. This absence is not merely symbolic. It is consequential. Those who first imagined Yenagoa not as a provincial settlement but as a catalytic engine for Bayelsa's economic, administrative, and urban transformation possess an inherited clarity of purpose.

Observers with a discerning eye have long argued that the state stands to gain significantly if, in 2027, leadership were drawn from among those who combine that founding vision with proven managerial capacity. Entrusting the helm to a representative of the very community that midwifed the capital could supply the resolve and coherence needed to evolve Yenagoa from an assemblage of administrative conveniences into a fully integrated and future-facing city system.

This disconnect matters because, as urban scholars like Mario Polèse suggest, "Nations (and by extension, state leadership) matter" in shaping cities. If the leadership does not instinctively understand the specific urban strategic role of the capital from its inception, they are likely to view Yenagoa as a "cost center" to be managed rather than an "engine" to be fueled, thereby falling into the trap of "unrealized agglomeration economies," where cities have the population size but lack the institutional quality or "glue" to generate wealth. Bayelsa's status as Nigeria's second-poorest state by Multidimensional Poverty Index scores, despite its oil wealth, is a stark reminder of this concept. To reverse this, the state must focus on social cohesion and metropolitan governance.

The question today's citizens must ask is: would Bayelsa's trajectory change if it deliberately fielded leadership drawn from those who have historically understood and championed Yenagoa's strategic role from its birth? There is a level of identity-driven planning that comes only from those who view the city not just as a workplace, but as an ancestral and strategic home.

Identity-driven planning does not imply ethnic exclusion or parochial entitlement. Rather, it refers to a deeply internalized understanding of place—an instinctive grasp of why the capital exists, what historical compromise produced it, and what long-term role it must play in the political economy of the state. Leaders shaped by the original Yenagoa capital city project understand that the city was conceived as a collective asset for all Bayelsans, regardless of local government of origin. Its success or failure is therefore not a Yenagoa problem, but a Bayelsa problem.

Leadership that instinctively understands the capital's role as both an ancestral home and a strategic asset approaches governance differently from leadership that treats the capital as a neutral administrative site. In the former case, the city is not perceived merely as a cost center—an expensive seat of government to be serviced with recurrent expenditure—but as a living balance sheet whose value can be deliberately grown. Such leadership recognizes that every road, institution, land-use decision, and cultural investment either compounds or erodes long-term urban wealth. This instinctive understanding shifts policy from short-term fiscal management toward long-term asset creation, where the objective is to increase the productive, cultural, and financial value of the city for present and future generations.

When a capital is understood as an ancestral and strategic home, public investments are more likely to be framed as intergenerational commitments rather than politically motivated projects. Urban land is treated as a scarce and valuable asset to be strategically allocated, not casually consumed. Infrastructure is designed to catalyze private investment and agglomeration economies, not merely to satisfy immediate political demands. Institutions such as universities, libraries, cultural centers, and innovation hubs are prioritized because they anchor human capital and generate non-extractive forms of wealth. In this way, emotional attachment to place reinforces rational economic planning, producing what might be described as a moral economy of urban development—one in which stewardship, continuity, and legacy matter.

Figures who combine high-level managerial acumen with intimate knowledge of the capital's founding vision are uniquely positioned to operationalize this shift. Managerial competence enables the navigation of complex bureaucracies, the mobilization of capital, the structuring of partnerships, and the execution of large-scale projects. Yet competence alone is insufficient. Without an internalized understanding of the city's original strategic purpose, even technically skilled leadership may default to incrementalism—maintaining the city rather than transforming it. By contrast, leaders shaped by the original vision of Yenagoa as a city-system possess strategic clarity that aligns day-to-day governance with long-term urban outcomes.

Such leadership is better equipped to bridge the persistent gap between vision and execution that has characterized Yenagoa's development. It can translate abstract ideas of urban advantage into concrete policy instruments: metropolitan governance frameworks, land value capture mechanisms, infrastructure-led industrial clustering, and deliberate investments in knowledge institutions. Over time, this approach enables the capital to generate its own revenues, attract talent and capital, and progressively reduce its dependence on oil rents and federation allocations. In effect, the city transitions from being a fiscal burden on the state to becoming a primary generator of wealth.

For this reason, support for such leadership should be grounded not in local origin or rotational logic, but in strategic alignment with the city's founding purpose. When Yenagoa functions as a viable, dense, and productive urban center, the benefits diffuse outward—stimulating riverine trade, expanding markets for rural producers, attracting investment across all local government areas, and strengthening Bayelsa's bargaining power within the Nigerian federation. Only when the capital works does the state work. Supporting leadership that instinctively understands and is committed to this reality is therefore an act of collective self-interest for all Bayelsans.

Ultimately, the argument is not one of ethnic entitlement but of urban logic. Cities flourish when leadership understands not only how to govern, but why the city exists in the first place. Yenagoa was conceived as more than an administrative necessity; it was imagined as the integrative heart of Bayelsa's political economy and the symbolic home of Ijaw aspiration. Leadership that instinctively grasps this dual identity is more likely to make the difficult, long-horizon decisions required to convert Yenagoa from an underperforming capital into a durable wealth engine for the state.

Yenagoa, like all great cities, is a "crucible" where society's contradictions are contested. It is a place where the enormous wealth generated by oil (Bayelsa accounts for a significant portion of Nigeria's oil production) exists side-by-side with multidimensional poverty and environmental degradation.

Robert Beauregard argues that the city is not a solution to these dilemmas but the ground on which they are fought. The strategy for Bayelsa must be to use the city's density to manage these contradictions. By clustering high-skilled workers and institutions in the city center, Yenagoa can create "knowledge spillovers" that move the population out of the informal economy and into formal, wealth-generating sectors.

A nuanced understanding of urban prosperity, as championed by Christopher Kennedy, distinguishes between "economic growth" (income) and "wealth" (tangible assets). In this framework, the wealth of Yenagoa is the total value of the assets owned by its citizens: their real estate, their businesses, and their financial holdings. Physical infrastructure substantially underlies this wealth.

Furthermore, Kennedy's "ecological parallel" suggests that cities, like ecosystems, pass through stages of development. An unhealthy urban ecosystem is one where infrastructure and economic development are misaligned. Yenagoa's reliance on the informal economy and its struggle with erratic electricity supply are indicators of an ecological imbalance that requires targeted "infrastructure-led" interventions to cure.

Currently, the "informal economy" in Yenagoa is dominant, driven by urban poverty and limited formal employment. This is not a failure of the people; it is a failure of "system density." When infrastructure is spread thin (sprawl), the cost of formalizing business becomes too high. When we reclaim the "administrative skeleton" vision of the Committee for the Creation of Bayelsa State and densify the city, we make prosperity accessible.

The historical circumstances of 1996 provided the "skeleton," and the decades of administrative growth since have provided the "musculature" of a state capital. However, the work remains unfinished. The persistent multidimensional poverty of its citizens suggests that the "original purpose" of Yenagoa has been deferred.

Today's policymakers—guided by the lessons of Brugmann, Kennedy, Polèse, and Beauregard—face a defining challenge. Will they continue the ad hoc expansion of a "local council headquarters," or will they reclaim the strategic foresight of Agama, Azaiki, and Sasime? The path to prosperity lies in deliberate urbanism: optimizing density, investing in asset-rich infrastructure, and cultivating a spirit of civicism that makes every resident an owner of the city's destiny.

As Yenagoa continues its transition into a burgeoning metropolis, we are left with a provocative question: can a city built in the swamps of the Delta become the financial and cultural capital of the Ijaw nation? The "administrative skeleton" of 1996 was a resilient start, but the true wealth of Bayelsa will only be unlocked when Yenagoa fulfills its promise as a true, integrated citysystem. The question now is not if Yenagoa can become a center of prosperity, but who has the vision to build it and transform it truly into a haven in the creeks?

**Professor Chris Ide is Emeritus Professor of Politics and Public Administration, Savannah State University, Savannah, Georgia, USA.*

## NIMASA, Malta Explore Partnership To Advance Nigeria's Ship Registry

By **Sulaimon Salau**

THE Director General of the Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA), Dayo Mobereola, has held strategic discussions with the Registrar General of Shipping and Seamen of the Malta Ship Registry, Ivan Tabone, on knowledge sharing and capacity building to support the modernization of the Nigerian Ship Registry. The engagement took place on the sidelines of the maritime exhibition, Posidonia 2026, in Athens, Greece.

The meeting focused on collaboration in ship registration processes, regulatory efficiency, digital transformation, and institutional best practices, with both parties exploring opportunities for technical cooperation to enhance the competitiveness of the Nigerian Ship Registry.

Speaking during the meeting, Mobereola reaffirmed NIMASA's commitment to fully automate the Nigerian Ship Registry in line with international standards. He noted that ongoing reforms are aimed at improving efficiency, increasing indigenous vessel registrations, boosting investor confidence, and positioning Nigeria as a leading maritime hub in Africa.

According to him, the agency is building a transparent, technology-driven registry that supports the growth of Nigeria's maritime sector and aligns with the vision of the Federal Ministry of Marine and Blue Economy under the leadership of Adegboyega Oyetola.

The Malta Ship Registry is widely regarded as one of the world's most successful ship registries, ranking as the largest merchant shipping register in Europe and among the top six globally by gross tonnage.

## Interswitch Founder Joins Global Jury For 2026 EY World Entrepreneur Awards

By **Sulaimon Salau**

FOUNDER and Group Managing Director/CEO of Interswitch Group, Mitchell Elegbe, has been re-appointed as the only entrepreneur from Africa into the global jury of the 2026 Ernst & Young (EY) World Entrepreneur of The Year Awards, which takes place annually in June in Monte Carlo, Monaco, for the third consecutive year.

According to EY, the World Entrepreneur of the Year Hall of Fame is an elite corps of men and women who have been recognized for their exceptional entrepreneurial achievements.

