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IDA condemns killings in Irigwe land

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# THE Nigeria Standard



TRUTH EXALTS A NATION

VOL. 13 NO. 832

WEDNESDAY, June 19, 2024

N206

Website address: <http://thenigeriastandard.ng>  
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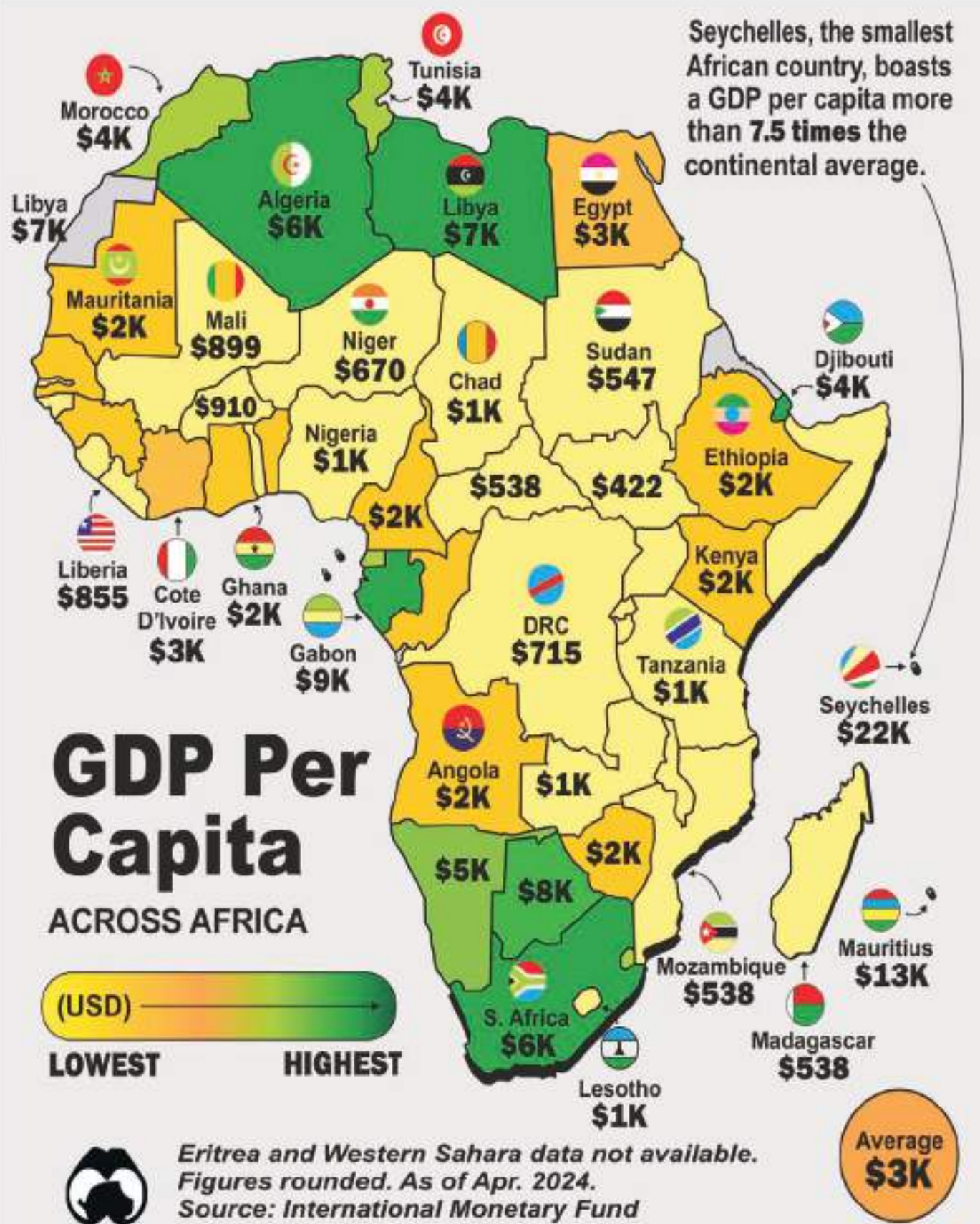
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## FG accused of attempting to create new breed of Boko Haram



Kwankwaso

THE National Leader and 2023 Presidential Candidate of the New Nigeria Peoples Party (NNPP) Senator Rabi'u Musa Kwankwaso, has accused the All Progressive Congress (APC)-led Federal Government of attempting to create a new breed of Boko Haram terrorists in Kano State.

Kwankwaso was reacting to the ongoing situation in Kano, where Federal security agencies, with constitutionally assigned responsibility for ensuring peace, law and order, have been backing the deposed Emir of Kano, Aminu Ado Bayero.

Speaking at a flag-off ceremony for the construction of 82 kilometres rural road networks at his hometown, Madobi, Senator Kwankwaso said people of

Kano will resist any attempt to undermine the constituted authority in the state.

"We have mass followership because people believe in us, we are pro-people and the NNPP administration is determined to serve them anywhere they voted for it."

Senator Kwankwaso added that as politicians, "we will not fold our arms and watch enemies of the state destroying the peaceful co-existence of our dear state, as we shall do everything possible to support the governor to succeed. I am happy that he is not distracted and he is focused on achieving his goals.

"There are people from Kano, enemies of the state, who also suffer mental illness and are the

ones advising the Federal Government on how to take over Kano through a State of Emergency. This is madness of the highest order that the good, peace loving and committed people of Kano will resist."

Kwankwaso also stated that, "in the build up to 2027, some desperate politicians are already on a mission of disruption, but we will rather prefer the two of us to lose than to allow them crush us unnecessarily. We dare anybody, who thinks he can victimise us politically, to go and be rest assured that we are ready for the fight.

"We are not afraid to be out of power because we will remain politicians in or out of government, we cannot run away from our destiny, we are humans, we know what is good for us and we will pursue it vigorously," the former Kano State Governor vowed.

The NNPP national leader further stated that the Federal Government was listening to some unpatriotic politicians from Kano, who will only contribute to its failure because, he said, the people of Kano will resist any attempt to undermine the constitutional responsibility of the Governor by any individual or group.

"We are open to dialogue, truce and reconciliation, but we will not accept intimidation and political harassment of any sort. We know how to play politics and we have all it takes to protect ourselves from any evil," Kwankwaso emphatically warned.

The Chairman of the Association of Local Governments of Nigeria, Rivers State chapter, Allwell Ihunda, escaped death narrowly as protesting youths chased him along Moscow Road in Port Harcourt, the state capital, on Tuesday.

Ihunda, who is the outgoing Chairman of Port Harcourt City Local Government Area, was on his way to the council secretariat with some aides and security details when the incident occurred.

It was gathered that he had alighted from his vehicle and tried to make his way into the council but met a group of youths who occupied the entrance.

Almost immediately, the youth started shouting, chasing him, the youths tried to get hold of Ihunda, who raced towards his car.

But the security details attached to the Mayor, as he is fondly called, resisted the youths from getting hold of their principal, shooting into the air to disperse them.

Ihunda jumped into a black SUV vehicle, escorted by aides and zoomed off while the youths continued shooting into the air.

Two other vehicles, including a white van believed to be that of aides of the outgoing chairman, were spotted going after him, while the youths rained abuses at him.

Some of the youth were heard shouting, "That is him, Allwell. Chase him. Who is he? Look at him, Mayor is running. Chase him. Are you mad? God punish you."

## Protesting youths chase Rivers LG boss

"Don't run, come, you will see pressure. We are not afraid of you. You are mad. Thunder will fire you."

But some of his security details were seen trying to calm the youths who refused to listen to them, saying, "Why is he running?"

Recall that the state ALGON had vowed not to vacate office after the expiration of their tenure on June 17.

The LG chairmen, who were elected under the administration of Nyesom Wike as governor, had cited the local government amendment law made by the Martin Amaewhule-led House of Assembly.

The law extends the

tenure of the council chairmen by six months due to the failure of Governor Siminalayi Fubara to conduct local government elections.

The Amaewhule-led 27 lawmakers loyal to the FCT minister have been having a running battle with Fubara, due to the disagreement between him and his predecessor.

Fubara survived an attempt to impeach him last year, which worsened the political crisis in the state.

Fubara, in a state-wide broadcast on Tuesday, directed the heads of local government administration to take charge of council affairs from Wednesday, June 19, pending further directives.



Ihunda

## Change your mindset about this country -Tinubu

President Bola Ahmed Tinubu has asked Nigerians to change their mindset about the country.

Speaking in Lagos when he received a delegation from the National Assembly who came to felicitate with him on the occasion of Eid-el-Kabir, the president said it has become imperative for Nigerians to have a change of value system to move the country forward.

He described as act of sabotage, citizens that go about removing electric cables, rail tracks amidst other illegal vices, saying, "Yes, there is poverty; there is suffering in the land. We are not the only people facing such, but we must face our challenges."

The delegation, led by the President of the Senate, Senator Godswill Akpabio, included the Deputy Senate President, Senator Jibrin Barau; Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives, Honourable Benjamin Kalu, among others.

According to the President, "Good economics at a harsh time is the challenge that we must face. As I said in my speech, no matter how difficult it is and how challenging it can be, I will not turn my back on Nigeria."

"The need (for some citizens) to change the rent-seeking mindset and become more productive to the economy is a challenge. The need to stop smuggling and all economic sabotage.

"Why should we have people removing rail tracks and all that, stealing electric cables and sabotaging the economy? We must embrace the campaign to change our value system. We must tell our people that the challenge we face is for all of us to change our mindset about our country," President Tinubu said.

The President commended the leadership of the National Assembly for the support extended to his administration, which has resulted in some of the important developments recorded by his administration.

## Beverages prepared with unclean water can spread cholera -NCDC

The Nigeria Centre for Disease Control and Prevention has said that beverages, ice, and drinks prepared with unclean or contaminated water can spread cholera.

Cholera is a food and water-borne disease caused by the ingestion of the bacteria— *Vibrio cholerae* — in contaminated water and food.

Symptoms of cholera include acute profuse, painless watery diarrhoea (rice water stools) of sudden onset, with or without vomiting. It may be associated with nausea, profuse vomiting, and fever.

Experts say severe cases of cholera can lead to death within hours due to dehydration. However, about 80 per cent of infected people may only show mild symptoms or have no symptoms at all.

In Nigeria, cholera is an endemic and seasonal disease, occurring annually, mostly during the rainy season and more frequently in areas with poor sanitation.

The 10 states contributing 90 per cent to the current cholera outbreak burden include Bayelsa, Zamfara, Abia, Cross River, Bauchi, Delta, Katsina, Imo, Nasarawa, and Lagos states.

So far, from January 1 to June 11, 2024, cholera cases have been reported from 96 LGAs in 30 states, according to the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control and Prevention.

Experts say cholera is prevalent in areas with high-density populations, poor water supply, and poor personal and environmental hygiene.

Earlier, the Director General of the NCDC, Dr Jide Idris disclosed that

the agency is conducting a risk assessment, and assisting states to respond to the outbreak.

On Tuesday, the NCDC, on its X handle, NCDCgov, warned, "Beverages, ice and drinks prepared with unclean or contaminated water can spread #cholera."

"Protect yourself and your loved ones; do not buy or consume foods or drinks prepared with water from unreliable sources."

On how to prevent the spread of the infection, the agency advised Nigerians to make water safe and use water from reliable sources.

It said, "Use water from reliable sources, boil water before drinking, store water in properly covered containers, ensure bottled water and pure water sachet is properly sealed before you drink it."

On its website, the agency said the disease is easily treatable if detected early.

"Most infected people can be treated successfully through prompt administration of Oral Rehydration Solution to replace lost fluids and electrolytes, and appropriate antibiotics.

"The ORS solution is a powder that can be reconstituted in boiled or bottled water. Cholera can be deadly when infected people do not access care immediately.

"Cholera can be prevented through ensuring access to safe, potable drinking water; proper sanitation and waste disposal; and appropriate hygiene including handwashing. Raw fruits and vegetables, food from street vendors, and raw or undercooked seafood should be avoided," it added.



## Dirty toilets: Persistent problem in Nigeria's public space

FILTHY toilets in public spaces, especially in schools and rented houses, continue to be a significant concern in Nigeria. The issue has persisted for decades, with many individuals having horror stories about their first encounters with dirty toilets. The situation is not only unpleasant but also poses serious health risks to users.

Many individuals have shared their experiences with filthy toilets in public spaces. A lady recalled seeing hundreds of maggots in the toilet she was meant to use on her first day in school. The sight was so traumatic that she almost passed out. Another student spent two weeks without defecating due to the filthy conditions, leading to serious health issues. These experiences are not isolated, as many individuals have faced similar situations.

Students in Nigeria's boarding schools have developed strategies to cope with the situation. They use toilets at specific times and avoid certain toilets altogether. Some students have even resorted to using the bushes or other unhygienic methods to avoid using the filthy toilets. However, these strategies are not sustainable solutions and do not address the root causes of the problem.

The root causes of filthy toilets in public spaces are inadequate toilets, lack of maintenance culture, and insufficient water supply. In many schools and rented houses, the number of toilets is insufficient, leading to overcrowding and poor maintenance. Additionally, the lack of a maintenance culture means that toilets are not regularly cleaned, and repairs are not done promptly. Insufficient water supply also contributes to the problem, as toilets cannot be flushed regularly.

Filthy toilets pose significant health risks to users. The spread of diseases such as diarrhea, cholera, and typhoid fever is common in areas with poor toilet hygiene. Additionally, the presence of maggots and other pests in toilets can lead to infections and other health issues. The health hazards associated with filthy toilets are numerous, and it is crucial that we address this issue to ensure a healthier and more dignified environment for everyone.

To address the issue of filthy toilets in public spaces, we must prioritize toilet hygiene and sanitation. Schools and landlords must ensure that toilets are adequate, well-maintained, and regularly cleaned. Sanitary inspectors should educate schools and landlords on the importance of proper toilet facilities and enforce standards. Modern toilets should be a basic requirement in every accommodation.

The government must also play a role in addressing the issue of filthy toilets in public spaces. They must ensure that

schools and public buildings have adequate toilet facilities and that they are regularly maintained. The government must also provide funding for the construction of modern toilets in public spaces. Additionally, they must enforce laws and regulations regarding toilet hygiene and sanitation.

Public awareness is also crucial in addressing the issue of filthy toilets in public spaces. Individuals must be educated on the importance of proper toilet hygiene and sanitation. Public awareness campaigns can be used to educate individuals on the health hazards associated with filthy toilets and the importance of maintaining proper toilet facilities.

The dirty toilet palaver is a persistent issue in Nigeria's public spaces. It poses significant health risks to users and is a blight on our collective dignity. To address this issue, we must prioritize toilet hygiene and sanitation. Schools, landlords, the government, and individuals must work together to ensure that every individual has access to clean and hygienic toilet facilities. We owe it to ourselves and future generations to ensure that this issue is addressed once and for all.

Toilet hygiene is a critical aspect of public health. Proper toilet facilities and good hygiene practices are essential in preventing the spread of diseases. Toilet hygiene includes not only the cleanliness of the toilet itself but also the surrounding environment. This includes the availability of clean water, soap, and toilet paper.

Good toilet hygiene has numerous benefits. It prevents the spread of diseases, reduces the risk of infections, and promotes a healthy environment. Additionally, good toilet hygiene boosts individual confidence and dignity. When individuals have access to clean and hygienic toilet facilities, they feel more comfortable and confident.

Poor toilet hygiene has severe consequences. It leads to the spread of diseases, increases the risk of infections, and creates an unhealthy environment. Additionally, poor toilet hygiene can lead to emotional trauma and low self-esteem. Individuals who are forced to use filthy toilets may feel embarrassed and humiliated.

Sanitary inspectors play a crucial role in ensuring toilet hygiene and sanitation. They inspect toilet facilities in schools, rented houses, and public buildings to ensure that they meet the required standards. Sanitary inspectors also educate individuals on the importance of proper toilet hygiene and sanitation. They provide guidance on how to maintain proper toilet facilities and enforce laws and regulations regarding toilet hygiene.

## News

# Mutfwang grants pardon to 13 inmates

By PETER TITLE

GOVERNOR Caleb Mutfwang of Plateau State has granted pardon to 13 prison inmates.

This act, according to him, was based on recommendations from the Plateau State Advisory Council on Prerogative of Mercy in commemoration of 25 years of uninterrupted democracy in Nigeria.

Governor Mutfwang stated, "In exercise of the powers conferred upon me under Section 212 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 as amended, I, Barr. Caleb Manasseh Mutfwang, Governor of Plateau State, Nigeria, after consultation with the State Advisory Council on Prerogative of Mercy, do hereby exercise my power of Prerogative of Mercy."

Among those pardoned were Bitrus Gonkir, Umar Adams, Monday Pam, and Jibrin Ibrahim, who received absolute pardon.

Victor Pam will serve 1 year 8 months from the approval date, Daniel Umar 2 years 11 months, Husaini Ya'u 2 years and Dauda



Mutfwang

Joshua 5 years.

Also, Moses John will now serve 1 year 2 months from approval date, Nanfa Yusuf, Harisu Abdullahi and Binsing Nden had their death sentences commuted to life imprisonment.

Mutfwang disclosed that the beneficiaries had sufficiently shown remorse for their

crimes based on the recommendations from the Advisory Council on Prerogative of Mercy.

He urged the public to focus on dialogue and reconciliation for a progressive and prosperous state, stressing that democracy was the best model for addressing national challenges.

## Eid-el-Kabir: Ododo seeks support for President Tinubu's administration

From AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja

KOGI State Governor, Ahmed Usman Ododo has called on Nigerians to join hands and support President Bola Tinubu to enable him achieve his laudable programmes and policies for the country.

Governor Ododo in his sallah message in Okene, Okene Local Government Area of the state shortly after he observed Eid prayer to mark Eid-El-Kabir festival, urged Nigerians irrespective of their political affiliation to join hands and support the many initiatives of the president in order to move the nation forward.

Speaking on the security situation of the State, he reaffirmed that his administration will continue to prioritize issues of security, stressing that Kogi State can never be a fertile land for any criminals to practice their dubious and ungodly trade.

The Governor warned criminal elements if there is any, to move out of the state or face the full wrath of the law.

While felicitating with Muslims, Governor Ododo urged the people of the State to reflect on the spirit of the Sallah celebration to sacrifice more in the name of Allah, and to commit to actions that uplift the

state and country at large.

"As a government, we are committed to protecting lives and property and promoting social welfare by delivering dividends of democracy to enhance the living conditions of our people at all times.

"Let us be security conscious and engage in consistent watch over our neighbourhoods and report any suspicious activity to law enforcement agents who are present in all our communities" he stated.

In his sallah message, the Ohinoyi of Ebiraland Ahmed Tijani Anaje cautioned his people against disobedience and behavior that can impede

the peaceful coexistence of the inhabitants of his domain.

The royal father congratulated Muslims and urged them to imbibe the teaching of the religion through constant emulation of prophet Muhammad's deeds and ways of life.

The Chief Imam of Ebiraland Sheik Salihu Abere prayed God to give the Governor the strength and patience to pilot the affairs of the state.

He called on Muslims to love one another and extend that to non Muslims in the spirit of peace, unity as exemplified by the holy Prophet Muhammad.

## Taraba killings: Assembly moves to establish mobile police base

From VICTOR GAI, Jalingo

FOLLOWING the brutal murder of the traditional ruler of Usmanu in Karim Lamido LGA, Mallam Auwal last week, the Taraba State House of Assembly has passed a motion to establish a mobile police base in the area.

The Assembly had during plenary recently, discussed the issue under Matters of Urgent Public Importance by Hon. Mark Dio Jen, Karim 1 Constituency.

In his presentation, the lawmaker said there was need to beef up security in Usmanu village of the area following the killing of the traditional ruler of the village and others.

According to him, at about 8pm on the said day, gunmen raised the entire village, killed the village head and others.

He said the incident was not the first time it would happen as the victim's mother and younger brother were equally killed while attending a wedding.

Jen said: "the entire LGA is living in fear. No life is safe within the environment. The House should see this as a matter of urgency".

The lawmaker expressed concern that only 11 soldiers were stationed in the community and that not only was Usmanu village a distant away from Karim, the local government headquarters, but the terrain was bad, therefore prayed the government to deploy more security personnel and assist the victims with food.

Also speaking, member representing Karim 2, Hon. Ahmed Shuaibu, revealed that Karim Lamido shares boundaries with four different States which makes it expedient for government to establish a security post in Kwanchi ward to check the spate of killings.

The Speaker of the House, Rt. Hon. John Bonzena, said it was the responsibility of the members to present facts to the House about security concerns in their constituencies for actions to be taken and for citizens to be able to access their farms.

He therefore requested the Clerk of the House to communicate the resolution of the House to the executive for further action.



Ododo



News

Sokoto APC rates its Governor High

From ANENE AIKE, Sokoto

Sokoto state chapter of the All Progressives Congress (APC) has said that Governor Ahmed Aliyu Sokoto is piloting the state to a destination of hope and glory for people of the state.

The party said the government of Governor Aliyu Sokoto has surpassed with difference the immediate past government of opposition PDP that left no positive legacy except "dismal records of performance"

The state party chairman, Sadiq Isah Achida, said in Sokoto as he explained that the governor has not disappointed both the

party and electorate who gave him the mandate to lead them.

"The governor has shown competence and resilience in delivering services to the people. "We are living witnesses to the numerous achievements recorded in just one year.

"No doubt, Sokoto state is fast being repositioned in many respects and spheres of infrastructural and human welfare development", he pointed out.

According to Achida, Sokoto state was gradually taking its rightful space in terms of development and provisions of human oriented needs.

"All policies and programmes are human

oriented in order to give our people sense of belonging and restore confidence for the government", he said.

Achida explained that all situations were being looked into especially security issues with commitment to remedy them within the time space.

"With these efforts, I am urging all and sundry across the state to demonstrate readiness and support for the government to passionately deliver the dividends of democracy through it purposeful action plan for good governance ", he appealed.

DCI lauds Kogi Assembly Members for humanitarian gesture

From AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja

A Non-Governmental Organisation, the Dual Care and HIV Prevention Initiative (DCI), has commended the Honourable members of Kogi State House of Assembly for their Humanitarian gesture towards the vulnerable citizens of Kogi State. Pastor Mrs Roseline Alabi, the Executive Director of DCI, gave the commendation while presenting certificates of Credence to members of Kogi State House of Assembly in Lokoja. "I am using this opportunity to congratulate Members of Kogi State House of Assembly for their first 100 days in office, and for supporting the less privileged in the state. "The members have used their office judiciously by supporting children living with HIV with funds which has never happened in the history of Kogi State House of Assembly. That is why we are giving the members Certificates of Credence as well as the Parent of the Year award to the Speaker, Rt Hon. Aliyu Umar Yusuf,, and his Deputy, Mrs Comfort Nwochiola. They have always supported the DCI any time we called upon them. "We also commend them for their interest in collaborating with the Civil Society Organizations in the state especially the DCI," Alabi said. She expressed confidence in the ability of the House members to give speedy hearing to the Anti Stigmatization Bill on HIV that is presently before the House, and specially appreciated the Speaker as well as the Deputy for laying good examples for others to follow in helping humanity especially vulnerable people in the society. Alabi also expressed her appreciation to Dr. Mrs



Gov. Ododo

Folashade Arike Ayoade, Secretary to the Government of the State (SGS) Kogi State for supporting the widows and orphans in the state through her NGO, FAIWO. Alabi praised the SGS for her tireless contributions to supporting widows and orphans in the society through provision of foodstuffs, financial support and the payment of school fees for orphans in the society. "Nothing is too much or too

small to give in putting smiles on the faces of the vulnerable particularly in this trying time, as "there couldn't have been a better time to render selfless service to the have not like now," Alabi said. She urged governments, corporate organisations and well-meaning individuals to support the vulnerable through funding towards sensitisation and awareness creation on HIV prevention and treatment.

Installation of Olubadan not governor's problem- Ladoja

From MUSLIUDEEN ADEBAYO, Ibadan

A former governor of Oyo State and the Otun Olubadan of Ibadanland, High Chief Rasidi Adewolu Ladoja has declared that it is the Oluwo that has the power to install the Olubadan of Ibadanland and not the governor.

Ladoja made this declaration while addressing journalists who thronged his Bodija Ibadan residence for the Eld-Kabir festival on Sunday.

The former governor, while speaking faulted Governor Seyi Makinde over his comments on health status of the Olubadan designate, Oba Owolabi Olakulehin.

He said the governor was wrong for saying Olakulehin will be enthroned when he is fit to be Olubadan.

Ladoja while speaking,

further said that only Ibadan people can enthrone Olubadan not the governor.

He added that Makinde can only present Staff of Office and instrument of office to the Olubadan designate not enthrone him.

The statement opined that "As far as I am concerned, Olakulehin is our Olubadan. The governor might have access to medical records of Olakulehin's health, or send his doctors to access his health or use artificial intelligence to do that," the former governor pointed out.

"I don't have any problem if the governor refuses to give him Staff of Office or instrument of office, but he is not the one to enthrone him," Ladoja added.

"Olakulehin is an aged man, we didn't expect him to still be acting like a youth," the former governor concluded.



Let not our children go mad

“  
Our religious leaders need to look at themselves again and determine whether the theology they are teaching is what our forefathers taught them. The leadership must also share in the blame. They have used public offices to pauperize the masses who in turn at every opportunity grab whatever comes their way. The elites have a lot of work to do if we are to truly fix our society. They cannot continue to live in the illusion that whatever they steal would be able to take care of their families when they answer the ultimate call.”

SINCE the year 2000 when it was posited that the world was coming to an end, so many things have taken a turn for the worse. We have continued to witness the depreciation in the value of our currency, the rise in crime and criminality, the abuse of our culture and values and the outright revolts against the many norms that had come to define us as a people. It has been said that we are in an era when the things we were used to must give way to those things that have been fashioned by the millennials or what they call disruptive technology. At once, our social fabrics have been completely disorganized and disoriented and, in fact, flushed down the drain yet alternatives have not been constructed to replace them.

Towns and communities that were hitherto closely knitted became war zones and our living patterns changed overnight. Neighbours became sworn enemies and could no longer relate to themselves with the usual conviviality. Things that were shared during festivities across religious and ethnic divides were no longer sent to even neighbours who shared the same faith and lived in the same communities. Overnight everybody built a prison wall around themselves and everybody was no longer a part of the society in which they lived.

Our millennial children, because of the exigencies of their births, did not have the luxury of relating with their peers like we did and therefore, grew to see the world differently. They never saw and still do not see the extended family as meaningful. They rather see their immediate families as all that there is. But it is not their fault. We created the conditions, the monsters that have shaped them. Because they scarcely relate with their peers, television and the social media became their companions and teachers. And because parents had no time to devote to their children because of the

leading our society to crash and self-destruct.

Some parents who gave birth and threw their children onto the streets have created a ready-made army for our politicians who use coercion to secure their political positions. These street urchins have not only constituted themselves into a nuisance to the society but have succeeded in entrenching a culture of violence and destruction on it. This has made their generation to see violence as normal. It is no wonder then that the crises which have bedeviled our society have refused to go away. These crises keep mutating from one form to another.

Our religious leaders need to look at themselves again and determine whether the theology they are teaching is what our forefathers taught them. The leadership must also share in the blame. They have used public offices to pauperize the masses who in turn at every opportunity grab whatever comes their way. The elites have a lot of work to do if we are to truly fix our society. They cannot continue to live in the illusion that whatever they steal would be able to take care of their families when they answer the ultimate call.

They must note that even those prison walls they have built around them cannot provide the needed protection when the poor and hungry decide that enough is enough. Our country has more than enough resources to provide the basics of life for everybody. What needs to be done and is undone, is for those entrusted with managing these resources to be sincere, frugal and honest. And nepotism, ethnicity, regionalism needs to be helmed and ostracized from our society to allow everybody realize their potentials. When we keep promoting mediocrity, we would continue to wallow in the wilderness and will never get it right.

**Editorial**

**As Nigeria's World Cup hope dims**

NIGERIA'S World Cup hope is on the verge of collapsing, and it would take a miracle to salvage it. Having played four games, amassing only three points from a possible twelve, it would have to depend on the outcome of other games in the group, apart from winning its remaining games for it to progress.

SINCE 1994, when Nigeria took the world by storm by breaking the jinx of not being able to participate in the World Cup, the Green Eagles have not been able to permanently stamp their authority on the round leather game. Clemence Westerhof, the Dutch tactician who masterminded Nigeria's success, assembled a team that has come to represent the golden era of Nigerian football. The Green Eagles, captained by Stephen Keshi, had earlier on won the Africa Cup of Nations hosted by Tunisia in 1994 and the male Olympics football team went on to win gold medal at the Atlanta Olympics in 1996.

AFTER producing that masterclass, Nigeria has not been able to replicate the feat and the Green Eagles have had their wings clipped in almost all the major tournaments. Indeed, since winning its third AFCON title in 2012, coached by the charismatic Stephen Keshi, Nigeria has wobbled and fumbled at tournaments just as Coach Fanny Amun had propounded.

WHAT have been the reasons for this dip in form? So many reasons can be adduced for our lackluster attitude to Nigerian football. The organizational structure that is supposed to help grow football in the country is completely absent. The Nigeria Football Federation is run by a cartel that knows next to nothing about the game. Football is seen as a cash cow that should be milked for the enjoyment of the administrators.

IN FACT, Nigeria legend, Daniel Amokachi, while reacting to the problems of the Super Eagles, has said that changing the coach will not solve the team's problems. He believes that Nigeria can only get right if the larger structural issues militating against the progress of football in the country are solved. "Focusing too much on the coaching is like building a house from the roof downwards instead of starting with the right foundation and build upwards," Amokachi told BBC Sport Africa.

HE went on to ask, "Do we have a solid developmental programme for our young footballers, a proper long-term plan for our national teams or develop a football identity for the game in our country? I am a product of the Nigerian league. But have we sorted all the issues around our domestic game, from players' welfare to the lack of television rights and the chaos around the organisation of local football?"

JUST like THE NIGERIA STANDARD, many other former Nigerian footballers share Amokachi's sentiments. Emeka Ezeugo, a member of the 1994 winning team, took a swipe at stakeholders whose perceived ineptitude has kept Nigerian football prostrate: "The backdoor is left open for anyone willing to cooperate. We have been giving the job to the wrong people, and that is why we have been having the wrong backdoor coaches, players, sports administrators, technical committee members, technical advisers, etc."

TO grow Nigeria's football, therefore, stakeholders must set a template for the wholistic development of the country's local league. With the resources available in the country and by putting square pegs in square holes, things will begin to take shape. We cannot wait on other countries to develop our talents on our behalf and expect them to give us hundred percent attention when called upon to represent the country. Truly, the indiscipline often exhibited by some of these so-called stars stem from their feeling bigger than their coaches.

ALSO, Nigeria must take advantage of the advances so far made in the sports to develop its own football. This means that football administrators must work assiduously to give football a Nigerian character, as advocated by Amokachi.

IF a coach is given an assignment, he must be supported to succeed. Thus, a more favourable environment must be created and global best practices adopted to attract the best to ply their trade in the country. Employing a coach and putting unnecessary roadblocks on the way for him to fail can only be counter-productive.

NOW that Finidi George has thrown in the towel as Head Coach, Nigeria's soccer administrators need to do a deep soul searching to assuage the feelings of citizens of this soccer-loving nation. Missing out on two world cups in a row would not be palatable at all.

THEREFORE, something drastic must be done to redeem the image of the country by at least winning the remaining six games and hoping that our opponents falter in their games. This will give Nigerians a glimmer of hope.



**Unmasking land grabbing in Plateau State: A path to sustainable solutions**

"Land grabbing is a form of colonialism, where the powerful exploit the vulnerable, leaving them in poverty and despair." - Winnie Byanyima, Executive Director of UNAIDS

As Nigeria marks another Democracy Day on June 12, we are reminded that the struggle for equality and justice continues. In Plateau State, land grabbing is a ticking time bomb, threatening the environment, local communities, and the economy. The British colonial government appropriated indigenous lands, displacing and disenfranchising communities. Today, corporations, individuals, and government projects continue this exploitation, fueling conflicts between communities, farmers, and herders. Even majority tribes conspire to grab land from their brothers, instead of

being their keepers as biblical injunctions instruct.

Land grabbers use various tactics to chase away communities, including violence, forced displacement, illegal land grabbing, manipulation of land laws, divisive tactics, economic coercion, and cultural erasure. To defeat these enemies and protect ancestral lands, communities must stand together in unity and solidarity, document their land ownership and cultural heritage, advocate for policy changes, seek legal action, manage their lands, preserve their culture, and seek international support.