Elegbe has made history, becoming the first and only entrepreneur globally to have won in both emerging and master categories in any region in 40 years, and invited to global jury for the 3rd year running

"The programme has recognized more than 10,000 outstanding entrepreneurs for their vision, innovation, courage, and leadership in building and growing successful businesses — businesses that influence the way people live, the products and services we depend on, and the economic vibrancy of our local communities and global markets," the company stated.

For the 2026 edition of the global awards, Elegbe has been re-invited by EY's global leadership to join the global jury being 1 of 9 former finalists who form the judging committee for the 2026 global awards of the initiative, holding annually in Monte Carlo, Monaco. The 2026 jury is made up of accomplished entrepreneurs.

## Seme Border Stakeholders Seek Review Of Vehicle Import Ban

### Cite Revenue Losses, Rising Smuggling

By **Sulaimon Salau**

STAKEHOLDERS in the freight forwarding industry in Seme have called on the Federal Government to review the ban on imported vehicles through the Seme Border, describing the policy as a case of "throwing the baby and bath water away."

The stakeholders, led by freight forwarding practitioner, Don Tino Celestine Esezobor, argued that nearly a decade after the ban was imposed, the policy has resulted in significant job losses, revenue decline and economic hardship for operators at the border, while failing to stop the influx of imported vehicles into the country.

The Federal Government had, on December 31, 2016, prohibited the importation of vehicles through Nigeria's land borders, including the Seme Border, as part of measures aimed at curbing smuggling and boosting revenue collection through the seaports.

However, the stakeholders said the policy has negatively affected hundreds of freight forwarding agents and support workers who depended on vehicle clearance operations for their livelihoods.

# Nigeria Targets More Oil Investment As Oil Licensing Round Holds Q3

By **Sulaimon Salau**

THE Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission (NUPRC) has said that the 2026 Licensing Round will commence latest by third quarter of 2026 having received the approval of the Minister of Petroleum Resources in line with the Petroleum Industry Act.

The Commission Chief Executive, Mrs. Oritsemeyiwa Eyesan, stated this when Meren Energy (formerly Africa Oil), visited the corporate headquarters of the NUPRC in Abuja.

Eyesan, who expressed satisfaction with the conduct of the 2025 Licensing Round, stated that the commercial bid would take place in July after which the next licensing round would commence.

The NUPRC boss said the heightened participation in the 2025 Licensing Round was a testament to the fact that Nigeria was headed in the right direction.

She said the rise in investments coupled with the upswing in production was evidence that Nigeria's oil and gas sector under the leadership of President Bola Tinubu had become attractive.

Eyesan stated: "We are fortunate that the President and Minister of Petroleum Resources have approved the 2026 Licensing Round.

"So, we are in the process of finalising the 2026 launch which will happen latest by the third quarter. So, this is the make or break point and we want to make sure we make it."

In his remarks, the Group CEO, Meren Energy, Dr. Oliver Quinn, stated that the current reforms had inspired the company to increase its investments in Nigeria hence its interest in asset divestments and licensing rounds.

Quinn revealed that Meren Energy's investment priority is Africa of which Nigeria ranks number one.

"We have operated in Agbami, Akpo and Egina world class fields. I think till date, in 20 years about $11bn in capital from our side has gone into these assets and about $4bn has gone to tax and royalties," he said, adding, "Nigeria remains the core of our business today because of the quality of these assets."

According to Quinn, Meren Energy is pressuring its partners on these assets to deepen their investments and then increase overall production.

He said Meren Energy was the first company in Nigeria to sell crude oil to the Dangote Refinery and the firm will continue to fulfil its Domestic Crude Supply Obligation so long as the price remains right.



Managing Director/CEO, Egbin Power, Mokhtar Bounour (left); Winner of Top Performer Award at Egbin Power's Employee Recognition Awards (ERA) 2026, Amos Oshanugo and acting Head of Human Resources, Ololade Shin-Aba at the presentation of the grand prize of a brand-new Chery Tiggo 2 Pro SUV at Egbin Power plant, Ikorodu, Lagos. PHOTO: SUNDAY AKINLOLU

## Why Online Businesses Aren't Attracting Customers – Wetinuneed Founder

By **Suliyat Tella**

MORE Nigerian small businesses are going digital, but many are still struggling to attract customers despite being active online, founder of Wetinuneed, Buchi Madiebo, has said.

From Instagram pages to Facebook adverts, WhatsApp Business and websites, many SMEs now invest time and money into building online presence.

However, Madiebo believes that being online alone is no longer enough to guarantee visibility or steady sales.

Speaking with *The Guardian*, she said many small businesses rely heavily on social media but still struggle because their visibility depends on crowded platforms and changing algorithms.

"Many businesses are online, but customers still cannot find them easily," she explained. "The digital space is becoming more competitive every day. Businesses now need more structured visibility, not just social media activity."

According to her, customers want businesses they can easily locate, verify and trust before making buying decisions.

This growing need for discoverability has increased interest in platforms designed to help businesses improve their digital presence in a more organised way.

Wetinuneed, a Nigerian business directory and discovery platform, is positioning itself as one of the platforms helping businesses become more visible and accessible online.

The platform allows businesses to showcase their products and services while helping customers discover businesses across different categories more easily.

Industry experts believe platforms focused on business discovery may become increasingly important as Nigeria's digital economy continues to expand.

For many SMEs, the conversation is gradually changing from simply being online to making sure customers can actually find, trust and engage with their businesses.

## Govt Tasked On Green Port, Improved Welfare For Dockworkers

### SCAN Seeks Capacity Building For Workers

By **Sulaimon Salau**

THE Federal Government has been urged to ensure a fast transition to greener ports, with due priority for welfare of dockworkers.

The Vice President, Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC), Prince Adewale Adeyanju, who stated this at the Shipping Correspondents Association of Nigeria (SCAN) Dockworkers' Day 2026, in Lagos, said any conversation about green ports must place workers at the heart of policy formulation and implementation.

Noting that the global maritime industry is already witnessing major transformations, he said the introduction of electric cargo handling equipment, automated systems, renewable energy solutions, digital logistics platforms, and environmentally friendly operational procedures is changing the way ports function.

"While these innovations offer significant environmental benefits, they also present challenges for workers. The transition to greener ports must not become an excuse for job losses, poor working conditions, or the exclusion of workers from decision - making processes," he said.

Adeyanju, who is also the former President-General, Maritime Workers Union of Nigeria (MWUN), said for Nigeria, the pursuit of green port presents opportunities, but achieving this feat requires huge investments, modern infrastructure, cleaner equipment, renewable energy systems, waste management facilities and environmentally responsible cargo-handling processes.

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# Researchers Fortify Poultry Farming With Groundbreaking Innovations

By **Gbenga Akinfenwa**

RESEARCHERS have discovered a groundbreaking innovation on how chickens can be protected from diseases by "training" their immune system and how vaccines and -glucan supplements enhance innate immunity in poultry.

This breakthrough study, by Hiroshima University, Japan published in *The Journal of Poultry Science*, not only offers a pathway to improve productivity but also contributes to sustainable poultry farming and a safer food supply.

According to the study, the innovation, a modification of cells in the innate immune system, may represent a new way of protecting poultry from infectious diseases.

In the review article, the researchers highlight key findings in this field, focusing on how vaccines and dietary supplementation with -glucans can enhance the innate immune system.

Their efforts pave the way towards more research in this unexplored area of avian immunology, leading to healthier and more productive chicken farms.

"In the ever-evolving world of poultry production, maintaining the health of chickens is vital not only for guaranteeing animal welfare but also for ensuring a safe and sustainable food supply. The immune system thus plays a crucial role in protecting chickens from a variety of diseases.

"The adaptive immune system, which includes highly specific responses driven by cellular memory, has long been the focus of vaccination strategies. However, recent research has highlighted the potential of trained immunity as a promising approach to disease prevention in various animals.

"Trained immunity can enhance the innate immune system—a less specific line of defense—through epigenetic and metabolic reprogramming of immune cells. However, the concept of trained immunity in poultry remains underexplored.

"Against this backdrop, a research team led by Professor Yukinori Yoshimura from Hiroshima University and The Open University of Japan recently published a review article in *The Journal of Poultry Science* in Volume 61 on March 13, 2024. This review highlights the effects of vaccination and -glucan supplementation on trained immunity in chickens.

"One of the key findings of our review was that the Newcastle disease/infectious bronchitis vaccine, widely used in poultry farming, has been shown to increase the expression of certain toll-like receptors (TLR7 and TLR21)," says Prof. Yoshimura.



These receptors enable innate immune cells to detect single-stranded ribonucleic acid viruses and unmethylated cytosine-phosphate-guanine-deoxyribonucleic acid of pathogens, even those unrelated to the vaccine's specific antigens. Therefore, vaccination may enhance the innate immune system's responses alongside its well-established effects on adaptive immunity, constituting a form of trained immunity.

Notably, the benefits of -glucan supplementation are quite varied, as it enhances the activity of innate immune cells and modulates the balance of cytokines and chemokines in the intestine, supporting a healthier immune environment.

The report, however, noted that further research is needed to fully understand the applicability of vaccines and dietary supplementation in achieving trained immunity.

"The determination of markers of trained immunity, such as specific histone modifications and intracellular metabolic events, will support the exploration of more effective vaccines and feed additives in the future.

"Nonetheless, the enhancement of both adaptive and innate immunity will likely provide chickens with better defense mechanisms, leading to healthier and more productive poultry," says Prof. Yoshimura.

# IAR&T Commissions New Station In Osun, Reaffirms Commitment To Food Security

By **Gbenga Akinfenwa**

THE Institute of Agricultural Research and Training (IAR&T), Ibadan, Oyo State has officially inaugurated a new Station at Imesi-Ile, Osun State, as part of moves to fulfill its mandate of combating the challenge of food insecurity in the country.