As we celebrate democracy, we must acknowledge the flaws in our system that perpetuate inequality and injustice. The time is now to address the issue of land grabbing and ensure that the resources of Plateau State benefit all its

citizens, not just a privileged few. Let us rise up, take back our land, resources, and future. "A stitch in time saves nine." Together, we can build a world where the earth's resources benefit all, not just a privileged few.

"The struggle for justice is not a struggle for the faint of heart. It is a struggle for those who believe in the power of their own voices, even when the odds seem insurmountable." - Desmond Tutu

On this Democracy Day, let us recommit to the fight against land grabbing and the struggle for a more just and equitable society, as Desmond Tutu so aptly said. United we stand, divided we fall. Joint hands and collective action are key to defeating land grabbers and preserving ancestral lands.

*Ishaya Rangu, a political analysts, writes from Kwall District, Bassa Local Government Area, Plateau State*

**Standard Cartoon**

**MINIMUM WAGE  
Gov. vs Workers**





## Politics

# Assessing our democracy



Tinubu



Mutfwang

By KENNETH DARENG

Since the return to civilian rule in 1999, Nigeria's democratic journey has been marked by disappointment and frustration. Despite the transition from military rule, the country's democratic progress has been hindered by poor leadership, corruption, and electoral malpractices. As Nigeria commemorates 25 years of democratic rule, it is essential to reflect on the gains and challenges of the country's democratic journey.

Nigeria's current democratic journey began in 1999, after years of military rule. The country's transition to democracy was marked by high hopes and expectations, with many Nigerians believing that democracy would bring about economic prosperity, political stability, and good governance. However, 25 years later, Nigeria's democratic journey has been marked by disappointment and frustration.

One of the significant challenges facing Nigeria's democracy is poor leadership. The country has been plagued by leaders who prioritize their interests over the needs of the people. This has led to a disconnect between the political class and the masses, with politicians focusing on

enriching themselves rather than addressing the country's economic and social challenges.

Corruption is another significant challenge facing Nigeria's democracy. The country has been ranked as one of the most corrupt countries in the world, with corruption permeating all levels of government and society. Corruption has undermined Nigeria's economic development, with billions of dollars lost to corrupt practices each year.

Electoral malpractices are also a significant challenge facing Nigeria's democracy. The Independent National Electoral Commission, INEC, has been accused of bias and incompetence, with elections often marred by violence, fraud, and irregularities. This has led to a lack of confidence in the electoral process, with many Nigerians believing that elections are rigged in favor of the ruling party.

Despite these challenges, Nigeria has made some progress in its democratic journey. The country has held six successful elections since 1999, with power transferring peacefully from one civilian government to another. Nigeria has also made significant progress in areas such as infrastructure development, with the country's economy growing at an average rate of 7% per

year over the past decade.

However, despite these gains, Nigeria's democratic journey is still facing significant challenges. The country's economy is still largely dependent on oil, with the country vulnerable to fluctuations in global oil prices. Nigeria's infrastructure is also still underdeveloped, with the country facing significant challenges in areas such as power generation, transportation, and healthcare.

To address these challenges, Nigeria needs transformative leaders who can drive economic growth and development. The country needs leaders who are committed to good governance, accountability, and transparency. Nigeria also needs to strengthen its democratic institutions, including the electoral commission and the judiciary, to ensure that they are independent and impartial.

Nigeria can learn from other countries that have achieved significant economic progress despite not being democracies. Singapore, for example, has achieved significant economic progress under an authoritarian government, with the country's economy growing at an average rate of 10% per year over the past decade. China has also achieved significant economic

progress, with the country's economy growing at an average rate of 10% per year over the past decade.

However, Nigeria's democratic journey is not just about economic progress. It is also about political stability, good governance, and human rights. Nigeria needs to ensure that its democratic institutions are strong and independent, with the country's leaders committed to accountability and transparency.

Nigeria's democratic journey has been marked by disappointment and frustration. However, the country has made some progress in areas such as infrastructure development and economic growth. To address the challenges facing its democratic journey, Nigeria needs transformative leaders who can drive economic growth and development, strengthen democratic institutions, and ensure accountability and transparency. With the right leadership and policies, Nigeria can achieve

significant economic progress and become a beacon of democracy in Africa.

Arising from the above submissions, this writer suggests the following measures as a way of strengthening our democracy:

Electing transformative leaders who can drive economic growth and development; strengthening democratic institutions and ensuring the independence of the judiciary and INEC; and improving electoral management and ensuring free and fair elections.

Others include addressing corruption and ensuring accountability in government; prioritizing the needs of the masses over the interests of politicians; encouraging foreign investment and improving health, education, and social welfare services; diversifying the economy and industrializing the country; and providing a roadmap for long-term development and economic growth.

**“To address these challenges, Nigeria needs transformative leaders who can drive economic growth and development. The country needs leaders who are committed to good governance, accountability, and transparency. Nigeria also needs to strengthen its democratic institutions, including the electoral commission and the judiciary, to ensure that they are independent and impartial.”**

## Change of Name

<p><b>DUNG</b></p> <p>I, formerly known as <b>DAUDA ESTHER RWANG</b>, now wish to be known and addressed as <b>DUNG ESTHER DAUDA</b>. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p><b>HAMIDU</b></p> <p>I, formerly known as <b>HAMIDU HADIZA</b>, now wish to be known and addressed as <b>HAMIDU HADIZA DAGUM</b>. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.</p>	<p><b>DAMANG</b></p> <p>I, formerly known as <b>DAMANG HELEN</b>, now wish to be known and addressed as <b>DAMANG HELENE ANAMAN</b>. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.</p>	<p><b>DANG</b></p> <p>I, formerly known as <b>BITRUS SAMUEL</b>, now wish to be known and addressed as <b>DANG BITRUS SAMUEL</b>. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.</p>	<p><b>MAHANNAN</b></p> <p>I, formerly known as <b>MAREN RUTH UNDICK</b>, now wish to be known and addressed as <b>MAHANNAN RUTH MAREN</b>. All former documents remain valid. NIMC and the general public should please take note.</p>
<p><b>BALWA</b></p> <p>I, formerly known as <b>BALWA YELLOW TULA</b>, now wish to be known and addressed as <b>BALWA VIVANDAK TULA</b>. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p><b>ABOK</b></p> <p>I, formerly known as <b>ABOK ARIN</b>, now wish to be known and addressed as <b>ABOK-ARIN ANAP ANGEL</b>. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public please take note.</p>	<p><b>DANING</b></p> <p>I, formerly known as <b>KANE DEBORAH</b>, now wish to be known and addressed as <b>DANING DEBORAH</b>. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.</p>	<p><b>ESTHER</b></p> <p>I, formerly known as <b>ESTHER TIMOTHY</b>, now wish to be known and addressed as <b>ESTHER IDI</b>. All former documents remain valid. Correct date of birth is 15/9/1990 not 15/9/1985. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.</p>	<p><b>NAOMI</b></p> <p>I, formerly known as <b>NAOMI DABWO ABWO</b>, now wish to be known and addressed as <b>NAOMI MORINA ABWO</b>. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.</p>
<p><b>HELVA</b></p> <p>I, formerly known as <b>HELVA BITRUS DANLADI</b>, now wish to be known and addressed as <b>HELVA BITRUS DANIEL</b>. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p><b>NAMANG</b></p> <p>I, formerly known as <b>ILIYA HANNATU</b>, now wish to be known and addressed as <b>NAMANG HANNATU MUTONG</b>. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.</p>	<p><b>CHIBUNDU</b></p> <p>I, formerly known as <b>CHIBUNDU REGINA</b>, now wish to be known and addressed as <b>CHIBUNDU REGINA ONUOHA</b>. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.</p>	<p><b>ISHAYA</b></p> <p>I, formerly known as <b>ISAIAH FRIDAY</b>, now wish to be known and addressed as <b>ISHAYA ZINGAK</b>. All former documents remain valid. Correct date of birth is 15th December, 2002. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.</p>	<p><b>ABDULLAHI</b></p> <p>I, formerly known as <b>SALIM ABDULLAHI MUHAMMED</b>, now wish to be known and addressed as <b>ABDULLAHI SALIM MUHAMMAD</b>. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.</p>
<p><b>ISHAKU</b></p> <p>I, formerly known as <b>ISHAKU BITRUS LAWUS</b>, now wish to be known and addressed as <b>ISHAKU IZANG YARO</b>. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p><b>KWANDE</b></p> <p>I, formerly known as <b>KWANNE NAANYUAM NOEL</b>, now wish to be known and addressed as <b>KWANDE NOEL NAANTUAM</b>. All former documents remain valid. Correct date of birth is 28th August, 1988 not 28th July, 1988. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.</p>	<p><b>TERDO</b></p> <p>I, formerly known as <b>TERDO ALICE SHANPEPE</b>, now wish to be known and addressed as <b>TERDO ALICE MATAWAL</b>. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p><b>MANCHA</b></p> <p>I, formerly known as <b>MANCHA PETER</b>, now wish to be known and addressed as <b>MANCHA PETER MWANGWONG</b>. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p><b>BINSHEP</b></p> <p>I, formerly known as <b>BINSHEP JULNAN</b>, now wish to be known and addressed as <b>BINSHEP GODWILL JULNAN</b>. All former documents remain valid. Correct date of birth is 3/3/2002. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>
<p><b>DAKUP</b></p> <p>I, formerly known as <b>DAKUP GODENNAAN DAKUP</b> now wish to be known and addressed as <b>DAKUP GODENNAAN JOHN</b>. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p><b>ABU</b></p> <p>I, formerly known as <b>ABU JEREMIAH GBOKSON</b>, now wish to be known and addressed as <b>ABU JEREMIAH GBOKSON</b>. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p><b>GARBA</b></p> <p>I, formerly known as <b>JOSEPH GRACE</b>, now wish to be known and addressed as <b>GARBA MARGRET HOSEA</b>. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p><b>DANIEL</b></p> <p>I, formerly known as <b>JOHN LAMNENNA</b>, now wish to be known and addressed as <b>DANIEL CHUNDUNG SAMSON</b>. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p><b>DAWAM</b></p> <p>I, formerly known as <b>PETER DAWAM</b>, now wish to be known and addressed as <b>DAWAM DANIEL GURUMDAT</b>. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>
<p><b>SATI</b></p> <p>I, formerly known as <b>KABANG HABIBA SATI</b>, now wish to be known and addressed as <b>SATI HABIBA</b>. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p><b>ALI</b></p> <p>I, formerly known as <b>BULUS JUMMAI ALI</b>, now wish to be known and addressed as <b>ALI JUMMAI</b>. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p><b>USMAN</b></p> <p>I, formerly known as <b>ABDULLAHI SALAMATU</b>, now wish to be known and addressed as <b>USMAN SALAMATU</b>. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p><b>CALEB</b></p> <p>I, formerly known as <b>SANI ASABE CALEB</b>, now wish to be known and addressed as <b>CALEB ASABE</b>. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p><b>JALLA</b></p> <p>I, formerly known as <b>EZEKIEL JALLA</b>, now wish to be known and addressed as <b>JALLA IBRAHIM EZEKIEL</b>. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>
<p><b>ANPE</b></p> <p>I, formerly known as <b>DANJUMA LUCY</b>, now wish to be known and addressed as <b>ANPE LUCY DANJUMA</b>. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>				

## News

### IDA condemns killings in Irigwe land

By VICTOR ALI

WORRIED by the incessant attacks and killings in Irigwe communities of Bassa Local Government Area of Plateau State, the Irigwe Development Association (IDA) rose from its meeting held on June 16, 2024 with a strong condemnation of the heinous acts which they said began since 2000.

In a communique signed by IDA President, Rev. (Dr) Daniel Gya, and General Secretary, Danjuma Dickson Auta, the group noted that statistics had shown that over 1,300 Irigwe people were killed between 2017 and 2024, leaving many widowed and orphaned.

The communique also lamented that some communities had been completely wiped out, homes destroyed and the lands hitherto used for farming had been turned into grazing lands.

IDA noted that the Irigwe people had lived peacefully with the Fulani and requested for the payment of N1,000,000,000.00 as compensation the families of people so far killed.

The communique disclosed that "the peace pact championed by the commander of the Special Task Force (STF) of the 'Operation Safe Haven' between the Irigwe and the resident Fulanis have been flagrantly abused by the

Fulanis returning to the land without obeying the terms of the agreement."

While noting that the agreement was signed on July 13, 2022, by the representatives of the Irigwe nation and the Fulani residents and countersigned by the commander of STF, representatives of the local and state governments, PIRC, Plateau State Peace Building Agency, Interfaith Mediation Centre (IMC), Dialogue, Reconciliation and Peace Center (DREP) and the representative of the United States Institute of Peace (USIPO), the communique however stated that, "sadly, this agreement was not implemented and the killings continued."

According to the communique, "If any Fulani man does not own property in Rigwe land, such a person has no business grazing in Rigweland and those who own property in Rigweland, should return to their lands accordingly and graze on their own property.

"If they do not return, they would graze their herds where they are living. We do not agree with Fulani's living on the outskirts and coming to grace on our farmlands."

The IDA stated that, because the Irigwe had co-existed peacefully with the Fulani, they must submit to the authorities in the land by abiding by their resolutions.

## PUBLIC NOTICE

### Dingkir Humanitarian Initiative (DHI)

This is to inform the general public that the above named Organization has applied to the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC). Abuja for registration Under Part "F" of Companies and Allied Matter's Act, 2020.

#### THE TRUSTEES-ARE

- |                            |   |           |
|----------------------------|---|-----------|
| 1. Gopar Yilkang Wulengkah | - | Chairman  |
| 2. Tokbish Yohanna         | - | Secretary |
| 3. Kosen Joseph            |   |           |
| 4. Gofwan Afya             |   |           |
| 5. Danjuma Briskila        |   |           |

#### AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Objectives for the Dingkir Humanitarian Initiative (DHI)

- Provision of Humanitarian Services:
    - Addressing the health needs of vulnerable populations, with a focus on HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis, and cancer.
  - Promotion of Gender Equality:
    - Addressing and reducing gender inequalities in health and social services.
  - Support for Adolescents and Young Persons:
    - Providing targeted health education and support services to adolescents and young individuals.
  - Assistance to Hard-to-Reach and Key Populations:
    - Offering support to persons with disabilities (PLWD), internally displaced persons (IDPs), orphans and vulnerable children (OVCs), widows, and the less privileged etc.
- Any objection to the registration should be forwarded to the registrar, General Corporate Affairs Commission, Plot 420, Tigris Crescent off Aguiyi Ironsi Street, Maitama Abuja, within 28 days of this publication.

SIGNED: SECRETARY

## PUBLIC NOTICE

### LOSS OF DOCUMENT

This is to notify the general public of the lost of original copy of Right of Occupancy (R of O) with No. PI57447 of property located at No. 15 Naraguta Avenue Old GRA Jos and belonging to **Mr. PHILLIP SUWA DIMKA**.

All efforts made to traced the said document proved abortive.

The ministry of Lands, Survey and Town Planning Jos and other concerned authorities to please take note.

Signed:

**PHILLIP SUWA DIMKA**

## Economy

# 'In Nigeria, a tyre never quite dies'



The photographer Andrew Esiebo travelled around the city capturing how car tyres otherwise destined for the dump are finding second lives as seats, fences and swings

By  
**SAEED KAMALI DEGHAN**

THE work of a vulcaniser is not unlike that of a surgeon, says the Nigerian photographer Andrew Esiebo. Armed with precision tools, vulcanisers across Nigeria extend the lives of tyres otherwise destined for the scrap heap.

"Vulcanisers are like doctors for tyres because the way they work is like surgery," says Esiebo, who has chronicled how used tyres are being repurposed in Lagos in a photography series exhibited as part of the British Academy-funded Pneuma-City project.

"In Nigeria, a tyre never quite dies. It's made from non-degradable material. However, even when the tyre is out of the car, there's still a use for it."

Esiebo's work shows

repurposed tyres scattered across the city, where they are used as flower pots, football goalposts, punch bags, makeshift tables, swings in a park and even seating in trendy bars. A company in Nigeria, he says, is recycling waste tyres to become floor tiles for a playground.

Esiebo's photos are shown in the headquarters of the vulcanisers' association in the Lagos neighbourhood of Mushin. The association's motto is "no tyre, no movement".

The photos are simultaneously being exhibited in seven vulcaniser workshops across the city, curated by the Lisbon-based Inês Vallee.

"It was a way of pushing photography beyond the conventional space," Esiebo says.

A freelance photographer based in Lagos, Esiebo

documents the rapid development of urban Nigeria. He started shooting the project in 2019 and continued until 2023.