In his welcome address, the Director of the host institution, Prof. Gabriel Oluwatosin, who commended the Owa-Ooye of Imesi-Ile, HRM Oba Enoch Ademola Akinyemi, Oyoyo II, and the Imesi-Ile Progressive Association (IPA), reiterated the Institute's commitment to food security through research, innovation and technology development.

Giving an insight on the new station, the Head of Crop and Livestock Production Unit, IAR&T and Chairman, Local Organising Committee, Prof. Johnson Adetumbi traced the trajectory of the station's establishment. He acknowledged the IPA's funding of the office building and land donation for farm operations.

While delivering his speech, the monarch, Oba Akinyemi, who appreciated the Institute for making the dream project a reality, urged the indigenes to maximize the presence of IAR&T for community and national benefit.

The National President of IPA, Samuel Olusola Agbeluyi, challenged other federal institutions to partner with the town, "as the Imesi-Ile community, though small in landmass, but big in ambition and aspirations, is open to advancement and progress."

However, as a way of encouraging the farmers in the community, a symbolic presentation of improved Maize seeds was performed by the Deputy Director of the Institute, Prof. Dotun Ogunniyan. He reiterated the Institute's resolve to producing quality seeds and ascertained them of high yields, urging the farmers to be committed to good agricultural practices.

In his goodwill message, the Chairman of All Farmers Association of Nigeria (AFAN), Osun State, Alhaji Wahab Bello, appreciated the Institute for the kind gesture and promised the seeds will be used maximally with expectation of good and positive feedback.

The Dean, Faculty of Agriculture, OAU, Ile-Ife, Prof. Femi Ajayi used the medium to interact with the farmers in their native language, imploring them to capitalize on the opportunity of having a Research Institute in their domain. He narrated a story to echo his food-for-thought to the farmers and wished the Institute continued success.

Also, the immediate Past Director of the Institute, Prof. Veronica Obatolu, who in her comment emphasised the importance of the project, said the reality of the station during the reign of the present Director is a great achievement and would do humanity good.

The Chief Host and Vice Chancellor, OAU, Ile-Ife, Prof. Adebayo Simeon Bamire, in his remarks, expressed gratitude to the Kabiyesi and the indigenes. He emphasised the strong linkage between OAU and IAR&T, stating "the presence of IAR&T is the presence of the Obafemi Awolowo University". He urged farmers to adopt good practices and lauded the Institute's capacity to solve agricultural challenges.

# WAVE Alerts Farmers On Emerging Cassava Virus Diseases

From **Gordi Udeajah**, Umuahia

FARMERS and other stakeholders in agriculture have been enjoined to adopt holistic surveillance and preventive measures to protect their cassava farms, among other crops, from being infected by viral diseases.

This follows the emergence of a devastating form of Cassava Mosaic Disease (CMD) caused by the Ugandan variant of East African Cassava Mosaic Virus (EACMV-Ug) in some countries in West Africa, and the prevalence of Cassava Brown Streak Disease (CBSD) in East Africa.

At a one day Farmers' Field Day on Cassava Virus Disease identification and Management, organised by WAVE in collaboration with BIORISKS, Council For Agricultural Research and Development (CORAF) and National Root Crops Research Institute (NRCRI), Umudike, Abia State, the farmers were also alerted by the South-South/South-East Country Director of the Central and West Africa Virus Epidemiology (WAVE) Project, Dr Chukwuemeka Nkere on ways to combat these diseases.

Held at the Abia State Agricultural Development Programme (ADP) Office, Umuahia, Abia State, the field day featured lectures, discussions, and demonstrations that centered on best agronomic practices for cassava production, disease symptoms identification, and use of disease-free planting materials.

Dr. Nkere cautioned that although these two cassava viral diseases are not yet in Nigeria, they could still emerge at any time.

According to the Country Director, "Viruses don't require visa to enter any country, the essence of the farmers field day was to create awareness and educate farmers on steps they should adopt to protect their farms from the diseases in case of any outbreak."

He warned that if not properly prevented, the Cassava Mosaic Disease, especially those that are caused by the Ugandan Variant (EACMV-Ug), and the Cassava Brown Streak Diseases, their emergence can lead to 100 per cent Cassava yield loss of over $2b yearly.

Dr. Nkere consequently advised farmers to always use virus-free material, source their planting materials from Certified Seed producers, and use recommended improved and resistant varieties to reduce or control the cassava diseases.

He commended the Abia State Government and the Agricultural Development Programme (ADP) for their commitment to agricultural extension and grassroots farmer engagement, describing the partnership as critical to the successful implementation of disease prevention and management interventions.

Dr Nkere further emphasised that sustained collaboration among all stakeholders in cassava value chain namely; researchers, policymakers, extension workers, NPPOs and farmers, is essential to protecting cassava production and strengthening food security across the region.

He reiterated WAVE's commitment to continuous nationwide stakeholder monitoring, advocacy for an efficient early warning system, and the development of a decision support system for rapid response to any disease incursions

The state ADP Manager, Mr. Okoro Nleanya, who declared the Field Day event open, described Cassava as one of Africa's most important food security crops and a major source of livelihood for millions of smallholder farmers

He commended the WAVE and co-organisers of the programme for partnering witAbia ADP in bringing the intervention closer to grassroots farmers, noting that such collaborations are essential for improving agricultural productivity and strengthening food security.

According to the ADP Manager, the State Government's continued support for agricultural extension services and farmer empowerment initiatives have been very impactful in the state.

# Buni Slashes Tractor Hiring Services By 50% In Yobe

From **Njadvara Musa**, Damaturu

THE Yobe State Governor, Mai Mala Buni has approved the implementation of the Tractor Hiring Services (TRHS) by 50 per cent for small-scale farmers in each of the 178 communities in the state.

According to him, the TRHS rate was slashed from N100,000 to N50,000.

The acting Secretary to the State Government, Dr Mohammed Goje, announced the new development in Damaturu, describing the 50 per cent subsidy, as a strategic intervention to ease the burden on farmers, increased access to mechanised farming, and improve agricultural productivity across the state.

The SSG noted that the reduction in tractor hiring fees will enable more farmers to cultivate larger portions of arable land, increase production, and maximise their yields during the current farming season.

"The 50 per cent reduction in tractor hiring fees will enable more farmers to cultivate larger portions of land, increase production, and maximise yields during the current farming season," said Dr Goje.

He added that the intervention is expected to significantly reduce the cost of cultivation, boost food security, and improve the economic wellbeing of farming communities throughout the state.

Goje stressed that Governor Buni's administration has continued to place agriculture at the forefront of its development agenda through sustained investments in tractors, agricultural machinery, improved seeds, fertilisers, irrigation support, and other farmer-friendly programmes designed to empower rural communities and stimulate economic growth.

The acting SSG explained that making tractor services more affordable would encourage greater participation in farming activities, enhance productivity, and support the state's drive towards agricultural self-sufficiency.

He, therefore reaffirmed the commitment of the Buni's administration to implement policies and programmes that could promote agricultural development, create jobs for youths, and improve livelihoods, and ensure sustainable economic growth for the people of Yobe state.

## Stakeholders Blame Lack Of Planning For Nigeria's Governance Failure

From **Joseph Chibueze**, Abuja

THE failure of governance in Nigeria has been blamed on the leaders' failure to plan.

This was the position of stakeholders at the public presentation of a new book in Abuja titled, 'It Starts With A Plan,' written by a legal practitioner, Mr. Chuka Modebe.

The stakeholders called for stronger citizen participation, long-term planning and collective action to address Nigeria's governance challenges. They described the book as a contribution to ongoing conversations on governance reforms and national development.

The book presentation drew attendance from the academia, authors, civil society organisations as well as public policy advocates.

Speaking on his motivation for writing the book, Modebe said Nigeria's persistent challenges could not be addressed without confronting what he described as the leaders' penchant for lack of planning.

He said while corruption has been blamed for systemic governance failures, it is largely a symptom of deeper structural problems–lack of planning.

## CIPM Recommits To Advancing Professional Excellence

By **Moyosore Salami**

THE Chartered Institute of Personnel Management (CIPM) has reaffirmed its commitment to advancing professional excellence and strengthening Human Resource capacity development.

The Vice Chairperson of Rivers State Branch of the CIPM, Orieji Uduma, stated this while announcing plans for its 27th annual state conference, with a focus on addressing changing workplace realities and strategies for building agile and sustainable organisations.

The conference, themed, 'Work, Workforce & Workplace: Driving Agile and Sustainable Organizations,' is scheduled to hold as a hybrid event in Port Harcourt, bringing together Human Resource (HR) professionals, business leaders, policymakers, entrepreneurs, administrators and industry stakeholders.

The institute said the conference is designed to provide a platform for examining emerging trends shaping the future of work, while equipping organisations with strategies to remain resilient and competitive amid evolving economic and workplace demands.

# PDP Tackles Fayose For Politicising Oyo Abduction

From **Ayodele Afolabi** and **John Akubo** (Abuja)

### Senator Defends Makinde, Warns Against Reckless Blame

THE Southwest Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) has described the comment of former governor of Ekiti State, Ayo Fayose, on the Oyo State abduction as reckless, insensitive and politically dangerous.

Fayose had alleged that the recent bandits' attack in Oriire Local Council of Oyo State may have been orchestrated by Governor Seyi Makinde to blackmail President Bola Ahmed Tinubu during a television programme.

The PDP, in a statement by its Southwest Zonal Publicity Secretary, Chief Sanya Atofarati, said such a statement exposed Fayose's glaring double standards on insecurity.

He said: "Fayose's hypocrisy becomes even more evident when viewed against developments in his home state of Ekiti, where armed men recently attacked a church in Eda-Oniyo, Ilejemeje Local Council, killing a visiting pastor and abducting several worshippers who remain in captivity.