Vulcanisers play "an essential role" in prolonging a tyre's life in a country with a high cost of living, where "changing a tyre is not always easy", Esiebo says. Lagos is a city of 20 million people, with roughly 2m cars on its roads.

Scrap tyres are a global problem, with some western countries dumping them in developing nations such as India in a phenomenon dubbed as "waste colonialism".

Dr David Garbin, from the University of Kent, is intrigued by the imported old European tyres (known as *tokunbo*) getting a second life in Lagos. Many get discarded and rescued by artists, he says, whose sculptures sometimes are acquired by galleries in Europe.

Echoing Esiebo, Garbin says

vulcanisers are doctors because "they cure and fix" the tyres, but also because they diagnose tyre conditions and advise drivers when to replace them.

"Many vulcanisers we spoke to shared their experience of getting seriously injured by exploding tyres," he adds.

"The work is challenging, with low and unpredictable income. Vulcanisers endure long hours on busy roadsides, exposed to pollution and heavy traffic, without formal protections such as pensions or health insurance. Despite the precarious nature of their work, they consider themselves essential to keeping the city moving.

"They 'patch' the city, enabling daily mobility, especially for affordable public transport like the iconic *danfos* (yellow buses) and *okadas* (motorcycle taxis)."

A tyre's material resilience, Garbin says, "is both a blessing and curse, allowing non-biodegradable tyres to cling to the urban fabric, potentially becoming breeding grounds for malarial mosquitoes or blocking waterways and drains."

Esiebo's favourite photo of the series is one showing "a guy having a nap on a roll of tyres". "That shows the ingenuity of it," he says.

"We upcycle almost everything in Nigeria," he adds. "Organically, we have a culture of upcycling; it's our way of life. It's just that we don't put the word to it."

This is what we're up against Teams of lawyers from the rich and powerful trying to stop us publishing stories they don't want you to see.

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BBC Africa

**"Vulcanisers play "an essential role" in prolonging a tyre's life in a country with a high cost of living, where "changing a tyre is not always easy", Esiebo says. Lagos is a city of 20 million people, with roughly 2m cars on its roads. Scrap tyres are a global problem, with some western countries dumping them in developing nations such as India in a phenomenon dubbed as "waste colonialism".**



## Focus

# Hurdles before persons with disabilities

By JENNIFER YARIMA

THE Federal Government's recent step to seal offices and public buildings without provisions for persons living with disabilities is a welcome development. This move aims to cushion the persistent hardships faced by individuals with disabilities in Nigeria. The struggles of persons with disabilities in Nigeria are multifaceted and deeply ingrained in the societal fabric.

Persons with disabilities face various challenges, including physical and mental impairments that substantially limit their life activities. These impairments may include vision or hearing impairments, mental health conditions, intellectual and developmental disabilities, chronic medical conditions, or other conditions that affect their daily lives.

Unfortunately, societal attitudes towards persons with disabilities are often unfavorable. They are frequently treated with disdain, leading to mistreatment and stigmatization. Persons with disabilities often struggle to find relevance among their peers, facing challenges in accessing job opportunities, schools' enrollment, marriage partners, economic opportunities, and safe spaces for social interactions.

In many ethnic groups in Nigeria, persons with disabilities are often viewed as a curse from the gods or the result of witchcraft. This harmful belief leads to stigmatization of families with individuals with disabilities. However, it is essential to recognize that disabilities can result from various factors, including birth defects or injuries sustained during life.

One of the significant challenges faced by persons with disabilities is limited accessibility to public spaces, transportation, and buildings. Inadequate infrastructure and a lack of universally designed environments create obstacles, limiting mobility and independence for individuals with disabilities.

Despite legislative efforts to promote inclusive education, barriers persist within educational institutions. Inaccessible facilities, a lack of appropriate accommodations, and a shortage of trained educators contribute to the academic challenges faced by students with disabilities.

The job market can be particularly challenging for individuals with disabilities, with inaccessible workplaces limiting their employment opportunities. Addressing these issues requires a concerted effort from employers and policymakers.

Public transportation systems often fail to consider the needs of people with disabilities, with insufficient accommodations such as wheelchair ramps and audible announcements creating barriers to independent mobility.

Persons living with disabilities are often relegated to the background and are vulnerable to abuse. Many are forced to beg for alms in public places, making them susceptible



to sexual molestation and ritual targeting.

To address these challenges, Nigeria has called for the establishment of the ECOWAS Agency for Disability Affairs. This agency aims to integrate regional disability policies and strategies for rehabilitation and equal opportunities in communities. It also seeks to provide mechanisms to protect, promote, support, and respect the actions of people with disabilities.

Nigeria has also launched the 'Beyond Disability' project, which aims to promote the inclusion of persons with disabilities in society. The project seeks to raise awareness and challenge harmful societal attitudes towards individuals with disabilities.

The Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act of 2018 is a significant step towards promoting the rights of persons with disabilities in Nigeria. The Act gives a 5-year window for all public buildings to create access for persons with disabilities.

The ECOWAS ministers have adopted an action plan on social inclusion to bridge the gaps affecting people with disabilities. The plan advocates for the employment of persons with disabilities as part of the commission's effort to prioritize inclusion. This plan covers the period of 2022 to 2030 and aims to impact the living conditions of

people with disabilities by guaranteeing their rights and full participation in society.

ECOWAS Commissioner for Humanitarian Development and Social Affairs, Prof. Fatou Sow, has assured that the sub-regional body will deploy all necessary support to ensure social inclusion of people with disabilities becomes a reality.

The National Commission for Persons with Disabilities (NCPWD) is an agency in Nigeria established in 2020 to prevent discrimination against persons with disabilities and ensure their inclusiveness in every sector. The commission,

headed by James David Lalu, aims to implement policies, programs, and projects on disability and development across the country to end discrimination against the approximately 31 million disabled people in Nigeria.

The challenges faced by persons with disabilities in Nigeria are multifaceted and deeply ingrained in societal attitudes and environmental barriers. However, with the establishment of the ECOWAS Agency for Disability Affairs, the launch of the 'Beyond Disability' project, and the implementation of the

Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act of 2018, Nigeria is taking significant steps towards promoting the inclusion of persons with disabilities. The National Commission for Persons with Disabilities (NCPWD) is also working tirelessly to ensure the rights and inclusiveness of persons with disabilities in Nigeria.

With continued efforts and awareness, Nigeria can become a more inclusive society where persons with disabilities are valued and empowered to reach their full potentials.

***"IN many ethnic groups in Nigeria, persons with disabilities are often viewed as a curse from the gods or the result of witchcraft. This harmful belief leads to stigmatization of families with individuals with disabilities. However, it is essential to recognize that disabilities can result from various factors, including birth defects or injuries sustained during life. One of the significant challenges faced by persons with disabilities is limited accessibility to public spaces, transportation, and buildings. Inadequate infrastructure and a lack of universally designed environments create obstacles, limiting mobility and independence for individuals with disabilities".***

## Feature

# Tinubu's June 12 speech and 'Lagos mentality'

By CHRIS GYANG

ONCE again, President Tinubu has displayed that 'Lagos mentality' for which other Nigerians have continued to berate Lagos leaders and citizens generally. It is an inordinate penchant to perceive the entire universe, most especially other parts of Nigeria outside South Western Nigeria, from the myopic prisms of their socio-economic and political milieu and experiences.

For them, anything that comes out of any other part of Nigeria, no matter how grand or spectacular, can never equal that which emanates from Lagos. In short, the world inexorably begins and ends in Lagos or, when they must be magnanimous to their own kith and kin, the South Western part of this country.

On June 12, 2024, the president delivered a national broadcast commemorating Democracy Day in which he honoured the sacrifices of pro-democracy activists who fought for the restoration of Chief Moshodu Abiola's annulled June 12, 1993, mandate.

However, Mr. Tinubu's speech conspicuously omitted the contributions of key figures from other regions outside the South West. This glaring oversight perpetuates a biased narrative, diminishing the roles played by Nigerians from their parts of the country in that and other struggles for democracy in Nigeria.

For instance, the Middle Belt region, comprising states like Plateau, Taraba, Benue, Nasarawa, and the southern parts of Kaduna State, among others, was also a hotbed of resistance against military rule and a crucial hub for pro-democracy activism both before and after the years following the annulment. Several notable figures from this region played pivotal roles in the June 12 struggle, yet they were deliberately overlooked by the president.

For instance, Chief Solomon Daushep Lar, the first civilian governor of Plateau State, and the first National Chairman of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), contributed significantly to the June 12 struggle. Lar's political acumen and vision were essential in mobilizing support from the Middle Belt and other regions, helping to build a broad-based coalition that transcended ethnic and regional lines. Lar was subjected to severe punishment, including imprisonment and harassment, by the military government for insisting that the military must go back to the barracks where they rightly belong.

The history of democracy in Nigeria cannot be complete



Tinubu

without mentioning the name of this great politician, fondly known as 'The Emancipator' all over the country for his masses-oriented/grassroots politics which won him so much admiration among ordinary folk.

There was also Air Commodore Jonah Jang (rtd.), another Plateau State indigene, who had meritoriously served as military governor in the old Gongola and Benue states. He also figured prominently in the National Democratic Coalition (NADECO) - a broad coalition of Nigerian democrats formed on 15 May, 1994, with the aim of making the General Sani Abacha military junta hand over to Chief Abiola. As a former military officer, Jang brought a unique perspective to the struggle, leveraging his military background to mobilize support and resources for the cause. He was imprisoned for several months by the military government for his activism, but his resolve remained unwavering. He later served for two terms as Plateau State governor where his stellar performance stands out up till today.

These and many other patriotic citizens from other parts of the country outside the South West had staked their lives for democracy in the country. It was Lar that initiated the G17 of northern leaders who wrote a letter to the dreaded dictator, Abacha, warning him about the consequences of holding on to power and personally delivered

it to him. Retired Air Commodore Jang, who was a member of this group, was accompanied by publishing a counter titled, THE NEED FOR CAUTION.

Resolute, the editors withstood their ground. But the state government went ahead and published it. Six members of the Editorial Board reacted by taking the most principled option left to them - they resigned. They were Emma Gogwim, Cyril Oga, Gideon Mitu, Harris Dawurang, Wilson Yale and Usman Abu. Later, Danjuma Abah, a proof reader, joined in solidarity with them.

President Tinubu's bias did not stop at omitting the names of the northern media fully of these valiant Nigerians. He backed the Bagangida and likewise poured encomiums on Abacha dictatorships, mainly selected newspapers from the Lagos/Ibadan axis and stopped from, say, the Middle Belt who also used their media to oppose the military regimes. Lagos-centric as he is, there is no doubt that Mr. President must have heard the name of THE NIGERIA STANDARD, which stood their ground in the pursuit of professional and democratic ideals. In fact, it could be said that it was relatively more difficult for these journalists to effectively practise their trade newspaper. This Jos, Plateau in the North, where the military State-based newspaper was founded in 1972 by the forward-looking Governor Joseph Dechi Gomwalk, of blessed memory. Following the annulment of the elections, this newspaper carried a strongly-worded front-page comment on June 21, 1993, titled, THIS IS OUR STAND.

The editorial urged the military government to resume the announcement of the results and cautioned that doing otherwise would not augur well for the peace and security of the country. The state government

tradition that has become all too familiar today in Nigeria's political landscape: the dominance of Lagos State and the South West in political appointments.

Since assuming office, President Tinubu has been accused of favouring individuals from his native Lagos State and the South West with political appointments, to the detriment of Nigerians from other regions. This nepotistic approach has created a perception that individuals from other parts of the country are incompetent or less deserving of political appointments because of their tribes and origins.

By ignoring the contributions of heroes from other regions, President Tinubu's speech reinforced a harmful narrative that has been used to justify the marginalization of certain regions, especially Nigeria's minorities, in political appointments. It is worthy of note that, since former Governor Lalong relinquished his position to go to the Senate, Plateau State has had no minister in the federal cabinet.

That June 12 speech was a missed opportunity to promote national unity and recognize the contributions of all Nigerians who fought for democracy.

President Tinubu should recognize the contributions of all Nigerians who fought for democracy, regardless of their region or ethnicity. This 'Lagos mentality' must cease forthwith. Only then can we build a truly united and prosperous country.



## Feature

# Seeking sustainable peace and development through fact-checking

By WULIME GOYIT

IT held at the Nigeria Army Resource Centre, the repository of Nigeria's military history. On the premises of this expansive facility is military hardware the kind of which wartime Nigeria paraded. What is more, a massive structure, in the shape of a pistol lying on its side, houses the Nigeria Army Museum. Here, an enclosed walkway is adorned with photos and mementos that celebrate the successes of our military men and women; they also carry the tragedies that are part of our checkered history.

How this facility lent itself to an event such as a National Fact-checking Course is not immediately noticed in its serious, sensitive and rather tense atmosphere. But, somewhere in the words of Dr. Joseph Ochogwu, Director-General, Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution (IPCR), this connection is found:

"The weakness of our institutions in fact-checking and probing the integrity of information exchanges in the nation's ecosystem, has further emboldened unscrupulous content creators and distributors to perfect their nefarious acts with selfish gain. This situation has exacerbated tensions, provoked political mistrust, fostered polarization among Nigerians and triggered wider socio-economic, cultural and religious changes...The deeper implications of fake news and misinformation include...widespread loss of lives, destruction of properties, displacement of a huge number of Nigerians and hindrance to socio-economic development."

From April 23<sup>rd</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup>, 2024, media professionals, security operatives, civil society organizations (CSOs), community leaders and government officials went through several training modules designed to equip them with the skills required to be able to



identify and fight the spread of fake news and ensure sanity in the information eco-system. The IPCR, premier peace think-tank and research agency of the Federal Government, together with peace advocacy organizations, Tomruk iHub Multiverse and DAKRISBENIC Foundation for Unity and Development in Africa (DAFUDA) assembled the experts and tools for the event.

With the theme, **Combating Fake News in the Security, Intelligence, Economic and Public Service Eco-system**, the National Fact-Checking Course was easily a chip off the United Nations' *Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech* which was launched in June of 2019 by UN Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres. Whether it is the conventional or New Media, increasing disorder in the information ecosystem continues to hold dreary implications for world peace and security. It is this realization which, Dr. Ochogwu said, formed the basis for "a coordinated action in all forms towards addressing the root causes of fake news for sustainable peace and development at local, national, regional and international

levels."

With recent advances in information and communication technology, it is contradiction in terms when the tools for development are the same tools that account for the destruction of society. But as Dr. Odeyemi Olayiwole, lead presenter at the event concurred in his paper, **Crisis Management: Leadership Strategies for Addressing False Information**, purveyors of fake news are not guided by ethical or moral considerations. Because they are merely in pursuit of an agenda, Dr. Olayiwole said, an effective response mechanism ought to be put in place to fight it. Prescribing the setting up of digital platforms for this purpose, he also suggested the need for established official communication channels, verification of facts, and quick response, among the ways of dealing with fake news.

Dr. Olayiwole averred that fake news thrives in a culture of deceit, and that trust and credibility on the part of the leadership in an organization is an essential requirement for the fight against it. According to him, official reaction to fake news should be focused on the issues, not people; solution, not

complaint; and on facts and figures.

But how can fake news be identified? This question and many other issues thrown up in the preceding paper were responded to in the sessions that followed, by the various resource persons lined up, and in the various ways they deemed fit. Above the din of it all was the understanding that the human being is first an emotional being before being logical. Hence, our emotion must always be on leash to be able to identify fake news. But, understanding the concept comes from the answers one gets from the questions that follow: Is it original? Is it manipulated? Has it been shared before? What is the integrity of its originator? Why is it shared?

A hands-on programme that it was, the technical sessions were an opportunity for group work, where practical exercises and case studies became the furnace that sharpened participants' perspectives on the various topics covered. And, among the topics which sought practical ways of dealing with the issues were: *Understanding the Social Media; Exploring the Information Disorder Ecosystem; Fact-Checking Strategies; Understanding*

*Cultural Norms, Beliefs and Bias; Technical Tools for Fact-Checking; and What is Fact-Checking and Why is it Important?* Long and dreary as they came, they were fleshed out with the use of Reverse Image Search engines such as TINEYE, YANDEX and BING, which were some of the tools participants were introduced to and which were used in the several exercises carried out.

Against the backdrop of the prevailing *information disorder* in the media, especially the social media space, the course identified three elements of information disorder: misinformation, disinformation and mal-information. Misinformation was defined as incorrect or misleading information; disinformation, as false information intended to deceive; while mal-information is deliberate exaggeration of the truth or passing of information in a way that is harmful.

The consensus at the event was that *information* is a two-edged sword that has built societies and also destroyed them depending on what it is intended for. Indeed, peddled with the intent to harm, words have a frightening propensity to inflict the greatest harm on the greatest number of people. And because of its duplicitous character, participants were urged to always be on the lookout for signs of fake news.

On the whole, the course exposed participants to the modern phenomenon of fake news, called attention to its dangers, and provided the skills and tools to be used to rid the information eco-system of its menace. And as participants left the still-glittering Asokoro District of Abuja, where it all took place, a lot had happened to suggest that indeed not all that glitters is gold. Hence, the need to begin to deploy their newfound expertise for the stability and progress of the country.

**Goyit, is the Director, Broadcast New Media, Plateau State Ministry of Information and Communication**





# IMAGES

## MUTFWANG RECEIVES DG NILEST AND MANAGEMENT

Plateau State Governor, Caleb Mutfwang recently received on a courtesy call the Director General, Nigeria Institute for Leather and Science Technology, (NILEST), Zaria, Kaduna State at his official residence, Government House, Rayfield, Jos



Mutfwang (left), welcoming the Director General, NILEST, Prof. Mohammed Kabiru Yakubu



Prof. Mohammed Kabiru Yakubu, (right) presenting shoes made by NILEST to Governor Mutfwang



Secretary to Government of the State, Arc. Samuel Jatau, Chief of Staff Government House, Jeremiah Satmark and the Head of Civil Service, Barr. Rauta Dakok



Cross-section of delegation from NILEST with the representative of Hon. Beni Lar, Alfred Nankpah Gono



Commissioners and Special Advisers to the Governor at the occasion



Mutfwang (right), in a handshake with Jos Centre Manager, NILEST, Dr. Bulus Habila



Governor Mutfwang (2nd right), DG, NILEST (right), in a photograph with his management team



Plateau State Governor (middle), in a group photograph with the government officials and the DG, NILEST's team

PHOTOS: DANLADI DUK



# IMAGES

## MUTFWANG VISITS MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES

Plateau State Governor, Caleb Mutfwang visited the Minister of Water Resources, Prof. Joseph Terlumun Ustev in his office, last week



Mutfwang being received by Prof. Ustev



Mutfwang (middle), Minister of Water Resources, Prof. Joseph Ustev  
Minister of State, Rt. Hon. Bello Muhammed Goronyo



Prof. Ustev (left), with the Plateau State Commissioner for Water Resources and Energy, Noel Nkup



Governor Mutfwang, in a group photograph with the Ministry's team

PHOTOS: DANLADI DUK

## MUTFWANG VISITS AVIATION MINISTER

Governor Caleb Mutfwang also visited the Minister of Aviation, Festus Keyamo (SAN)



Mutfwang in a warm embrace with Keyamo (SAN)



Keyamo (SAN) exchanging views with Governor Mutfwang



Governor Mutfwang exchanging greetings with CCECC contractors



Mutfwang with Keyamo in a handshake

PHOTOS: DANLADI DUK

## Foreign News

### US to give legal status to undocumented spouses

PRESIDENT Joe Biden is set to announce a new policy that would protect hundreds of thousands of undocumented spouses of US citizens from deportation, according to administration officials.

The action will apply to those who have been in the country for at least 10 years and will allow them to work in the US legally.

It marks the most significant relief programme for undocumented migrants already in the US since the Obama administration announced the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, or DACA, in 2012.

The White House believes more than 500,000 spouses of US citizens will benefit, in addition to 50,000 young people under 21 whose parent are married to an American citizen.

Earlier in June, Mr Biden vowed to make the US immigration system "more fair and more just".

Polls show that immigration is a primary concern for many voters ahead of the presidential election this November.

The announcement comes ahead of an event marking the 12th anniversary of the DACA programme, which shielded over 530,000 migrants who came to the US as children - known as Dreamers - from deportation.

Last Monday, senior administration officials said that undocumented spouses of US citizens would qualify if they had lived in the country for 10 years and been married as of 17 June.

Those who qualify will have three years to apply for permanent residency and will be eligible for a three-year work permit.

On average, the White House believes that those eligible for the process have been in the US for 23 years. A majority will have been born in Mexico.

They will be "paroled in place" and allowed to remain in the US while their status is changed.

NumbersUSA, an immigration reform group, slammed the new policy as "unconscionable".

The organisation's chief executive, James Massa, said in a statement: "Rather than stopping the worst border crisis in history, President Biden has overreached his executive authority to use an unconstitutional process, circumventing voters and their elected representatives in Congress, to send a



Biden

message that amnesty is available to those who enter illegally into the United States."

Alex Cuic, an immigration lawyer and professor at Case Western Reserve University in Ohio, told the BBC that while the action affected a "narrow group", it marked a "start" for a segment of the US immigrant population that historically would face complications normalising their status in the country, even when eligible.

"A good majority of them [would have] to leave the country in order to come back lawfully," he said. "It's like they physically enter the US, but their immigration 'soul' doesn't come with them."

By allowing beneficiaries to parole in place, Mr Cuic added, officials "kill off the need to separate families" when one spouse needs to leave the country to apply for lawful permanent residence.

The application process is likely to be open by the end

of summer, a senior administration official said on Monday.

### Putin vows to beat sanctions with North Korea

RUSSIAN President Vladimir Putin thanked North Korea for supporting his actions in Ukraine and said their countries will cooperate closely to overcome U.S.-led sanctions as he headed to Pyongyang yesterday for a summit with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un.

Putin's comments appeared in an op-ed piece in North Korean state media hours before his expected arrival for a two-day visit as the countries deepen their alignment in the face of separate, intensifying confrontations with Washington.

In the North Korean capital of Pyongyang, the streets were decorated with Putin's portraits and Russian flags. A banner hung on a building said: "We warmly welcome the President of the Russian Federation."

Putin, who will be making his first trip to North Korea in 24 years, said he highly appreciates its firm support of his military action in Ukraine. He said the countries would continue to "resolutely oppose" what he described as Western ambitions "to hinder the establishment of a multipolar world order based on justice, mutual respect for sovereignty, considering each other's interests." Putin also said Russia and North Korea will develop trade and payment systems "that are not

controlled by the West" and jointly oppose sanctions against the countries, which he described as "illegal, unilateral restrictions."

North Korea is under heavy U.N. Security Council economic sanctions over its nuclear weapons and missile programs, while Russia is also grappling with sanctions by the United States and its Western partners over its aggression in Ukraine.

Putin said the countries will also expand cooperation in tourism, culture and education.

Before heading to North Korea, Putin traveled to Yakutsk, a city in eastern Russia, where he reportedly planned to meet regional Gov. Aisen Nikolayev, and receive briefings on the area's technology and defense-related projects.

Putin's visit comes amid growing concerns about an arms arrangement in which Pyongyang provides Moscow with badly needed munitions to fuel Russia's war in Ukraine in exchange for economic assistance and technology transfers that would enhance the threat posed by Kim's nuclear weapons and missile program.

U.S. and South Korean officials say military, economic and other exchanges between North Korea and Russia have sharply increased

since Kim met Putin in September in the Russian Far East, their first since 2019.

U.S. and South Korean officials accuse the North of providing Russia with artillery, missiles and other military equipment for use in Ukraine, possibly in return for key military technologies and aid. Both Pyongyang and Moscow deny accusations about North Korean weapons transfers, which would violate multiple U.N. Security Council sanctions that Russia previously endorsed.

Along with China, Russia has provided political cover for Kim's continuing efforts to advance his nuclear arsenal, repeatedly blocking U.S.-led efforts to impose fresh U.N. sanctions on the North over its weapons tests.

In March, a Russian veto at the United Nations ended monitoring of U.N. sanctions against North Korea over its nuclear program, prompting Western accusations that Moscow is seeking to avoid scrutiny as it buys weapons from Pyongyang for use in Ukraine.

U.S. and South Korean officials have said they are discussing options for a new mechanism for monitoring the North.

Earlier this year, Putin sent Kim a high-end Aurus Senat limousine, which he had shown to

### Immigration emerged as a primary concern for US voters

arguing that it violated US immigration law with the action.

At the time of the announcement, Mr Biden urged those who consider the measure "too strict" to "be patient".

"[In] the weeks ahead, I will speak to how we can make our immigration system more fair and just," he said.

Aaron Reichlin-Melnick, policy director at the American Immigration Council, said that while the two announcements "don't intersect with each other at all", the more recent action may help the administration

"get some positive

headlines after the pushback" they received over the border announcement.

"The Biden administration has been receiving a lot of flak from people saying that their focus has all been on new arrivals, when there are so many long-term undocumented immigrants stuck trying to navigate our complicated immigration system," he added.

"I think the actions you've seen the president taking over the last few weeks really go towards addressing both those concerns," Mr Reichlin-Melnick added.

Culled from BBC News.

### Netanyahu dissolves war cabinet

ISRAELI Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu disbanded his war Cabinet has, a move that consolidates his influence over the Israel-Hamas war and likely diminishes the odds of a cease-fire in the Gaza Strip anytime soon.

Netanyahu announced the step days after his chief political rival, Benny Gantz, withdrew from the three-member war Cabinet. Gantz, a retired general and member of parliament, was widely seen as a more moderate voice.

Major war policies will now be solely approved by Netanyahu's security Cabinet - a larger body that is dominated by hard-liners who oppose the U.S.-backed cease-fire proposal and want to press ahead with the war.

Netanyahu is expected to consult on some decisions with close allies in ad-hoc meetings, said an Israeli official who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to brief the media.

These closed-door meetings could blunt some of the influence of the hard-liners. But Netanyahu himself has shown little enthusiasm for the cease-fire plan and his reliance on the full security Cabinet could give him cover to prolong a decision.

The war Cabinet was formed after the Oct. 7 Hamas attack on Israel



Netanyahu

when Gantz, an opposition party leader, joined with Netanyahu and Defense Minister Yoav Gallant in a show of unity.

At the time, Gantz demanded that a small decision-making body steer the war in a bid to sideline far-right members of Netanyahu's government.

He said he was fed up with a lack of progress bringing home the dozens of Israeli hostages held by Hamas. He accused Netanyahu of

drawing out the war to avoid new elections and a corruption trial. He called on Netanyahu to endorse a plan that - among other points - would rescue the captives and end Hamas rule in Gaza.

When Netanyahu did not express support for the plan, Gantz announced his departure. He said that "fateful strategic decisions" in the Cabinet were being "met with hesitancy and procrastination due to political considerations."

The disbanding of the war Cabinet only further distances

Netanyahu from centrist politicians more open to a cease-fire deal with Hamas.

Months of cease-fire talks have failed to find common ground between Hamas and Israeli leaders. Both Israel and Hamas have been reluctant to fully endorse a U.S.-backed plan that would return hostages, clear the way for an end to the war, and commence a rebuilding effort of the decimated territory.

Netanyahu will now rely on the members of his security Cabinet, some of whom oppose cease-fire deals and have voiced support for reoccupying Gaza.

After Gantz's departure, Israel's ultranationalist national security minister, Itamar Ben-Gvir, demanded inclusion in a renewed war Cabinet. Monday's move could help keep Ben-Gvir at a distance, but it cannot sideline him altogether.

The move also gives Netanyahu leeway to draw out the war to stay in power. Netanyahu's critics accuse him of delaying because an end to the war would mean an investigation into the government's failures on Oct. 7 and raise the likelihood of new elections when the prime minister's popularity is low.

Culled from BBC News.

the North Korean leader when they met in September. Observers said the shipment violated a U.N. resolution banning the supply of luxury items to North Korea.

John Kirby, spokesperson of the U.S. National Security Council, said the deepening relationship between Moscow and Pyongyang is concerning, "not just because of the impacts it's going to have on the Ukrainian people, because we know North Korean ballistic missiles are still being used to hit Ukrainian targets, but because there could be some reciprocity here that could affect security on the Korean Peninsula."

Lim Soosuk, spokesperson of South Korea's Foreign Ministry, said Seoul has been stressing to Moscow that any cooperation between Russia and North Korea must not "proceed in a direction that violates U.N. Security Council resolutions or undermines peace and stability in the region."

Tensions on the Korean Peninsula are at their highest point in years, with the pace of both Kim's weapons tests and combined military exercises involving the United States, South Korea and Japan intensifying in a tit-for-tat cycle.

The Koreas also have engaged in Cold War-style psychological warfare that involved North Korea dropping tons of trash on the South with balloons, and the South broadcasting anti-North Korean propaganda with its loudspeakers.

South Korea's military said soldiers fired warning shots to repel North Korean soldiers who temporarily crossed the land border for the second time this month. The South's military said North Korea has been increasing construction activity in front-line border areas, such as installing suspected anti-tank barriers, reinforcing roads and planting land mines.

Putin has continuously sought to rebuild ties with Pyongyang as part of efforts to restore his country's clout and its Soviet-era alliances. Moscow's ties with North Korea weakened after the 1991 Soviet collapse. Kim Jong Un first met with Putin in 2019 in Russia's eastern port of Vladivostok.

After North Korea, the Kremlin said Putin will also visit Vietnam on Wednesday and Thursday for talks that are expected to be focused on trade. The United States, which has spent years strengthening ties and accelerating trade with Vietnam, criticized Putin's planned visit.

Culled from BBC News.



VoxPop

# Nigerians express views on June 12

**Today marks six years since President Muhammadu Buhari declared June 12 as democracy day. As we celebrate this milestone, Hosea Nyamlong and Jidauna Daring went to town to sound out people on what they feel about the change in date and how it has impacted on the lives of the people.**



**Dr. Ezekiel Major Adeyi, Head of Department of Political science, University of Jos**

Democracy day was initially observed on May 29 to put an end to the long military rule. The political class has actualize its dream of establishing civil rule in Nigeria's democratic process on May 29, 1999.

However, those who participated in aborting and truncating the June 12, 1993, election that led to Sani Abacha and his cohorts taking over, have discovered that democracy has no alternative and that the only way they could pay for their sins was to make June 12 democracy day.

Realizing that citizens of the country, across the ethno-religious divides voted for the Social Democratic Party (SDP), it only made sense that the peoples' mandate be respected.

Recall that before the date was changed, President Muhammadu Buhari for whatever reason accepted and acknowledged the Presidential candidate of SDP, late Chief M.K.O Abiola, as winner of the June 12 election and he was honoured. This was meant to atone for the crime committed against the nation by those who annulled the election.

But in the actual sense, when we look at it, democracy day is not the question of May 29 or June 12. What matters most is to have good governance, equity, citizens having a sense of belongings (minority), sure of security when they go to their farms, without fear of being killed or cows eating up their crops. Until we ensure good governance through democratic process, the change from May 29 to June 12 cannot make meaning.

Well, as a political scientist, government should not sweep the basic things under the carpet but should know that citizens are more comfortable when there is good governance, when the prices of food in the market is affordable, when there is improvement in education, good medical services in our

hospitals etc, that would be more meaningful to Nigerians

It was just a pronouncement. Those who voted and those who were killed while protesting the cancellation of the election results were not recognised in any way nor were the dead compensated apart from the family of late M.K.O Abiola.

On a final note, government should know that the electorates do not vote on sentiment, so leaders that are privileged to be voted through out popular mandate must ensure they provide good governance. They should be thinking about what they can do to better the future of the country.



**Ayuku Pwaspo, Chairman of the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ), Plateau State Council**

The media played a significant role towards Nigeria's independence from Colonial rule and Nigeria's independence from military rule. Nigeria's democratic journey in 25 years has been turbulent and challenging one. Till date, democracy in Nigeria is still evolving. As watchdogs of the society, the media has sustained its function of educating the public on various issues and serves as a link between the government and the people. The media which serves as a mirror has kept the leaders and electorate in check through reportage and discourse on national issues. The media continues to set agenda for government and highlights societal ills, corruption and encourage citizens participation in governance. Because of the media, Nigeria is today celebrating 25 years of uninterrupted democracy.

Since 1999, May 29th was celebrated as Democracy day because it was the day, a democratically elected President took over power from a military regime. In 2018, President Muhammadu Buhari declared June 12, as the new date to celebrate Democracy Day to recognise and honour Chief MKO Abiola who was the winner of the 1993 elections, acclaimed to be the freest in the history of Nigeria but was, however, annulled by the then Head of State, General Ibrahim Babangida. Before then, the Yoruba's in the South-West celebrated June 12 as Abiola day and there were agitations for the day to be recognised and MKO honoured for losing his life in the quest for the entrenchment of

democratic governance in Nigeria.