"Eda-Oniyo is barely 30 minutes away from Afao-Ekiti, Fayose's hometown. Yet, he neither accused Governor Biodun Oyebanji of negligence nor demanded answers from the state government regarding the deteriorating security situation, while innocent citizens remained in captivity.

"Most disturbing was his recent appearance in Ilawe-Ekiti, within Ekiti Southwest Local Council, where he openly met and fraternised with APC members and political leaders in furtherance of his campaign for the APC governor. At no point during his visit did he demonstrate empathy for the victims of the Eda-Oniyo attack or use his platform to demand urgent action from the government.

"This selective outrage exposes the insincerity behind his comments on the Oyo incident and confirms that his criticisms are driven not by concern for victims of insecurity, but by partisan calculations."

Similarly, Senator Abdulfatai Buhari, representing Oyo Central, has urged political actors to desist from politicising Nigeria's security challenges, insisting that allegations against Makinde must be backed by verifiable evidence rather than speculation or social media narratives.

The senator, a member of the APC, made the remarks while speaking on recent insecurity incidents in parts of the South-West, including the abduction of schoolchildren in Oyo State, which he described as "deeply tragic and emotionally devastating" for affected families and communities.

He spoke while addressing newsmen at the Senate.

Responding to public commentary, including claims attributed to Fayose, Buhari cautioned against what he called "reckless attribution of blame" without investigative proof, warning that such narratives risk undermining ongoing security operations.



Commissioner of Livestock Development, Niger State, Adamu Mammagi Abdullahi (left); Chief Technical Officer, Promasidor Nigeria, Brighton Ochieng; Special Assistant to the Minister, Federal Ministry of Livestock Development, Dr Ishak. Bello; Minister of Livestock Development, Idi Mukhtar Maiha; Head of Raw Milk Supply and Production, Arla Foods, Snorri Sigurdsson; Acting. Director, TETFund Dairy Research and Development Centre, Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University (ATBU), Bauchi, Prof. Demo Kalla and Presenter, Voice of Nigeria, Rita Ene Okwanihe, during the World Milk Day 2026 Forum themed "Celebrating Women Farmers" held in Abuja.

## Domestic Crises Undermine Nigeria's Global Positioning, Says Akinyele

By **Suliyat Tella**

THE Vice-Chancellor, Maranatha University, Professor Rufus Akinyele, has observed that Nigeria's domestic challenges are limiting the influence of the country in international affairs.

Akinyele stated this while reviewing a collection of essays in a compendium titled, 'Governance Crises and Contradictions in Nigeria's Relations,' a festchrift in honour of the former Dean, School of Postgraduate Studies, University of Lagos, Professor Oladele Akinboye.

He stated that the various domestic challenges facing the country tend to undermine the country's global positioning.

According to Akinyele, Nigeria once played the role of a "big brother" on the African continent, but has gradually lost that position due to internal challenges.

Reviewing the book, Akinyele noted that the exclusion of women from governance is largely a consequence of godfatherism and consensus candidacy.

"Out of the 91 people who were screened for the 24 federal constituencies, only about 12 were women, and at the end of the process, they were all edged out," he said.

The guest lecturer, Prof. Alade Fawole, speaking on the lecture titled, 'Nigeria–U.S. Relations in an Unstable World Order," urged Nigerians to recognise that the country's sovereignty is under threat and that her protection rests largely in the hands of her citizens.

Fawole cautioned against the persistent practice of attacking and discrediting the government.

## World Environment Day: Ogoni Cleanup Sequestering Carbon, Reviving Livelihoods – HYPREP

From **Ann Godwin** and **Obinna Nwaoku**, Port Harcourt

### Groups Demand End To Gas Flaring In Niger Delta

THE Hydrocarbon Pollution Remediation Project (HYPREP) has described the ongoing restoration of Ogoniland as a results-driven climate action initiative, saying the project is not only reversing decades of environmental damage, but also contributing to the global fight against climate change.

Marking the 2026 World Environment Day, HYPREP said its large-scale mangrove restoration programme is reviving what was once regarded as the world's largest oil-degraded mangrove ecosystem, while creating jobs, restoring biodiversity and generating future carbon-credit opportunities for local communities.

The Project Coordinator of HYPREP, Prof. Nenibarini Zabbey, said the agency's environmental restoration efforts align with the global theme of this year's celebration: 'Inspired by Nature. For Climate. For Our Future.'

According to him, millions of native mangroves are being planted across polluted shorelines in Ogoniland, helping to absorb carbon emissions, restore fish breeding grounds and encourage the return of aquatic species such as fish, crabs, oysters and periwinkles.

He noted that the restored mangrove forests are already serving as significant carbon sinks, with plans underway to leverage carbon-credit opportunities that could provide sustainable funding for host communities and ensure long-term conservation of the ecosystem.

Zabbey explained that beyond environmental gains, the project has become a source of livelihood for thousands of Ogoni youths and women employed as mangrove planters, nursery operators and shoreline environmental monitors known as Mangrove Vanguards.

He added that HYPREP's intervention extends beyond mangrove restoration to include shoreline cleanup, remediation of polluted soil and groundwater, provision of potable water, health programmes, livelihood support schemes and the ongoing Ogoni Power Project.

## Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Group Targets 70% Local Drug Production

### Announces 2026 Expo

By **Isaac Taiwo**

THE Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Group of the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (PMG-MAN) has reaffirmed its commitment to achieving 70 per cent local manufacturing of medicines as part of efforts to strengthen medicine security and healthcare delivery in the country.

The Chairman of PMG-MAN and Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer of Daily-Need Industries Limited, Mr. Oluwatosin Jolayemi, made this known through the Chairman of the Exhibition Planning Committee and Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer of May & Baker Nigeria Plc, Dr. Patrick Ajah, during a press briefing announcing the 8th Nigeria Pharma Manufacturers Expo (NPME) 2026.

The two-day event, themed, 'Regional Manufacturing: Advancing Africa's Pharma and Life Sciences Sovereignty through Localization,' is scheduled to hold from September 28 to 29, 2026, at Harbour Point Event Centre, Victoria Island, Lagos.

Ajah said PMG-MAN, inaugurated in 1983 by the late former Minister of Health, Prof. Olikoye Ransome-Kuti, has grown from 20 pioneer members to more than 200 companies, contributing significantly to medicine access, employment generation and economic growth.

According to him, the association's long-term objective is to attain medicine self-sufficiency in Nigeria by reversing the historical dependence on imported drugs. He noted that recent industry data indicate substantial progress, with the ratio of imported to locally manufactured essential medicines now standing at approximately 50:50.

He added that imported finished pharmaceutical products had declined from 4.03 billion units to 1.13 billion units as of 2025, reflecting increased local production capacity and investment within the sector.

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**ADDITION OF NAME: ADEDEJI:** I, formerly known as Adedeji Ransom-Wise, now to be addressed as Adedeji Toluwalopemi Ransom-Wise. Former documents remain valid. General public take note.

**ADDITION OF NAME:** I formerly known as Mrs Ojonugwa Paula now wish to be addressed as Mrs Ojonugwa Paula Ogheneruona. All documents with former name remain valid. Public take note.

**ADDITION OF NAME:** I, formerly known as Jolly Emmanuel now wish to be addressed as Jolly Emmanuel Ozerze. My DOB is 07-03-2004, not, 18-05-2005. Former documents remain valid. Public note

**ADEBOYEJO:** I, formerly known as Miss. Adeboyejo, Yetunde Adebisi now wish to be addressed as Mrs. Odufuye, Oyinkansola Inioluwa. All former documents remain valid. General public,take note

**ADEKANMBI:** I, formerly known as Omowumi Ruth Adekanmbi now wish to be addressed as Mrs. Omowumi Ruth Fatoyinbo. All documents remain valid. Public note.

**ADEWOLE:** I formerly known as Adewole Caroline Esomun now wish to be addressed as Abamiyo Caroline Esomunu .All former documents remain valid , Public note

**AKHABUE :** I formerly known as, Akhabue Rosemary Onohon, now wish to be addressed as, Nwobodo Rosemary Onohon. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

**ALHASSAN :** I, Formerly known as Alhassan Morufu Babatunde Alhasan Morufu Babatunde now wish to be addressed as Alasan Morufu Babatunde. All former documents remain valid. General public, take note.

**ALLENOLUWASEUN:** I, formerly known as Allenoluwaseun Mary now wish to be addressed as Alajaibovincent Oluwaseun Mary. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

**AMAECHI :** I, formerly Amaechi Blessing Ihuoma now wish to be addressed as Emeka-Nkwo Ihuoma Blessing. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

**AMOS :** I, formerly known as Miss Amos Lapnen now wish to be known as Mrs Eziukwu Chidera Linda. All documents remain valid. First Bank and general public note.

**ANGELA:** I, formerly known as Adara Angela now wish to be known as Ofulue Ekwi Angela. All former documents remain valid. Public notice.

**AWOYALE:** I, formerly known as Miss. Ruth Titilope Awoyale. now wish to be addressed as Mrs. Ruth Titilope Williams. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

**BAMIDELE:** I, formerly known as Mr Ofik Bamidele Nkem, now wish to be addressed as Mr. Ofik Dele Nkem. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

**BENEDICT:** I,formerly known as Agbebiyi Benedict Adebayo Geofrey now wish to be addressed as Agbebiyi Bayo. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

**BENSON:** I, Formerly known as Benson Achuenu now wish to be addressed as Achuenu Paul Benson. Date of birth 25-05-1978 is wrong 25-05-1976 is right. All former documents remain valid. General public, take note.

**CHIJIOKE :** I. formerly Miracle Sopuruchi Chijioke now wish to be addressed as Miracle Goody-McBond. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

**CHIMBUCHI:** I, formerly known as Clinton Chibuchim Umeokoli, now wish to be addressed As Chimbuchi Clinton Umeokoli. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

**CHUKWUDIKE:** I, formerly known as Chukwudike Obiageli Angela now wish to be addressed as Ogbuanu Obiageli Angela. All former documents remain valid. General public note.