The adoption of June 12 as Democracy Day therefore, was received with mixed feelings by different sections of the media. Reason being that the owners of the different media organisations have their specific goals and interests and that reflected on the reports published or reported by such media outfits to celebrate June 12. Again, May 29 is still being recognised as the handover date in Nigeria and this in a way has dampened the excitement of June 12 in the sense that, the media would have to still focus on the initial May 29 celebration and sustain same till June 12. It may interest you to know that the media in the South-West celebrate June 12 more than other regions based on the reasons mentioned earlier.

As citizens of Nigeria, we must acknowledge that June 12 has come to stay. I want to urge my colleagues to sustain reportage on the principles of democracy, unity, peace and development of the country irrespective of religious, ethnic and regional differences. Journalists should desist from reportage that are insensitive to the collective interest of the nation. The sustenance of democracy in Nigeria depends on the media and this is enshrined in section 22 of the 1999 constitution as amended. To achieve this, the media must promote social justice, human rights, rule of law. In addition to this, the media must sustain voter education, the independence of INEC and PLASIEC in the case of Plateau to ensure that the electoral process is free and fair. Journalists should put the interest of the nation above self and play the game by the rules and also focus on developmental journalism with focus on national integration for a peaceful society where the rights of citizens are respected.



**Golching Istifanus Bala, Head Teacher COCIN Salvation Nursery/Primary School, Jenta Adams, Jos**

Democracy is the government by the people, of the people and for the people.

It is a thing of joy that today, Nigeria is celebrating 25 years of uninterrupted democracy from the long history of the military rule.

As a citizen, I have mixed feelings, Nigeria is yet to be there (nascent democracy), looking at what is happening to our economy and politics. The country is battling with many challenges, among which is insecurity.

In a democratic set up, the peoples' welfare and the security of their lives and property matters, but as it is today, Nigeria is faced with the issue of insecurity. This has made citizens not to sleep with their two eyes closed.

In the political arena today, the system is marred with lack of credible, free and fair elections. Our elections are characterise by a lot of rigging. So, the mixed feelings arises as a result of the denial of the mandate of the citizens.

Normally Nigeria used to celebrate her democracy day on May 29 but the Buhari declared June 12 as democracy day instead of the May 29.

According to the former President, June 12 is seen as the day the most credible and fair election took place in the country in 1993 won by Late Chief M K O Abiola.

Historically, the election is the most accepted general election ever conducted in Nigeria. The election cannot be compared with what is obtainable now. It is therefore a day set aside to celebrate the gains of democracy.

It is our hope that as a nation, we will imbibe such character to sustain the democratic processes.

So far, Nigeria has achieved in some sectors, like in education, our universities are better funded, today every state in Nigeria has a federal university, education is much easier to access now, not like in the past.

I believe the sustainability of democracy in Nigeria, depends on our leaders today and the ones that will come in the future.



**Mallah Grace Monday, a resident at Donkat Bali Road Jos**

Celebrating 25 of uninterrupted democracy in Nigeria as a country, is an achievement so far.

Our leaders have a lot of work to do in order to sustain the democratic journey of the nation.

Nigeria is faced with the issue of insecurity, economic challenges, lack of social amenities.

I believe our leaders can do better in ensuring that the welfare of the citizens are met by providing the basic needs and also creating an enabling environment for them to thrive.

Coming down to the change of date of Nigeria's democracy day from May 29 to June 12 is the Buhari administration's way of celebrating the credible election conducted in 1993.

As a citizen, the change of the date does not matter, what matters most, is that citizens want to see the dividend of democracy cut across the entire country in terms of the welfare, development and ensuring the security of lives and property of citizens.

Our leaders should make us proud by doing the needful in sustaining the democratic processes in order to better the future of the country.



**Jesse Azard Eleazar, a resident of Jos North Local Government Area**

Nigeria today is still waxing stronger. Despite challenges, we are still one as a nation.

Nigeria is yet to attain its potentials, the democratic processes is not yet mature, our elections are not free and fair, while citizens are not satisfied with the government.

As a citizen of Nigeria, my prayers for our leaders is to lead the country to the promised land by ensuring that good governance is achieved at the end of the day.

About the June 12, the administration of President Muhammadu Buhari recognized the truth and by declaring June 12 as Nigeria's democracy day to those heroes that paid the supreme prize for democracy.

Late M.K.O Abiola won the elections in 1993 general elections, but was annulled by the former military President, General Ibrahim Babangida.

I think by extension, Buhari has apologized to the Yoruba people and the entire country. Buhari has strengthened the democratic processes of the country by declaring June 12 as the hallmark of democracy in Nigeria.

I believe in Nigeria and the way forward for democracy to be sustained in the country is by citizens supporting any government in power, irrespective of our religion, tribes, culture, norms and values

Sustainability and continuity of June 12 is possible, only if we work as one, irrespective of our differences. God Bless Nigeria.



# Cost of living: People turn to 'throw-away' rice for food

*As the rising cost of living continues to bite, many in northern Nigeria are turning to rice grains that millers normally reject after processing or sell to farmers to feed their fish*

THESE are referred to in the Hausa language, widely spoken in the north, as afafata, which means "battling" because they are literally a battle to cook and eat as the grains are so hard.

"A few years ago, people didn't care about this type of rice, and we usually threw it away along with the rice hulls, but times have changed," Isah Hamisu, a rice mill worker in the northern city of Kano, told the BBC.

Despite the grains being broken, dirty and tough, afafata's cheaper price has made it more attractive for humans and helped poorer families to be able to afford to eat one of the staple foods in the country.

Fish farm owner Fatima Abdullahi said her fish love it but because people are now eating afafata, its price has risen.

Prices in Nigeria are increasing at their fastest rate for nearly 30 years. On top of global pressures, President Bola Tinubu's cancellation of the fuel subsidy plus the devaluation of the currency, the naira, have added to inflation.

A standard 50kg (110lb) bag of rice, which could help feed a household of between eight and 10 for about a month, now costs 77,000 naira (\$53; £41). This is an increase of more than 70% since the middle of last year and exceeds the monthly income of a majority of Nigerians.

any more families in the north are now opting to buy afafata

In the face of this many are struggling to cope and in some states there have been cost-of-living protests.



Earlier this month in Niger state, central Nigeria, protesters blocked roads and held placards saying that they were being suffocated by the rising prices.

A few days later there was a similar demonstration in Kano in the north-west. In the aftermath, Governor Alhaji Abba Kabir Yusuf admitted there was starvation in his state and said a solution must be found.

The solution, for now, for some is found in afafata.

Hajiya Rabi Isah, based in Kano state, told the BBC that if it were

not for this type of rice her children would go hungry as she cannot afford the normal kind.

"Normal rice is 4,000 naira (\$2.70) per bowl which is beyond my means, I can only afford afafata which is 2,500 naira (\$1.69) now," she said. One bowl of rice from the market can feed an average family in Kano for a day.

"Without afafata, feeding my family would be a major issue for me."

Market sellers have also noticed a difference.

Market seller Saminu Uba has noticed afafata becoming more

popular Saminu Uba, who works in Kano's Medile market, said the side of his business is booming.

"Most people can no longer afford normal rice and they come for this which is cheaper even though it tastes less good," he told the BBC.

One of his customers, Hashimu Dahiru, admits people are having to find ways of adapting.

"The cost of goods is alarming - in just two months the price of everything has doubled," he

said. "Our wives spend hours removing stones and dirt from the rice before cooking and even then it ends up tasting not nice, but we have to eat to survive."

The presidency has said it is doing all it can about the situation, including the distribution of more than 100 tonnes of grains such as rice, millet and maize in the hope that it would cushion the effects of inflation and help lower the market price.

But the president's aide Bayo Onanuga upset many recently when he said that Nigeria still had one of the lowest costs of living in Africa.

The increasing price of rice is not a new problem though.

President Tinubu's predecessor, Muhammadu Buhari, banned the importation of rice to encourage more Nigerian farmers to grow the crop, but local producers have been unable to meet the demand.

Before then Nigerian markets were filled with rice from Thailand at an affordable price for many.

Mr Tinubu has lifted import restrictions, but now the shortage of foreign currency and the falling value of the naira has made bringing in rice trickier.

*Courtesy, BBC*





# EVERYBODY'S WORLD

With **Palang Kasmi**

## Living

### Addressing child trafficking in Plateau State

By **PALANG KASMI**

IN recent times, Plateau State has been in the news and social media for the wrong reasons as children from the state have been found to have been trafficked from the state to other parts of the country and even foreign countries.

In a recent trending online video, over 10 teenage Nigerian girls between the ages of 15 and 16 were rescued by authorities after they were trafficked to Ghana for prostitution. Among them were girls from Plateau State. This is just one out of the many arrests this year where Plateau girls were found in the list of girls trafficked for sexual exploitation and domestic work across the country.

Statistics from the International Labour Organisation (ILO) estimates that fifteen 15 million children are engaged in child labour in Nigeria with 40% of them at the risk of being trafficked both internally and externally for various purposes. They are engaged in domestic labour, prostitution, pornography, armed conflict, farm work and even rituals.

Due to this disturbing trend, Coordinator of Child Protection Network (CPN) in Plateau State, Mrs. Sandra Chikan, has recently in a press statement, condemned the current trend of trafficking children from the state.

Chikan, in the statement made available to newsmen in Jos, stressed that CPN would no longer condone the illicit acts where children and young girls from Plateau State are tricked, forced or persuaded to leave their homes and then transported and forced to work or sold and trafficked for sexual exploitation.

According to her, because of the alarming increase in cases of child trafficking, young girls from Plateau State have on several occasions been lured by syndicates to other countries and states for prostitution and child labour.

"This ugly trend must stop; we have to rise up against it; we will no longer condone this situation, CPN condemns this dastardly act, and we call on parents and guardians to be aware of these criminals," she declared.

Describing the situation as disturbing, Chikan called for stiffer punishment for perpetrators to serve as a deterrent to others adding: "Parents and community members should not fail in their primary responsibility of protecting and training their children. Government should explore options for implementing policies and engaging stakeholders in a concerted effort to combat this menace and criminality." She also called on community leaders to report unlawful activities and crimes to law enforcement agencies.

Being one of the northern states battling with security challenges in the country, many communities in Plateau State have been affected by unprovoked attacks and killings, resulting in the displacement of many residents from their ancestral homes in Mangu, Bokokos, Riyom, Barkin Ladi and Riyom local government areas of the state.

While some of the displaced residents



Mrs. Chikan



have run to seek refuge with their families or relatives, others are forced to live in Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps as temporary shelters. Over 500 persons are reported to be IDPs in Plateau State.

At such challenging times, among some of the social ills that affects people living in the IDP camps is trafficking in Persons (TIP). The human traffickers usually cash in on the humanitarian crisis and pretend to come with solutions. Sadly, they have ulterior motives which usually result to dire consequences, many experts have warned.

Traffickers have a pattern of pretending to render help to unsuspecting victims. They come and pick out of school kids with promises to enroll them into school, or pick girls with a promise for a better life in large cities, only to turn them into wards of high profile sex trafficking rings, at the national or international levels. Most victims lured into sex trafficking during interviews said they were promised good jobs and a better life by the traffickers only to discover a different ball game when they arrived their new destinations.

Poverty is a significant factor in child trafficking in Plateau State. Many families in the state

struggle to make ends meet, and they may see child trafficking as a way to generate income. Traffickers often target poor families, promising them large sums of money in exchange for their children.

According to the United Nations, poverty is a major driver of child trafficking in Nigeria. The organization estimates that over 70% of children who are trafficked in Nigeria are from poor families.

"Poverty is a major challenge in addressing child trafficking in Nigeria," said a UN official. "Many families are desperate for income, and they may see child trafficking as a way to escape poverty."

The lack of education and unemployment are also significant factors in child trafficking in Plateau State. Many children in the state do not have access to education, and they may be forced to drop out of school to work and support their families.

According to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, over 10 million children in Nigeria are out of school, and many of them are from Plateau State. The lack of education makes them vulnerable to trafficking, as they may not have the skills and knowledge to protect themselves from traffickers.

In May 2022, a publication of the News Agency of Nigeria,



NAN, revealed some tips released by the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP), about some tricks used by human traffickers to lure their victims.

It read: "The traffickers often capitalised on victims' ignorance. The new tricks utilised by Traffickers in Persons (TIP) include technology, hunting, fishing, surrogacy, sports; especially football, orphanage and homes, among others. Before now, the human traffickers were using direct contact, also known as physical contact, but have opted for the new tricks. The traffickers often leverage social media to reach the public, especially their target.

"Orphanage trafficking is more

rampant with unregistered orphanages and homes, with owners canvassing for poor parents under the guise of caring for their children. We appeal to all parents to check the legal status of the Orphanage with the relevant local government area before releasing their wards. Traffickers often disguise as orphanage operators."

Despite these efforts, much work remains to be done. Child trafficking is a complex issue that requires a sustained and coordinated response from all stakeholders. It is only by working together that we can hope to protect our children from this scourge and ensure that they are able to grow and thrive in a safe and supportive environment.

## Opinion

# Misplaced priorities and fuss over a national anthem

Floating around on social media has been the justification that the 2014 National Conference under President Goodluck Jonathan had called for a reversion to the old national anthem. If this were to be the case, the question is why PBAT is not prioritising many of the salient constitutional issues put forward at the time as needing changes too. Maybe soon the full pictures and reasons will unravel.

The abiding concern is whether the changing back to the old anthem is a national priority at the end of PBAT's first year in office. There is the concern also about why this change was undemocratically rushed through the National Assembly within a week, as if Nigerians, at large, did not deserve consultations because they already have elected occupants in the Assembly.

It would have been great if the National Assembly was addressing Nigeria's leadership deficit and the current inability to radically reduce corruption, repossess thefts of the national patrimony, with a boost on the gross national production. Which Nigerians complained to the Assembly

By **BABAFEMI A. BADEJO**

that a new national anthem is needed? Nigerians are facing serious socio-economic problems, corruption and insecurity challenges, and the National Assembly rather prioritised, through a rush, a retrogressive move to reintroduce a colonial anthem. Change should be progressive and not retrogressive. Prioritising the change of one national song for an older one does not show national seriousness. It does not demonstrate leadership. Furthermore, there are words in the old anthem that are problematic. For instance, the Yoruba, Igbo, Fulani, Ijaw, Ibibio, Hausa, Tiv, Idoma, etc., are described as tribes. These are nationalities that are respectively bigger than many European states that are accepted as nations. It is denigrating and insulting to the national psyche to refer to Nigeria's different nationalities as "tribes." In Anthropology, a tribe is a band of people with rudimentary organisational structures, though larger than a family. Are the English a

tribe? Definitely, one cannot call the Yoruba, who are of the magnitude of well over 50 million people in the larger world, with sophisticated pre-colonial structures, as a tribe.

If we have the luxury of wanting a change of anthem, it would have been useful to call on all Nigerians to compete on the lyrics and the tune for a new song. It is retrogressive to lazily and lackadaisically drop what Nigeria has had since 1978, for some vague reasons, and replace it with what the colonial powers bequeathed. This is more so when the teaming unemployed youth of Nigeria were born into the use of "Arise O Compatriots" that was not only written by Nigerians but recognises Nigeria's history, including its unfortunate civil war that all agree should not be repeated. The "brotherhood" that PBAT is emphasising in the colonial bequeathed anthem did not prevent the 1967 to 1970 civil war that had the tremendous loss of the lives of brothers and even sisters.

The jettisoned anthem did not produce the level of corruption

ravaging our country and neither will the colonial anthem heal our land. It is the correction of our leadership deficit for it to radically reduce corruption and deftly handle the hostile external dynamics that can start to cure our underdevelopment and the failure in putting Nigerians on the path towards utmost freedom. Singing to a national anthem can be a rallying call on citizens to make sacrifices in the interest of all with respect to international competitions, including wars. But the patriotic zeal only evinces the desired loyalty of being ready to die for one's country if governance is of a quality of performance that puts the core of material and human rights needs of people on the table.

**Babafemi A. Badejo, a former deputy special representative of the UN Secretary-General for Somalia, is currently a legal practitioner and professor of Political Science and International Relations at Chrisland University, Abeokuta.**  
**Concluded**

# Distinguished Senator Cow and his human rights

The most unfortunate aspect of last Wednesday's debate in the Senate is that the argument to equate cows with Nigerians by the northern elite did not start today. Even the most learned legal minds in the north think in that direction. For the eight years of his ruinous leadership of the country, the mental faculty of General Muhammadu Buhari tilted more to attaching importance to cows than to an average Nigerian. The Daura-born General is legendary in that regard. Buhari was reported to have led a delegation of Arewa chieftains to the late Lam Adesina, when he was the governor of Oyo State in the year 2000 to tell the governor that "Your people are killing my people." Buhari made that notorious statement in reaction to the herders/farmers clash in Oke Ogun area of Oyo State. To him, what mattered then was the number of herders killed in retaliatory attacks by the farmers, and not the calamities visited on the lives and property of the farmers by the AK-47-carrying murderous herders.

Buhari had an alibi in his Attorney-General of the Federation (AGF), and Minister of Justice, Abubakar Malami, a Senior Advocate of Nigeria (SAN), whose employment of nauseating sophistry, while justifying the rights of cows above those of Nigerians, became notoriously legendary. Malami, while reacting to the Asaba congregation of the 17 southern governors where the resolution to ban open grazing was debated and adopted, cited Section 41 (1) of the constitution to reduce the argument to the pedestrian level of the rights of cows! On a national television station, Malami, witlessly intoned: "It is about constitutionality within the context of the freedoms expressed in our Constitution... Can you deny the rights of a Nigerian?" and which right was the then AGF talking about? Section 41 (1) states inter alia: "Every citizen of Nigeria is entitled to move freely throughout Nigeria..." The fundamental words here are contained in the phrase, "Every

By **SUYI AYODELE**

citizen of Nigeria." The question to ask then is: Are cows human beings, and citizens of Nigeria?

The calamity of the Buhari era is that Nigerians, for the first time in history, had the misfortune of having a negatively brilliant AGF interpreting the spirits and letters of the constitution to a completely biddable president! Little wonder then that the Mai Gaskiya never raised a finger to defend the rights to life of other Nigerians apart from those of his kinsmen, the Fulani herders and their cows. That was why when Buhari stuttered to Benue, where over a hundred farmers were slaughtered by herdsmen, all he could do was to laugh and wonder aloud why the Inspector-General of Police (IGP) he asked to relocate to Benue State was not on ground! That was why Buhari and Malami devoted the greatest parts of their energy to bringing back the antediluvian Rural Grazing Areas (RUGA) policy but for the resistance of Nigerians.

Buhari's offspring are back in the Senate to defend the 'fundamental human rights of cows', the same way their forebear did. Good enough, Akpabio was able to push the anti-open grazing bill through. We thank him for that first-ever positive act. While at that, we need to remind the Alieros and Gojes of the North that nobody is against the free movement of northerners to any part down south. The problem is that in moving about, no Nigerian is permitted to constitute a threat to the well-being of other Nigerians. It should be a thing of collective shame to the agitators of the right to free movement for cows that anywhere herdsmen go, there is always sorrow, tears and blood. We had herdsmen in our areas when we were growing up. The difference between then and now is that the cow herders of the past had just ordinary sticks, whereas the herdsmen of the Aliero and Goje's

world of today carry AK-47 assault rifles. AK-47 is not a game-hunting gun.

Nigeria is indeed in a confused state. An average southern Nigerian grew up with the Catechism that teaches that God created human beings to have dominion over animals. The opposite is what the north has; a place where animals are more treasured than human beings. Methinks that if the northern elite had paid the attention they give to cows to the educational development of the herdsmen, the North would have been a lot better than it is today. Incidentally, only the children of the hoi polloi of the North are recruited as cow herders, while the children of the elite are in the best schools across the country and beyond! I have stopped lamenting over the calamity those who brought the north and the south together as "one indivisible" nation brought upon us. The reality on ground now is that there is no immediate solution to that fundamental problem. So, what do we make with the stones that the January 1, 1914, amalgamation threw on our path? The north must talk to itself and realise that it is pushing its luck with the rest of the nation too far!

The world has moved away from the precariously ambulant pastoral lifestyle that Aliero and Goje are advocating, to more sophisticated stationary ranches which give more yields in terms of dairy products and beef to the herders. Besides, while herdsmen have the right to freedom of movement, farmers and other Nigerians also have the rights to harvest the products of their farms and enjoy the peace of their communities. There must be a common ground. That solution is in the anti-grazing bill as proposed by Senator Titus Zam of Benue North-West Senatorial District. All right-thinking Nigerians, especially from the North, should embrace such a

noble, decent and modern legislation. In the first instance, it is wicked for the elite of the North to keep their children in their comfy homes and at the same time ask herdsmen to tramp through the forests of Kano to Sekona in Osun State. If, in 2024, northern senators still have the mentality of Abdullahi Adamu, the former National Chairman of the All Progressives Congress (APC), former senator and former governor of Nasarawa State to wit: "The government is free to establish grazing reserves anywhere. Government is government. If anybody thinks he is violent, the government has the monopoly of violence", I can predict the end. DISASTER!

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**Concluded**



## For the Record

By MIKE OMERI,  
PASCHAL ANOSIKE &  
KLAUS SCHNEIDER

# Building resilient African Higher Education for economic development

THE 4th Annual Global Meeting of the Forum for Innovation in African Universities (FIAU) is poised to be another highly successful gathering of best minds in academia, industry and government committed to finding solutions to post-COVID barriers to innovation in Africa's higher education sector. Scheduled to hold on July 10<sup>th</sup>, 2024, at the National Airforce Conference Centre, Abuja, Nigeria, the Meeting, themed: "Pathways to Building Resilient African Higher Education for Economic Development," will again attract high-level participants from Universities, Colleges of Education, Polytechnics/Monotechnics, leading figures from the private sector and policy makers across Africa, Asia, and Europe to debate ways of addressing the sector's innovation challenges.

This year's FIAU Meeting is timely against the backdrop of dwindling public perception globally about the relevance of higher education for individual and societal growth. Despite this, higher education broadens opportunities for individuals by providing access to a breadth of skills needed to thrive in life, work, and citizenship. There is a strong link between higher education, high income, and GDP per capita. Together, these factors increase human capital development, individual productivity, and consequently address poverty and inequality. There is a need therefore to redirect attention to the crucial role of education in general, but particularly higher education as a catalyst for achieving individual success in Africa. For instance, across Africa including Nigeria-Africa's largest economy and most populous, graduate unemployment is spiraling despite increased public investment. A major part of the problem is that the skills graduates have attained in schools do not align with the skills employers need, and this makes graduates unemployable in the employment sector.

Clearly, at a national level, these factors call for increased public scrutiny of the role of higher education for Nigeria's socio-economic development, especially in the wider contexts of the Students Loan Act 2024 recently signed into Law by President Bola Tinubu amidst his commitment to using education as one of the central pillars of his 'Eight Policy Priorities' designed to jump-start Nigeria's socio-economic growth under his 'Renewed Hope Agenda 2023-27'. Guided by these priorities, the Federal Ministry of Education has laid out a 13-pillar Strategic Roadmap (2024-27) that includes, among others, ICT in Education, Skills Development, Entrepreneurship Education, Infrastructure, and Financing of different levels of Education as its key Ministerial Deliverables.

Against this background, high-level speakers, panelists and exhibitors are converging at this year's FIAU Meeting to debate how to transform Africa's higher education sector. The main focus of their discussion is to explore ways of enabling higher education providers to embrace a number of



proven innovation measures. Among others, these include exploring alternative financing and revenue-generation models (e.g., Public-Private Partnership) for higher education institutions to reduce their high dependency on public funding; forging international partnerships that expand access, enhance teaching and research quality, and foster knowledge/cultural exchange through transnational education (TNE); entrepreneurship education; upskilling, reskilling and incentivizing teaching personnel to improve their digital skills and integrate ICT into their practice and pedagogy; enhancing students practical/vocational skills and work experience through a nationally recognized apprenticeships and internships schemes; increased higher education collaboration with technology firms to digitalize teaching and learning, and design and deliver curricula that truly address labour market needs; and increase investment in innovative and applied research that solves our most pressing societal challenges identified under the African Union Agenda 2063 and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

By bringing together international and regional higher education experts and multi-sector stakeholders to explore these challenges and the opportunities in terms of what can be achieved, and how, the theme of this year's FIAU Annual Global Meeting indeed resonates strongly with national efforts across Africa, not just in Nigeria, directed at ensuring that higher education pays off through individual access to decent livelihood opportunities as prescribed under the United Nations SDGs framework.

### Advancing the SDGs

Urgency of action is needed in paradigm shift across Africa towards adapting modern technologies and associated benefits including innovation, digital skills and entrepreneurship linkages as basis to engineer change for local and global impact.

This urgency has become far more pressing today in Africa than ever before. Thus, prompting higher education stakeholders globally including educators, industry players and policy makers to converge in Abuja to explore what can be done through multi-stakeholder commitment and action guided by FIAU's vision. By focusing on SDGs targets 4, 8, 9 and 17, FIAU's mission in Africa equally is directly linked to the issues that we face as a region under the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):

### SDG 4: Quality Education

The primary focus of the FIAU meeting is on enhancing the quality of higher education in Africa. By addressing financial constraints, improving infrastructure, integrating technology, and updating curricula, the event aligns with the goal of ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all.

### SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth

By bridging the employability skills gap and promoting entrepreneurship education, the meeting supports SDG 8, which aims to promote sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all. Dr. Jamil Salmi, a global tertiary education expert, highlights that "higher education institutions play a pivotal role in preparing a skilled workforce that can drive economic development".

### SDG 9: Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure

The focus on infrastructure and technology acquisition at the FIAU meeting aligns with SDG 9, which emphasizes building resilient infrastructure, promoting inclusive and sustainable industrialization, and fostering innovation. Mr. Colin Sirett, Former Head of Research and Technology at Airbus UK/Europe, notes that "investing in technological infrastructure in educational institutions can lead to significant advancements in innovation and industrial growth."

### SDG 17: Partnerships for the

### Goals

The collaborative nature of the FIAU meeting, which brings together international experts, policymakers, educators, and industry leaders, supports SDG 17. This goal emphasizes the importance of partnerships in achieving sustainable development. According to Professor Paul Tiyambe Zeleza, "Global partnerships in higher education can enhance the quality of education, drive research and development, and facilitate shared knowledge and experience".

### Empowering Africa's Higher Education Through Collaboration

One of the key advantages of the FIAU's July gathering is the potential to promote and advance international apprenticeships and international partnership opportunities, shared knowledge, and experience, which can significantly enhance the quality and relevance of higher education in Africa. Professor Paul Tiyambe Zeleza, a renowned expert in African higher education had consistently emphasized that: "Collaborative efforts between African institutions and their international counterparts are crucial for fostering innovation and bridging the skills gap".

The integration of research and development (R&D) in higher institutions—universities, polytechnics, colleges of education, and Monotechnics—can lead to groundbreaking discoveries and innovations that drive economic growth. Moreover, the meeting will highlight the importance of policy and legislative support in creating an enabling environment for higher education to thrive.

### Participation for change and impact

Analysis of the barriers to innovation facing the global higher education sector shows that the conditions in many higher education institutions in Africa are more dire and require a multi-stakeholder effort to be improved in a genuinely fundamental manner. In light of this,

participants at this year's Meeting will gain access to invaluable research insights, resources and networks to support their professional growth and institutional priorities. The event promises insightful discussions by some of the leading minds in their fields, providing access into practical steps and tested methods for achieving across-the-board higher education policy priorities.

Attendees will learn about alternative financing models for higher education providers, accessing funding opportunities, integrating advanced technologies, toolkit for designing curricula that meet labour market needs, and developing confident and work-ready graduates that can go on an own their business and with attributes/skills employers need

For these reasons, the July 10<sup>th</sup> 4th Annual Global Meeting of the Forum for Innovation in African Universities must be seen as a timely 'call to action' from all stakeholders in African higher education space including providers, regulators, policymakers and investors. It is only by working together to accelerate innovation, through sustained multi-stakeholder collaboration, can African higher education sector emerge as a resilient driver of economic development.

"If we could read the secret history of our enemies, we should find in each man's life, sorrow and suffering enough to disarm all hostility."

- Henry Wadsworth Longfellow  
(27 February 1807 – 24 March 1882)

### About FIAU

Founded in 2021 as a fully independent non-for-profit global initiative, the Forum for Innovation in African Universities (FIAU) is the foremost University-Industry Partnership network dedicated to intellectual debate to strengthen Africa's higher education system. It has no ties to any political ideology or interest group. It Global Annual Meetings attract and engage leading minds in academe, businesses, governments, and the third sector who gather annually in July to debate, influence, and shape higher education innovation agendas in Africa. FIAU's relationship with key decision makers in these sectors means that it is a 'voice of influence' able to leverage the research insight, knowledge, and policy developed during their meetings to foster meaningful change and partnerships that help strengthen the capacity of African higher education institutions to deliver high quality outcomes and graduates that contribute to their countries' socio-economic development. As a trusted ally for facilitating insightful discussions, knowledge exchange and networking, its priority is to help African higher education institutions to overcome their challenges by connecting them with highly reputable higher education and industry global partners that form the bedrock of its network.

To read about FIAU, please visit [www.fiau.org](http://www.fiau.org). For enquiries: write to [info@fiau.org](mailto:info@fiau.org)

## Research

# Aku Ruo Ulo concept as a development model

By UDECHUKWU GERALD and ANYANECHI CHUKWUDI

THE Igbo people of Nigeria are indigenous to the South Eastern and South Southern part of the country as well as some pockets of Middle Belt (North Central). They are an ethnic group well known for their enterprising, fiercely independent and adventurous nature. Natively referred as Ndi Igbo, they are known for their rich cultural and social values which places emphasis on their ancestral roots and lands. To the Igbo, the world is a playground and they transverse it as they please. This is the Igbo mindset and identity and its patterns of acculturation, which makes it difficult for a subject of a single king. Among the Igbo rich culture and social values is the concept of "Aku Ruo Ulo Amata Onye Kpara Ya" loosely translated (when wealth gets home or ancestral land, we will know the real owner). Wealth in this instance is the physical and intellectual property as well as the human being himself (the Igbo person), for regardless of his sojourns and wealth the Igbo person is expected to return to Ala (the ancestral land in life or in death).

The "Aku Ruo Ulo" is an informal institutionalized socio-cultural practice that dates back in time, which entails that no matter how influential and how long the Igbo person has travelled, his wealth and influence should be felt by his community (ala nna ya or ancestral home). If this is not done and seen then his influence and wealth counts as nothing before his kinsmen and community. As a result, the Igbo person should or is required to show physical evidence of the wealth, influence and heights he has attained while in his travels or pursuits. This practice ensures a constant touch with the native community or land and its aspirations for development and progress. It is a socio-cultural practice and concept that has been sustained despite the economic challenges of the recent years and the restless Igbo spirit to explore different frontiers for survival.

The "Aku Ruo Ulo" concept or philosophy is therefore, a socio-cultural and developmental practice that is accepted to ensure the continuous development of the ancestral places (villages) and the need to always think home no matter how far or how long the Igbo person has gone from his ancestral home. This concept incidentally applies even in death. The Igbo do not allow their dead to be buried in a foreign soil. This is a strong demonstration of the attachment to the homeland even in death.

A look into pre-colonial society shows that the various Igbo migrant communities such as the Aro and the Nri always returns to their ancestral homes with whatever knowledge or wealth acquired in their travels. This was also true of the various Igbo groups such as the Isu, the Oboama, and the Awka to mention but a few. However, two major events in Igbo history made this concept or philosophy to be ingrained in the Igbo consciousness of home and development. Firstly, the Igbo contact with westernization and modernization (colonial era) made it possible for a lot of Igbo people to leave their ancestral lands to sojourns in distant lands within Nigeria in



search of opportunities engendered by colonization.

The outward movement of the Igbos is well documented from colonial times till date especially movement northwards and westward to provide auxiliary services to the colonialists. Despite these mass movements, they never forget their homeland. In order to integrate among themselves they formed the Igbo town unions in any major towns and cities they settled. These town unions became a powerful tool for the provision of social amenities such as schools, hospitals, electricity, roads and small cooperatives for assisting struggling or sending intelligent students within the community abroad for study.

Secondly the Nigeria-Biafran civil war 1967-70 served as an eye opener to the Igbo on the need to think home (Aku ruo ulo) in whatever circumstance. As a result of the civil war, a lot of the returning Igbo were shocked to discover that they had become refugees in their homelands regardless of their status. Indeed, the shock of the "abandoned property" saga of the post war years reignited afresh the spirit of *Aku ruo ulo* among the Igbo person. This rude awakening by most Igbo refugees strengthened their resolve in the concept of *Aku ruo ulo* such that no matter what misfortune befell the Igbo person in his travels, there is that relief and comfort that his wealth and influence is felt at home and that he can also find succor and shelter in the social and infrastructural development of his community which he advertently contributed to.