**CONFIRMATION OF NAME:** That, Ehinomen Moses S.A. and Aigbirenmonlen Akhere, and, Aigbirenmonlen Moses, is same person, now addressed as, Aigbirenmonlen Moses Ehinomen. Former documents remains valid, public note.

**CONFIRMATION OF NAME:** This is to confirm that Adedayo Daniel is the same person as Adedayo Daniel Ojo. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

**CONFIRMATION OF NAME:** That, Iyere Martha Akhere and Iyere Martha is same person now wish to be addressed as Abhuluimen Martha Akhere. Former documents remain valid. Public note.

**CORRECTION OF NAME AND DOB:** My name was wrongly written as Adesokan Olubunmi Hannah, Adesokan Olubunmi instead of Adesokan Oluwabunmi Aduke and my D O B was wrongly written as 1st January,1940 instead of 12th April,1963. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

**CORRECTION OF NAME:** My name was wrongly arranged as Umanah Glory Sunday instead of Sunday Glory Umanah. My DOB is 02/11/1979 not 03/12/1979. All former documents remain valid. Banks, general public take note.

**CORRECTION OF NAME:** My name was wrongly captured as Jane Nneka Obataluonye instead of Obataluonye Nneka Jane. All former documents remain valid. NIN General public take note.

**CORRECTION OF NAME:** My name was wrongly captured as Joy Uchechi Godswill instead of Joy Uchechi God'swill. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

**CORRECTION OF NAME:** My name was wrongly written as Hyper Michaels Ben instead of Ifeanyi Michael Alieja. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

**CORRECTION OF NAME:** That some official documents captured my name as Kanayo Benneth Edeh, instead of Anayo Benneth Edeh in NIN. All former documents remain valid. General public note.

**CORRECTION OF NAMES AND DATE OF BIRTH:** My name was wrongly written as Ekwo Obiabo instead of Ekwo Obiabo Samson.My DOB is 07/03/1992 not17/12/1992 All former documents remain valid. Public take note

**CORRECTION OF NAMES AND DATE OF BIRTH:** My name was wrongly written as Paul Omodamilare Emmanuel instead of Paul Oluwadamilare Temitope. My DOB is 9/9/1990 not 9/9/1995. All former documents remain valid. Public take note.

**DAMILARE-DANIEL:** I, formerly Mrs. Damilare-Daniel Adenike D. now wish to be addressed as Mrs Olajide Adenike Deborah. Former documents remain valid. Public take note

**DOKUNMU :** I,fFormerly Miss Dokunmu Ibironke Felicia now wish to be known as Mrs Allen Ibironke Felicia. All former documents remain valid. General public note.

**EKENEDILICHUKWU:** I, formerly known as Ekenedilichukwu Umeokoli, now wish to be addressed As Ekenedilichukwu Emmanuel Umeokoli. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

**IDHOVE:** I, formerly known as Miss Idhove Bridget now wish to be addressed as Mrs Okoh Idhove Bridget. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

**JACOB :** I formerly known as Jacob Jennifer Adaorah now wish to be addressed as Jacob Jennifer Iniobong. All Former documents eemain valid. General public take note

**JONATHAN :** I, formerly known as Ntak Udeme Jonathan now wish to revert to Ntak Ime Thomas. All former documents remain valid. General public, take note.

**JUSTICE :** I, formerly known as Justice Ehigie now wishes to be addressed as Gerald Ubawike Biose. All former documents remain valid.Ministry of Education . Public, take note.

**KALARIA:** I, formerly known as Kalaria Eriifeoluwa Amina Oluwaseyifunmi Ukiwe now wish to be addressed as Kalaria Ukiwe. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

**KIMBERLY:** I, formerly known as Kimberly Zikora Ogbu Igwe, now wish to be addressed As Kimberly Zikora Igwe. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

**MARTINS:** I, formerly known as Tamunomiebaka Queenette Martins now wish to be addressed as Tamunomiebaka Queenette Nubuisi. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

**NDOR :** I Formerly known as Jecinta Livinus Ndor now wish to be addressed as Jecinta Anusionwu. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

**NESO-NATHAN:** I, formerly known as Neso-Nathan Ogbu Igwe, now wish to be addressed as Neso-Nathan Igwe. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

**NZUBECHUKWU:** I, formerly known as Nzube Jacinta Umeokoli, now wish to be addressed As Nzubechukwu Jecinta Umeokoli. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

**OGBONNAYA:** I, Formerly known as Miss Ogbonnaya Chileme, now wish to be known as Mrs. Oziagbe Chileme. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

**OGUNDIPE :** I, formerly known as Ogundipe Tawakalitu Folakemi now wishes to be known as Afolabi Tawakalitu Folakemi. All former documents remain valid. General public, take note.

**OKEKE:** I, formerly known as Miss Okeke Chiamaka Blessing now wish to be addressed as Mrs. Ezeibekwe Chiamaka Blessing. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

**OKOH:** I, formerly known as Okoh Ebitu Erioluwape Oluwarotimi Ukiwe, now wish to be addressed as Okoh Ebitu Ukiwe. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

**OLAJIDE:** I, formerly known as Olajide Fasilat Temitope now wish to be addressed as Atakan Fasilat Temitope. All former documents remain valid. General public,take note

**OYENEKAN :** I, formerly known as Oyenekan Abosede Mary now wish to be addressed as Mrs. Akindele Abosede Mary.All former document remain valid public note.

**REARRANGEMENT OF NAME:** I, formerly known as Ikoojo Friday Mark now wish to be addressed as Friday Ikoojo Mark .All former documents remain valid. General public take note

**SIPEE :** I, formerly known as Miss. Sorbari Sira Sipee now wish to be addressed as Mrs. Sorbari Sira Ntor. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

**SOLA:** I, Formerly known as Sola Adesina Salawu now wish to be addressed as Adesina Peter Abiodun. All former documents remain valid. General public, take note.

**THOMPSON :** I, formerly known as Thompson Mercy Ime Ekpo now wish to be addressed as Ekpo Mercy Ime. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

**UGWU :** I formerly known as Ugwu Nwanneka Blessing now wish to be addressed as Nnagbo Nwanneka Blessing. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

**USAMAH :** I formerly known as Usamah Chizaram Esther now wish to be addressed as Anieze Chizaram Esther. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

**UTIBE-ABASI:** I, formerly known as Utibe-Abasi Saviour Mfonobong Ukut now wish to be addressed as Utibe-Abasi Saviour Ubong. All former documents remain valid. General public,take note

# News

## Pelumi Onifade's Death: Coroner Issues Fresh Orders To LASUTH, Lagos DNA Centre

THE Coroner Court investigating the death of Mr. Pelumi Onifade, a young journalist with Gboah TV, who was reportedly shot and arrested while covering the #EndSARS protests on October 24, 2020, has ordered the Chief Medical Examiner of the Lagos State University Teaching Hospital (LASUTH) to forward to the court within 21 days the autopsy report for an unidentified body tagged 1,385, which is believed to be that of the late journalist.

The investigating magistrate, Mrs. Temitope Oladele, also issued a separate order to the Director of the Lagos State DNA and Forensic Centre to forward to the court within 21 days, the Deoxyribonucleic Acid (DNA) test result for the same body for which DNA samples collected by LASUTH from the body and Mr. Onifade's parents were forwarded to it.

The Coroner issued the orders at the resumed hearing in the inquest into the death of Mr. Onifade, who was reportedly arrested by policemen attached to a Lagos State Task Force while he was covering the #EndSARS protests in 2020, and later found dead at the Ikorodu General Hospital mortuary, where his body was deposited.

The inquest was convened on the orders of a Federal High Court in Lagos following a wrongful death suit brought against the Police and the Lagos State Government by Media Rights Agenda (MRA) demanding, among other things, an investigation into the late journalist's death and the prosecution of those responsible for his death.

## Oyebanji Commissions Research Centre For Newborn At EKSUTH

EKITI State Governor, Mr. Biodun Oyebanji on Friday, commissioned a state-of-the-art Centre for Newborn Health Research and Innovation (CeNHRI) at the University Teaching Hospital, Ado Ekiti, describing the facility as a major milestone in his administration's effort to improve maternal and newborn healthcare delivery in the state and the country at large.

Speaking while commissioning the facility, the first in Nigeria focusing solely on newborn, Oyebanji said the centre would serve as a hub for cutting-edge research, innovation and clinical excellence aimed at addressing challenges associated with neonatal care and reducing infant mortality rate in the state and beyond.

Oyebanji maintained that the facility reflects his government's commitment to advancing scientific knowledge and reducing neonatal mortality, adding that the centre will serve as a platform for innovation, research, capacity building and evidence based healthcare intervention aimed at improving the survival and well-being of mothers and newborns.

## Lagos Central Mosque Dispute: Court Dismisses Case Against *Baba Adinni*

By **Shakirah Adunola**

A Lagos Magistrates' Court sitting in Tinubu, Yaba Magisterial District, has discharged Baba Adinni of Lagos, Alh. Sikiru Alabi-Macfoy after upholding a 'No Case Submission' filed by his defence team.

Alabi-Macfoy had been arraigned by the Commissioner of Police under Charge No: TB/34A/2025 on a one-count charge of disorderly conduct.

The prosecution alleged that on or before February 2025, Alabi-Macfoy paraded himself as the Baba Adinni of the Lagos Central Mosque and disrupted the public Ramadan lectures of the substantive Chief Imam, an offence punishable under Section 168 (1)(d) of the Criminal Law of Lagos State 2015.

Delivering judgment in the case, the presiding magistrate, Paul Daramola, evaluated the evidence presented by the prosecution, which closed its case after calling seven witnesses (PW1 to PW7) and tendering 17 exhibits.

The court observed a striking lack of substance in the state's case, noting that the nominal complainant, the Chief Imam of Central Mosque, Sheikh Sulaimon Abu-Nola, was entirely absent from the courtroom and never appeared to give evidence.

**CHANGE OF NAME**

I say that Oladunmomi Oyenike Layonu is my name as presently reflected on the data page of my Nigerian passport. I now wish to add my christian name "Florence" so that my name will now be reflected as "Florence Oladunmomi Oyenike Layonu" on the data page of my Nigerian Passport on renewal. All former documents bearing the name "Oladunmomi Oyenike Layonu" remain valid. The general public should take note.

# Govt, Allen Onyema To Immortalise Stephen Keshi




AS Nigeria buries one of its legendary football heroes this weekend, the spirit of another late football hero of the same generation is being evoked.

As the body of late Henry Onyenmanze Nwosu, MON, is being committed to mother-earth on Saturday, June 6, in Naze, near Owerri, on Sunday, June 7, 2026, the first in a two-part series of activities in remembrance of late Stephen Okechukwu Keshi, MFR, the one referred to as 'the Big Boss' by the football faithful, will take place in Lagos at the 10th Memorial Lecture organised yearly by a Foundation established by his friends and family at the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs, Lagos.

Also, on July 28, 2026, exactly a day to the date (July 29) that Stephen Keshi died 10 years ago in 2016, his contributions as a sports diplomat within Nigeria's strategic foreign affairs will be showcased and acknowledged. His name will be inscribed in gold letters on 'the NIIA Sports Diplomacy Wall of Fame' in everlasting memory of the great Nigerian football hero and patriot.

His name will be an addition to those of 69 other sporting heroes from Nigeria's history that have already been found deserving of a place on famed Wall.

The 'NIIA Sports Diplomacy Wall of Fame' is a national monument established by an agency of the federal government of Nigeria, the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs, to immortalize Nigerians that are known to have made major contributions to Nigeria's international politics and diplomacy objectives through sports.

On July 28th 2026, it will be 3 years since the edifice was erected within the premises of NIIA in Lagos sponsored by Dr.Allen Onyema and his AirPeace Airline. It is an environment of water fountains, a beautiful garden and a Black marbled-wall on which the names of Nigerian sports heroes considered deserving are inscribed.

The existing list will now be extended to include the name of former Nigerian Green Eagles Captain and national team Coach, Stephen Okechukwu Keshi, CON. He has been considered worthy, and his contributions identified, justified and approved by the NIIA.

The extension of the space on the wall to accommodate his name, plus the small ceremony to be done in his honour, will be courtesy of Dr. Allen Onyema and AirPeace Airline.

Stephen Keshi played and captained the Nigerian national football team. He also coached and managed the National team of Nigeria to an African Cup victory, qualified and took another African national team, Togo, to the FIFA World Cup, personally opened the way and assisted a whole generation of Nigerian and other African football players in the transition to professional ranks in Europe.

Meanwhile, inside the sports diplomacy department of the NIIA, a few other Nigerians athletes are being considered for a place on the wall in the very near future. They include world record breaker and holder,Tobi Amusan; first and only female Olympic Gold medalist, Chioma Ajunwa, and the Atlanta '96 'Dream Team' and Olympic Gold medalists.

The honours list is not based on sports achievements only, but on impact in the international diplomatic and political space in conformity with Nigeria's foreign affairs agenda and objectives!

I remember the great 'Stefan', as I called Keshi, very fondly. He called me 'Segunda Fero'!

# Carloha Nigeria Boosts Okpekpe Road Race With Mobility Solutions, Fan Engagement

By **Benjamin Alade**

CARLOHA Nigeria, the authorised dealers of Chery vehicles in Nigeria, added excitement and innovation to the 2026 Okpekpe International Road Race by enhancing race operations and creating engaging experiences for participants and spectators at the event held on May 30 in Okpekpe, Edo State.

The company leveraged the internationally recognised race to showcase its commitment to sports development, healthy living and community engagement while presenting a range of innovative mobility solutions to thousands of attendees.

A key aspect of Carloha's involvement was the deployment of the Chery HIMLA pickup truck as the official carrier of the race's giant timing clock. The vehicle played a crucial role in supporting race logistics by ensuring the clock remained visible throughout the competition, while also demonstrating its strength, durability and reliability.

In addition to supporting event operations, Carloha displayed some of Chery's latest vehicle models, including the Tiggo 9, Tiggo 8 Pro, the electric iCAR and the HIMLA pickup truck. The exhibition gave visitors the opportunity to interact with the vehicles and explore modern automotive technologies.

The company also organised test-drive sessions that attracted hundreds of athletes, spectators and visitors, allowing them to experience the vehicles' safety features, comfort, intelligent technologies and performance capabilities firsthand.

Carloha's exhibition pavilion emerged as one of the major attractions at the event, drawing athletes, sports enthusiasts, families, business leaders, government officials and traditional rulers. Visitors participated in interactive activities, received information on vehicle features and learned about emerging mobility solutions.

Among the dignitaries who visited the stand was former Edo State Governor, Adams Oshiomhole, who test-drove the iCAR electric vehicle, generating significant interest among attendees and sparking conversations about the future of electric mobility in Nigeria.

Former Edo State Deputy Governor, Philip Shaibu, also visited the pavilion and praised Carloha for supporting sports development and bringing innovative automotive experiences to the event.

Speaking on the company's participation, General Manager of Carloha Nigeria, Felix Mahan, said the objective was not only to showcase vehicles but also to contribute to an event that promotes excellence, healthy living and national pride.

According to him, the Okpekpe International Road Race has evolved into a major platform for celebrating athletic achievement and encouraging healthy lifestyles, adding that Carloha's presence was designed to enhance the event experience while introducing attendees to innovative mobility solutions.

# 'I Want To Inspire Next Generation Of Nigerian Rugby Players'

*Aaron Grandidier-Nkanang is an English-French-Nigerian professional rugby player who plays for the French National team. He won a gold medal as part of the France national rugby sevens team at the 2004 Paris Olympics. Coming to Nigeria for the first time, he tells* ***TOBI AWODIPE*** *what this means for him and how he intends to inspire the next generation of Nigerian rugby players.*

**This is your first time in Nigeria, what does this visit mean to you personally and why did it take you so long to come?**

IT means a lot to me personally because this year, I truly understood the importance of having multiple cultures I've, grown up with what you might call a triple culture: English, French, Nigerian. Last year, when I was invited to the presidential state dinner when President Bola Tinubu came to the Elysée, I understood truly that I am Nigerian and I need to explore my roots.

**How have you been able to successfully navigate this triple identity you speak of and which do you feel most comfortable with?**

It is interesting because on paper, I am French, I grew up in London for the majority of my life so I feel most British but, France gave me the biggest opportunities professionally. At the same time, I carry a French and Nigerian name, so I think I resonate most with the two worlds that I lived with, but I'm very much aware now that I am carrying a Nigerian name with my roots in Nigeria and and that's why I wanted to come back here to explore that.

**You speak French well; do you speak any Nigerian language?**

Unfortunately, we didn't speak any Nigerian language growing up. My dad didn't go to Nigeria often and dint speak the language, however, food was our major link to the country growing up and I ate a number of Nigerian meals. Coming to Nigeria, I am trying to discover as much as the culture as I can.

**Tell us about winning a Gold Medal at the 2024 Olympics, what did it mean to you and how do you think your victory can influence rugby in Nigeria?**

I think it was the biggest achievement of my life by far. The weight an Olympic medal carries is internationally known. No matter where you go, everybody knows about the Olympics and the weight of the Olympic gold is heavy and I feel very privileged to have won one. I think the fact that I've won one means that when I come here and I want to talk about my journey, success, determination and drive, I think the gold medal legitimises that more than anything else.

**How did you start playing Rugby and why that?**

I first discovered it in secondary school and it was difficult because it was the only sport that my secondary school had to offer but I was really bad in the beginning. I had no natural ability in rugby asides my physical attributes and I was so bad that I stopped playing for some years.



Grandidier-Nkanang

Eventually, I came back to it because all my close friends were playing and I didn't wanna miss out and all it took was one coach to tell me I believe you can take this professional.

# NSC Names Lagos Sports Commission Boss, Fatodu As Aquatic Federation President

By **Gowon Akpodonor**

NIGERIA'S drive to strengthen governance and accelerate development across its sporting ecosystem received a monumental boost on Friday as the National Sports Commission (NSC) announced the appointment of Hon. Lekan Fatodu as President of the Nigeria Aquatics Federation.


Fatodu

The appointment, approved by the leadership of the Commission, places one of the country's most visible and dynamic sports administrators at the helm of a federation responsible for the growth and development of swimming, diving, water polo, artistic swimming, and other aquatic disciplines across Nigeria.

Fatodu, who currently serves as Director General of the Lagos State Sports Commission (LSSC), assumes the leadership of the federation at a period when stakeholders are increasingly demanding stronger structures, improved athlete pathways, enhanced technical development, and greater international competitiveness for aquatic sports in the country.

The announcement was made by the Director General of the National Sports Commission, Hon. Bukola Olopade, who described the appointment as part of ongoing efforts to reposition sports federations through capable leadership, institutional reforms, and a renewed focus on athlete development.

Industry observers view the development as a strategic move, given Fatodu's growing reputation in sports administration and his role in driving several reforms within Lagos State's, and by extension, Nigeria's sports ecosystem.

Since assuming office as Director General of the Lagos State Sports Commission, Fatodu has championed initiatives aimed at strengthening grassroots participation, talent discovery, sports infrastructure development, athlete welfare, and institutional partnerships. Under his leadership, Lagos has consolidated its position as one of Nigeria's most active sports development hubs, with deliberate investments in youth-focused programmes and sustainable talent pipelines.

His appointment is expected to bring similar energy and strategic direction to aquatic sports, a sector widely acknowledged as possessing significant untapped potential despite Nigeria's vast population and abundant natural resources.

Speaking on the appointment, Fatodu described the opportunity as a call to service and a responsibility to contribute to the advancement of another critical segment of Nigerian sports.

"This appointment represents an opportunity to build stronger structures for aquatic sports development across the country. Our focus will be on creating pathways that identify talent early, strengthen coaching and technical capacity, improve competition opportunities, and ensure that Nigerian athletes can compete successfully on the continental and global stage. Sustainable sports development requires systems, consistency, and collaboration, and that is the approach we intend to pursue," he said.

He added that the future of Nigerian sports lies in the country's ability to deliberately nurture young talents through organised programmes capable of connecting grassroots participation with elite performance.

"Our objective must be to create a development model where every talented young Nigerian, regardless of location, has a realistic opportunity to discover, develop, and maximise his or her sporting potential. Aquatic sports offer tremendous possibilities, and we must work collectively to unlock them."

For the National Sports Commission, the appointment aligns with ongoing efforts to strengthen federations through leadership capable of driving measurable outcomes, improving athlete performance, and enhancing Nigeria's competitiveness on the international stage.

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Victor Osimhen looks sad after missing the 2026 FIFA World Cup

# Adelabu: 'It's Sad Govt Has Not Done Anything To NFF Despite Losing Two World Cup Tickets'

By **Gowon Akpodonor**

WITH the 2026 FIFA set to kick off on Thursday, June 11, the frustration of the Super Eagles missing the big party is telling on many football-loving Nigerians.

Former Green Eagles winger, Adegoke Adelabu, is of the view that the Federal Government is not handling issues concerning the nation's football the way it should have.

"I think the government is in complete negligence of the issues of sport at this time," Adelabu told *The Guardian*.

"It may look as if the NFF officials are getting away with their failures, but sooner or later nemesis will catch up with them. They will surely give account of their stewardship."

Adelabu, who played club football with IICC Shooting Stars of Ibadan, said that the Super Eagles missing two consecutive FIFA World Cup despite Africa having 10 slots 'was a big embarrassment' for the government and people of Nigeria.

"There is not much we can say, because we are still in the same place of trying to buy progress at whatever cost to remain relevant. But we have come to the point that actually reflects our lack of foresight and lack of professional competence to run advanced football industry either for the purposes of development or recreational tendency.

Speaking further, Adelabu, a sports scientist, said: "We know it will surely come to this point because of the incompetence of the officials and lack of domestic grooming of the players with respect to our national policy on sport development."

According to the former Manager of Eko United FC, otherwise known as *Asiwaju Babes*, nobody is overseeing the activities of the NFF. "That is why there is lack of implementation of the principle of check and balance, which has reduced the whole exercise of Nigerian football to futility. I am sure if our government had taken action after the NFF when failed to qualify for Qatar 2022, this failure in 2026 would have been avoided. Now, the NFF top officials feel no one can do them anything. It's bad for our nation," Adelabu added.

For some other stakeholders, **football** is deeply embedded in Nigerian culture, and the Super Eagles serve as a unifying force in a country often divided by ethnic and political differences.

To them, the passion and enthusiasm surrounding the national team reach its peak during major tournaments, particularly at the senior FIFA World Cup.

The impact of Nigeria missing out at Qatar 2022 World Cup was felt, but not as much as Super Eagles' failure to qualify for the 2026 edition to be co-hosted by USA, Canada and Mexico.

For stakeholders, the Super Eagles missing the 2026 World Cup party, a second time in a row, has not only deprived them the joy, but the pride and collective excitement that come with supporting their team on the global stage.

Beyond the emotional and sporting impact, there are significant economic consequences of missing the World Cup, as sponsorships, advertisements, and merchandising, which normally thrive when Nigeria participates in the World Cup, have disappeared.

More worrisome is the fact that established stars like Victor Osimhen, Ademola Lookman, Alex Iwobi, amongst others, would also miss a chance to enhance their global reputation and increase their market value.

Among players in the present generation of Super Eagles players, only three, Wilfred Ndidi, Francis Uzoho and Alex Iwobi have featured at the senior FIFA World Cup.

In practical terms, Nigeria's failure to qualify for the 2026 World Cup immediately shut the door on a guaranteed $10.5 million (about N15.5 billion) money that would have been deposited in NFF account, which represents nearly 87 per cent of the federation's budget, crippling potential investment in grassroots football, youth tournaments, and domestic league infrastructure.

## World Cup 2026: Onuachu 'In Pains' Over Super Eagles Absence

TOP striker, Paul Onuachu has said that the Super Eagles absence at the 2026 FIFA World Cup continues to haunt him.

Onuachu who spoke before the Super Eagles took on Poland in a friendly on Wednesday stated that despite parading some of the best players in Africa, Nigeria failed to pick one of the 10 tickets to represent the continent at the world soccer fiesta to be hosted by the USA, Canada and Mexico.

"Sad we're not going to the World Cup," Onuachu said.

"Because we have good players, great players, world-class players, but unfortunately we are not going to the World Cup, but it's football."

At 31, Onuachu and his present teammates would have to wait another four years and based on the rich base of talents that keep springing up, there is no guarantee Onuachu will be in the next team. This 2026 World Cup might as well be a last chance for him and other senior Super Eagles players to play in the World Cup.

Onuachu had a good 2026 season with his Turkish club, Trabzonspor, who finished behind Victor Osimhen's Galatasaray and Fenerbahce in the league.

## 'Lagos 2026 National Intermediate Games Will Be World-Class'

LAGOS State Governor, Babajide Sanwo-Olu, has assured that the maiden National Intermediate Games, to be hosted by the state would be delivered to world-class standards.

The Governor made the pledge during the week as the Main Organising Committee (MOC), led by the Director General of the National Sports Commission (NSC), Bukola Olopade, inspected facilities across the state.

The National Intermediate Games was introduced by the NSC to strengthen the transition from grassroots, particularly those from the National Youth Games to elite sports.

It will hold from October 1 to 15, 2026, featuring 15 compulsory sports and serving as a critical platform for the discovery of future national and international champions.

During the inspection, the delegation inspected the ongoing rehabilitation at the Teslim Balogun Stadium, which is receiving extensive upgrades including a new playing surface and improved infrastructure.

Contractors confirmed that the project remains on schedule for completion ahead of the Games. The team also visited the indoor sports hall, basketball facilities, and other venues earmarked for the competition.

Governor Sanwo-Olu, who recently approved the appointment of the Local Organising Committee, (LOC), for the Games, emphasised Lagos' track record of hosting major sporting events and its commitment to youth development.

"We will host the Games in a very excellent way because it reflects the yearnings and aspirations of Nigerians and our commitment to youth and sports development," Sanwo-Olu said. "We will host the Games in a manner that will be the envy of stakeholders and custodians of sports across the country."

On his part, the NSC Director General, Olopade commended the Lagos State government for its sustained investment in sports infrastructure and youth development, describing Lagos as Nigeria's foremost sports hub and an ideal host for the historic championship.

Olopade noted that the National Intermediate Games is one of the Commission's most significant sports development initiatives, designed to bridge the gap between grassroots and elite sports while creating a sustainable pathway for young athletes aged 16 to 19 years. He expressed confidence that the synergy between the National Sports Commission and Lagos State would establish a new benchmark for youth competitions.

## Iwobi, Akpan Join Super Eagles Camp Ahead Portugal Friendly

SUPER Eagles preparations in Portugal received a significant boost following the arrival of midfielder Alex Iwobi and Genk defender Christian Akpan in Lisbon.

A total of 19 players made the journey from Poland to Portugal as the team continued its training programme ahead of upcoming assignments. The squad is gradually approaching full strength, with Samuel Chukwueze expected to link up with his teammates on Friday.

Meanwhile, striker Rafiu Durosinmi was granted permission to attend to private matters and did not travel with the rest of the delegation.

The latest arrivals increase the coaching crew's options as preparations intensify in Lisbon. With Chukwueze also expected to join the camp on Friday, the team is expected to have a near-complete squad available for the final phase of training.

The Portugal camp is expected to provide the players with additional time to build chemistry, fine-tune tactical plans and improve match fitness ahead of their forthcoming fixtures.

Super Eagles will face Portugal in the international friendly game on Wednesday, June 10.

The Unity Cup champions played a 2-2 draw with Poland on Wednesday night before the trip to Portugal.

The three times African champions are preparing for the 2026 CAF African Nations Cup qualifiers, while Portugal is heading for the 2026 World Cup, which kicks off on June 11 with an opener between host, Mexico, and

## Nigerian Athletics Has Fallen, Says Amike

FORMER national 400m hurdles champion, Olympian Henry Amike, has called for greater investment in athletics, athletes' welfare, training and competitions to restore Nigeria's competitiveness in track and field events.

Amike who spoke in Abuja Thursday said the pace of development in Nigerian athletics has fallen short of expectations despite the achievements recorded by previous generations of athletes.

"We expected that after we left the scene, people would take over immediately, but it has taken almost 40 years before things like this are coming up. We are not happy with what we have seen in Nigerian track and field," he said.

He said that their technical expertise and experience could contribute significantly to policy formulation and institutional reforms within the sector.

Amike, one of Nigeria's most accomplished track and field athletes, represented the country at the 1984 Olympic Games in Los Angeles and the 1988 Olympic Games in Seoul.

He competed in the 400 metres hurdles and 4×400 metres relay events.

The Olympian's most notable international achievement came at the 1987 World Championships in Rome, where he became the first Nigerian athlete to qualify for the final of the men's 400m hurdles. His personal best time of 48.50 seconds stood as Nigeria's national record for 35 years before it was broken in 2022.

Amike also won medals at continental competitions and was widely regarded as one of Africa's leading hurdlers during the 1980s, contributing to Nigeria's growing profile in international athletics.

Amike, who served as a legislative assistant to the speaker of the House of Representatives, has confirmed his intention to contest the Lagos West Senatorial District seat in 2027.

According to him, his political agenda will focus on youth empowerment, sports development, education and broader socio-economic issues affecting residents of the senatorial district. NAN

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Adelabu: 'It's Sad Govt Has Not Done Anything To NFF Despite Losing Two World Cup Tickets
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# INSIDE STUFF WITH MARTINS OLOJA



(08052097817 SMS only) martins.oloja@guardian.ng Continue on X: @MartinsOloja

# #2027: Team Tinubu And Danger Of Assumption (2)

AS I was saying, it is more important at this time to continue to engage our leaders at all levels to be more resourceful and constructive in managing and navigating the landmines in politics of this very complex federation. As I had hinted on two previous occasions, the reason for this caveat is not far fetched: I would like our leaders to be aware that it is possible to win the 2027 elections anyhow and thereafter lose this beautiful country. That is the crux of the matter and the main reason our leaders should continue to avoid the danger of assumptions that may trigger that unfortunate outcome that president Good luck Jonathan gracefully avoided in 2015 when he decided to concede defeat after losing election and winning the country. His famous words are still there on a marble: 'Nobody's political ambition is worth the blood of any Nigerian. . .'

Let's continue to amplify that voice of reason, wisdom and responsibility to our leaders that they should not aim at winning elections and losing the country. This is therefore a voice of reason that our leaders body language of treating 2027 as a mere formality can threaten Nigeria's democracy, peace and stability. And here is why: Democracy dies less from coups and more from complacency. The most dangerous assumption a leader can make is that the next election is a formality. The second is that the courts will always align with the executive as it happened in 1983 with Twelve Two Thirds controversy that Supreme Court then resolved in favour of the ruling party, NPN. That also happened in the United States when the Supreme Court effectively stopped vote counting in Florida – including the contested ballots in Miami-Dade County on December 9, 2000. The highest court then granted the emergency petition from the George Bush Camp to halt the hand recounts. The development resulted in the final landmark ruling in Bush Vs Gore on December 12, 2000.

This musing examines why the mindset that "2027 is already won" and "the judiciary is in the president's pocket" is dangerous for Nigeria, and for the office of the president itself. So it is for the long-term stability of the federation. It is not an indictment of any individual. It is a warning about a pattern that has broken democracies across Africa and beyond. That is why perception index already developing by the curious building of permanent houses for Justices of various cadres, members of the Body of Benchers and Law School Students in Abuja should have been better managed. Why is a Minister in charge of the Federal Capital Territory noisily advertising the real estates being built for serving Justices, members of Body of Benchers and Law Students as personal gifts? Can't this careless gesture be interpreted as 'Project-2027 Tinubu Spirit', as it was in those days for Justice Mohammed Bello's Supreme Court when Mercedes Benz Car Gifts were reproachfully tagged "IBB Spirit". The troubling resultant litigation, (defamation) handled by the then irrepressible lawyer, Gani Fawehinmi who stood for "The News" magazine exposed a lot about the then CJN, Bello's roots. That is what libel case can do: destroy.

The logic that incumbency + party structure + control of federal resources = inevitable victory is dangerous. The calculation is simple math: control the security budget, control state governors in your party, control media narratives, as the opposition appears fragmented.is presumptuous.

Why it is so dangerous: That assumption blinds the presidency to real volatility. Nigeria's electorate has become less predictable. 2015 removed an incumbent. 2023 produced the lowest voter turnout in 24 years at 27% but also showed that ethnic-regional blocs can swing against expectations, and that third-force candidates can disrupt old calculations. What is more, the prevailing economic pain, fuel prices, inflation, and insecurity can create "pocketbook voting" that incumbency cannot buy off. Assuming 2027 is automatic means policies stop being tested against public reaction until it is too late.



Tinubu

The presumption also kills intra-party discipline that has been noticed all over the place. When the top seat is treated as closed, party primaries become the real election. That shifts competition inward and rewards loyalty over competence. Talented but independent voices leave elsewhere. The party becomes an echo chamber. By 2027, the party machinery will be strong on paper but brittle in ideas and consensus that should build it. In the same vein, that assumption that we will win, after all signals to voters that participation is optional.

In all democracies, elections require legitimacy, not just a winner. Turnout in 2023 fell partly because many Nigerians believed "it won't change anything." A president who assumes victory publicly reinforces that belief. Lower turnout does not help the incumbent long-term. It weakens the mandate, emboldens non-state actors, and makes post-election governance harder.

What is more strategic, history does not support the assumption of this type.

No Nigerian president since 1999 has coasted to re-election without a real contest. Obasanjo 2003, Yar'Adua 2007, Jonathan 2011, Buhari 2019 — each faced serious opposition, litigation, and regional resistance. 2027 will have 20+ parties, independent candidates post-Electoral Act 2022, and a youth population where 60% are under 25. Demographics are not a formality, after all.

**Assumption #2:** "The judiciary at this time isn't going to be our headache".

**The logic:** Appointments to the Supreme Court, Court of Appeal, and Federal High Court are made by the president on NJC's advice. Control over resources and post-service appointments create alignment. Therefore, election petitions, constitutional cases, and anti-corruption matters will "go the right way" as perceived at the moment is a dangerous assumption and here is why too: That logic confuses appointment power with control of decisions at critical moments of a nation. Appointing judges is not the same as directing judgments when the nation is on the cusp of a change or revolution being triggered by existential threats. Nigeria's judges are still governed by the Constitution, the Evidence Act, and their own professional survival, as recent judgments seem to be suggesting. Once a judge takes the oath, institutional pride and personal reputation kick in. The 2007 and 2019 election petition seasons showed that Nigerian courts can and do rule against the executive, even at the highest level. Assuming control forces the judiciary into a position where any ruling for the executive looks compromised, even when it is legally sound. The judges are citizens and can feel what public interest means at this critical time when even some senior members of the Temple of Justice have joined critics who are concerned about their involvement in political judgments that have negatively affected internal democracy.

Here is the thing, perceived fusion of powers too destroys checks and balances. Montesquieu's separation of powers is not Western decoration. It is engineering. The legislature makes law, the executive executes, the judiciary previously regarded as the last hope of the common man, interprets. When the public believes the judiciary has merged with the executive, two things happen: Losing parties stop litigating and resort to street protest, and the executive stops drafting sound legislation because it assumes the courts will "fix it." Both erode the rule of law. And when citizens begin to see only the rule of man instead of the rule of law, there is loss of confidence in leadership.

Besides, that perception tends to internationalises domestic disputes and here are the consequences: Investors, rating agencies, and foreign governments watch judicial independence as a proxy for political risk. If Nigeria is perceived as having a captured judiciary, the cost of borrowing rises, FDI falls, and election credibility is questioned abroad. That hurts the president's own economic agenda more than any opposition lawsuit. And that puts the president's legacy at risk.

Every president leaves office. A judiciary that is seen as "in the pocket" during tenure will rush to reassert independence afterward. Cases that were delayed will be accelerated. Rulings that were narrow will be expanded. The president who assumed control will leave office with no institutional shield.

The dangerous symptom: Fusion is not a constitutional amendment. It is a culture. Signs include: legislative rubber-stamping; bills passed with minimal debate. Oversight hearings are cancelled. Budget defence becomes ritual as we are witnessing in Nigeria. There will also be judicial delays on politically sensitive cases. And even petitions that should take 180 days under the Electoral Act stretch to the edge. Delays look strategic even if they are not.

In this situation, we will see security agencies acting like a party wing: Police and DSS statements start mirroring party talking points. Here is the deadliest, in this regard: INEC, election management agency, is perceived as aligned. Even when INEC acts independently, public trust collapses if the presidency assumes the outcome is fixed. Once fusion perception sets in, reversing it requires crisis management. Nigeria saw this in 1993 and again post-2015. Rebuilding trust takes years.

How a president can avoid the danger of assumptions Institutionalise doubt: Create a "red team" in the presidency whose job is to argue why 2027 could be lost. Force policy and campaign teams to answer them monthly.

Respect separation of power publicly: Meet the CJN regularly but never discuss pending cases. Fund the judiciary adequately but through the budget, not discretionary gifts as it is happening though a careless and garrulous minister. The judiciary as an independent arm can build real estates for judicial officers without noise as it had happened before 2023.

*Let the parties compete*: Hold real and credible primaries. A president who fears internal competition will fear general elections.

Protect INEC and security agencies' independence: Give them budget and operational autonomy. A strong INEC is better for an incumbent than a weak one, because it makes victory credible.

**For citizens and media:**

Reject fatalism: "My vote won't count" is the self-fulfilling prophecy that makes the dangerous assumption true.

Demand process, not outcome: Ask not "who will win 2027" but "are the rules fair for 2027?"

**The paradox of power**

Team Tinubu should note that the president who assumes 2027 is a formality is the president most likely to lose it. Power in a democracy is borrowed, not owned. The moment you act like it is permanent, citizens start planning for the day it is not. Conversely, the president who treats 2027 as a real contest governs better today. He listens more, delivers more, and keeps institutions strong. If he wins, his mandate is unassailable. If he loses, Nigeria survives the transition and his legacy is intact. Let me say this before next week's intervention: Assumptions are more expensive than opposition

Opposition parties can be managed, negotiated with, or defeated. Assumptions cannot. They live inside the president's circle and distort every decision. Nigeria cannot afford a presidency that believes elections are theatre and courts are instruments. We tried that logic in the First Republic. We tried a softer version under military-guided politics. Each time, the bill came due in blood, debt, or lost decades. 2027 should not be regarded as a formality. It is a test. The judiciary is not a pocket. It is a mirror. If the president respects both, Nigeria's democracy gets stronger. If he assumes both, he will learn — too late — that institutions only look weak until the day you need them.

The danger of assumptions is not that they are wrong. It is that by the time you discover they are wrong, you no longer have the institutions to correct course.

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