For the foreigner, it could be inferred that the *Aku ruo ulo* concept is a vital instrument for socio-cultural and infrastructure development among the Igbo. This concept therefore, embodies not only the presence of wealth acquired but initiating and executing important social and economic projects in the various Igbo town and villages. It is on this basis that the practice is largely seen as an agent for sustainable development. The crucial importance of this philosophy is evidence in its developmental roles and functions over time.

The concept has helped in engendering sustainable community development. It thrives mostly in rural Igbo settlements or communities where life is more interdependent and based on communal kind of living. A critical examination of this concept has also shown that indigenous Igbo

communities and elsewhere in Nigeria have fallen victims of under development arising from the remote nature of their environment coupled with public and private concentration on urban areas for meaningful infrastructure development. This situation has deprived most of these communities in Nigeria the opportunity of unleashing their potentials and maximizing their human and natural resources for socio-economic development in their environment.

One of the major causes of underdevelopment in Igbo communities is the absence of the provision of basic social amenities by governments. Limited attention has been extended to these indigenous communities from the government not minding their importance to national cohesion, integration, agriculture and food supply, propagation of indigenous values system and cultural sustainability. Most of these communities lack basic infrastructure compared with their urban counterparts, hence the continued menace of rural/urban migration which is a bane to national economic planning, growth and development.

Against this backdrop and coupled with the lessons of the contacts with the colonialists and the events of the Nigeria Biafra civil war the *Aku ruo ulo* philosophy has evolved and has been integrated into the Igbo consciousness to fill the gap created by lack of government attention and the need to avoid a repeat of the bitter lessons of the war years. With the understanding that sustainable development is that kind of progressive change that ensures quality standard of living of a people in a continuous and progressive manner, it could be argued that the *Aku ruo ulo* concept is an agent of sustainable community development. The materialization of this concept has crystallized into developments that cover sectors such as agriculture, health, culture, education, economic empowerment and social cohesion. This has been evident in the number of self-help projects like water boreholes, health centers, roads and drainage, provision and of course the building and maintenance of places of worship, community schools and modern houses for habitation. The *Aku ruo ulo* concept can therefore, be seen from the various developmental projects undertaken by the various Igbo communities. Some of these principles to be highlighted here include but not limited to (a) the

principle of self-reliance, (b) the principle of self-growth (c) the principle of self-help (d) the principle of *onye aghala nwanne* (No one should be left behind).

**The principle of self reliance:** This principle encourages indigenous communities to be self-reliant, utilizing available resource in their environment even outside of Igbo land to improve the socio-economic standards of living without necessary waiting for external help from the government. The principle promotes greater cohesiveness and total commitment to the cause of community and communal articulation and actions towards the sustainable growth of the socio-economic aspects of the community.

**The principle of self growth:** The major purpose of this principle is that communities should not be stagnant or feel satisfied or fulfilled at a particular stage of their socio-economic development, rather they should strive to growth from one stage of development to another growing sustainably in their socio-economic lives in their environment.

**The principle of self help:** This principle presupposes that the Igbo regardless of his travels and wealth and no matter how long he had left the village, should cooperate with other members of his community to solve their problems through joint efforts with little or no assistance from the external bodies. Through this philosophy people in the community aspire to develop their community by joining forces to confront various needs of the community. This principle discourages laziness, and motivates communities to harness available resources in the environment for meaningful socio-economic development without necessarily waiting for external interventions. It motivates various individuals and socio-cultural groups to come together to better their communities.

**The principle of *onye aghala nwanne ya*:** This principle made the Igbo people to grow together even in their adversity. It shows that extended family and community are of utmost importance in Igbo land. "To be" is to be part of an extended family (*Nwanne*) literally means mother's child, that is, sister or brother. Interestingly, mother here does not mean the biological mother but the earth goddess *Ala*. *Ala* is the mother of all Igbo people, from her comes forth and returns the Igbo people. Hence *Nwanne* as extended family

member does not mean that the Igbo people resemble one another, speak the same language, behave the same way but simply are offspring of the same *Ala*. They share common fate and experience as a people. In this, the Igbo wherever they see themselves, especially outside of "Igbo land" where they are likely to be vulnerable and far away from home "Ala's protection see themselves as *Nwanne* (brethren). Therefore, the *Aku* should *ruo ulo* so that the influence and wealth and contribution of *Nwanne* can be felt at home in terms of infrastructure and financial developments. The *Ala* from which he emigrated must feel the impact of the *Nwanne* or *Nwa ya* who has gone to seek for means to better himself, his *chi* and his *Ala*. And, therefore, it is not only the *Aku* that should and must get home or reach home but also the Igbo person either in life or in death because the person himself is greater than even wealth (*madu ka aku*) and if so then the greater need to bring the person home either in life or in death and more importantly the body and some of the departed Igbo person is expected to integrate back into the *ala* (ancestral) roots and communication is ensured between the dead ancestors and the living generations.

### Conclusion:

Seen from the general perspective that charity begins at home the practice of (*Aku ruo ulo*) in Igbo society is an age long practice that has been from generation to generation, but more importantly became a relaying point for Igbo presence and survival since the end of the civil war 1970. In spite of the transformation in society especially in the area of ICT which has bridged gaps in distance and time there is the continuous consciousness of the *Aku ruo ulo* practice among the modern Igbo. This is also rooted and connected to sustainable community development projects embarked upon by individual Igbo or groups for the progress of their communities. This essay which has been made a research topic have brought to fore that no matter the level of societal change and civilization, the *Aku ruo ulo* practice is a phenomenon that cannot be underrated because of the important role it has helped to engender in Igbo society. These roles are better appreciated because of deficits in good governance in the area of provisions of dividends of democracy to the people. The resilience of this philosophy and practice has shown vis-a-vis its contribution towards sustainable development that despite the torrents of explosion in ICT it qualifies as a model for sustainable community development.

All the challenges posed to the Igbo notwithstanding, the people with their community spirit embedded in the *Aku ruo ulo* concept, have continued to cement their survival resolve in the post war era and current economic challenges. A study in the Igbo community system of *Aku ruo ulo* could therefore be a bedrock for Nigeria's economic and infrastructural success.

**Udechukwu Gerald and Anyanechi Chukwudi are staff of Institute of Archaeology and Museum Studies, Jos.**





## Frozen fish comes back to life in video gone viral

By BRUCE Y. LEE

NEW DELHI: Oh, what sorcery is this? A video going insanely viral on Facebook shows a frozen fish, pulled straight out of a refrigerator, springing back to life and swimming in a tub of water. Shared on the 'NTD Television' Facebook page, the video has collected almost 6 million views within 20 hours. Versions of the video have been circulating online for a while now. However, this reposted version seems to have invoked quite a few reactions from people on the social networking site.

Footage in the clip shows a man opening a refrigerator and taking the fish out. You can see the fish white as snow since ice covers it completely. It also doesn't seem to be moving at all.

The man then puts it in a huge container which already has a



black fish in it. The frozen fish seems to instantly thaw and you can now see that it's actually silver in colour. Moments (that pretty much feel like an eternity)

later the fish moves a fin and springs back into action. It begins swimming around the vessel just like the black one.

Source: NTD Television

## Woman addicted to eating own hair

By LUCY PASHA-ROBINSON



Trichotillomania is a condition where a person feels compelled to pull their hair out

hospital in the US, had suffered dramatic weight loss, losing 15 pounds over the previous eight months after she lost her appetite.

The unnamed woman was rushed into surgery, where a giant hairball was found lodged in her digestive tract, with a small "tail" of hair trailing into her intestines and a second four centimetre hairball nestled deeper in her bowel.

She was found to be suffering from the rare Rapunzel Syndrome, which has only ever been documented 88 times in medical literature.

According to the BMJ journal,

effects and complications as hair becomes lodged in the sufferer's stomach.

Typical symptoms include nausea, vomiting, altered bowel habits, abdominal distension and weight loss.

Complications can be severe and include bowel obstruction, bowel perforation, intestinal bleeding, anaemia, weight loss and appendicitis.

Surgeons removed both hairballs from the woman and she was released from hospital after six days, with recommendations to seek psychological therapy.

She was also treated for malnutrition and advised to eat food high in proteins, such as eggs and chicken breast, and a daily iron supplement.



A large hairball measuring 15x10 cm was removed from the woman's stomach. (BMJ Case Reports)

A woman who was addicted to pulling out and eating her own hair had a giant hairball measuring 15 centimetres removed from her stomach, according to a medical journal.

The 38-year-old, who was suffering from nausea, vomiting and an extremely swollen abdomen when she arrived at

the syndrome is caused by trichotillomania, a disorder that causes a patient to develop an irresistible urge to pull out their own hair, and sometimes eat it.

Named after the long-haired Rapunzel from the Grimm brothers' fairy tale, it is extremely uncommon but can cause potentially deadly side

## King of West African tribe returns to gardening job in Canada

By NIAMH KIRK

THE King of a West African tribe has returned to Canada to resume his job as a gardener – in order to raise money to provide healthcare for his new "subjects".

Eric Manu became royalty when his 67-year-old uncle, Dat, passed away last year.

After living in Canada for three years with his wife and small son, he moved back to southern Ghana to take up his birth right.

He said: "It's a huge experience. You have to embrace it with passion.

"It's something of my heritage, my culture, and traditions."

But now the chief of the Akan tribe, located in the village of Adansi Aboabo no. 2, has returned to the North American country and taken his old job back.

Moving back to British Columbia, he has returned to landscaping and gardening in the town in a bid to raise cash for his 6,000 strong tribe.

Mr Manu told CTV News: "Sometimes we go to the (job) site and they say, 'You are the chief. I saw you on TV.

"Why are you doing the landscaping?"

"This is humbleness you understand. Anytime I'm in Canada, I'm proud to work for my boss."

When he first moved his boss, Susan Watson, started a foundation called To The Moon and Back, which sent the young King off with a shipment full of school supplies, clothing, laptops and medical supplies.

The owner of The Landscape Consultants, she travelled to Ghana for the ceremony, and said: "They're beautiful inside and out and they have absolutely nothing.

"And you come home here and most of us are miserable and we want something more."

The money Mr Manu hopes to raise from his several month stay in Canada will be invested in improving healthcare, with the aim of returning with another shipment of equipment.

Ms Watson added: "The whole village was quite poor.

"The clinic only has a midwife and a few nurses. There is no doctor on site."

Source: CTV News



## 'Frozen excrement' dropped from plane crashes through house roof

A Canadian woman has claimed a frozen lump of excrement from a plane passing overhead ripped through the roof of her mother's house.

Stephanie Moore said she was woken up by a crashing sound and saw a huge hole in the ceiling in the hallway - less than 15ft from where she was sleeping.

The 36-year-old teacher had been staying with her mother overnight after returning from a trip to Cuba.

After the incident, she said she found pink insulation, drywall, ceiling material and shattered bits of wood on the hallway floor in a puddle of water.

In the morning, daylight could be seen shining through the hole which was around one metre in diameter and the crash had caused damage to the roof's planking and shingles.

Ms Moore told CBC News: "At first I thought it was just damage to the ceiling. I couldn't tell it went right through the roof when I first saw it".

She said both the insurance appraiser and roof repairmen who visited the next day said it was the

"strangest thing they had ever seen".

The roofer who inspected the damage said there was no rotting wood in the roof and before the incident the outer shell of the house was solid.

They did not find any evidence that a tree or branch cause the damage and there was no ice or snow on the roof when it happened.

The roofer said it was mostly likely to have been "blue ice" - a term for

frozen excrement that can accidentally leak away from planes midflight, named for the colour of disinfectant used by sewage systems in commercial planes.

Blue ice has been known to hit homes and melt on impact leaving little evidence behind.

The only other thing that could cause that sort of damage would be a small meteor strike - but that would leave a rock or mineral in the debris.

A spokeswoman for Transport Canada said they were looking into the claim.

She said: "The department takes all reports of possible debris coming from aircraft very seriously. Every reported incident is investigated by Transport Canada officials".

Canadian Aviation Regulations forbid creating a hazard by dropping waste midflight she added



## Feature

## Nigeria confronts its worst economic crisis

By  
**RUTH MACLEAN &  
ISMAIL AUWAL**

NIGERIA is facing its worst economic crisis in decades, with skyrocketing inflation, a national currency in free-fall and millions of people struggling to buy food. Only two years ago Africa's biggest economy, Nigeria is projected to drop to fourth place this year.

The pain is widespread. Unions strike to protest salaries of around \$20 a month. People die in stampedes, desperate for free sacks of rice. Hospitals are overrun with women wracked by spasms from calcium deficiencies.

The crisis is largely believed to be rooted in two major changes implemented by a president elected 15 months ago: the partial removal of fuel subsidies and the floating of the currency, which together have caused major price rises.

A nation of entrepreneurs, Nigeria's more than 200 million citizens are skilled at managing in tough circumstances, without the services states usually provide. They generate their own electricity and source their own water. They take up arms and defend their communities when the armed forces cannot. They negotiate with kidnappers when family members are abducted.

But right now, their resourcefulness is being stretched to the limit.

A map of Nigeria locating Kano, Ibadan and the state of Nasarawa. Lagos and Abuja are also located.

On a recent morning in a corner of the biggest emergency room in northern Nigeria, three women were convulsing in painful spasms, unable to speak. Each year, the E.R. at Murtala Muhammed Specialist Hospital in Kano, Nigeria's second-largest city, received one or two cases of hypocalcemia caused by malnutrition, said Salisu Garba, a kindly health worker who hurried from bed to bed, ward to ward.

Now, with many unable to afford food, the hospital sees multiple cases every day.

Mr. Garba was sizing up the women's husbands. Which source of nutrition he recommended depended on what he thought they could afford. Baobab leaves or tiger nuts for the poor; boiled-up bones for the slightly better off. He laughed at the suggestion that anyone could afford milk.

More than 87 million people in Nigeria, Africa's most populous country, live below the poverty line — the world's second-largest poor population after India, a country seven times its size. And punishing inflation means poverty rates are expected to rise still further this year and next, according to the World Bank.

Last week, unions shut down hospitals, courts, schools, airports and even the country's Parliament, striking in an attempt to force the government to increase the monthly salary of \$20 it pays its lowest workers.

But over 92 percent of working-age Nigerians are in the informal sector, where there are no wages, and no unions to fight for them.

For the Afolabi family in Ibadan, in southwestern Nigeria, the descent into poverty started in January with the loss of an electric tuk-tuk taxi.

Forced to sell the taxi to pay his wife's hospital bills after the difficult birth of their second child, Babatunde Afolabi turned to occasional construction work. It paid badly, but the family managed.

"We had no thoughts about starvation," he said.

Patients wait to be seen at the Murtala Muhammad General Hospital. The crowds are thinner than they used to be, as many can no longer afford the bus fare.

But then, he said, cassava — the cheapest staple in many parts of Nigeria — tripled in price.

All they can afford now, he said, is a



**A woman suffering from hypocalcemia, caused by a lack of calcium, in a hospital in Nigeria. Food prices have shot up and Nigerians are not eating enough**

few biscuits, a little bread, and for their 6-year-old, 20 peanuts a day.

Nigeria is a country heavily dependent on imported petroleum products, despite being a major oil producer. After years of underinvestment and mismanagement, its state refineries produce hardly any gasoline.

For decades, the national soundtrack has been the hum of small generators, fired up during daily power outages. Petroleum products move goods and people around the country.

Until recently, the government subsidized that petroleum, to the tune of billions of dollars a year.

Many Nigerians said the subsidy was the only useful contribution from a neglectful and predatory government. Successive presidents have pledged to remove the subsidy, which drains a hefty chunk of government revenue — and later backtracked fearing mass unrest.

Nigeria is a country that runs on imported gasoline, which the government has long subsidized to the tune of billions of dollars a year.

Bola Tinubu, who was elected Nigeria's president last year, initially followed through.

"It was a necessary action for my country not to go bankrupt," Mr. Tinubu said in April, at a meeting of the World Economic Forum in Saudi Arabia.

Instead, many Nigerians are going bankrupt — or working multiple jobs to stay afloat.

Mr. Garba, the hospital worker, used to be solidly middle class, even though 17 family members, including 12 children, depended on him.

After shifts at the hospital, where he is setting up the first statewide ambulance service in addition to working in the emergency room, for which he is paid \$150 a month, he heads to the Red Cross. There he occasionally receives a \$3.30 volunteer stipend for helping tackle a severe diphtheria outbreak.

At night, he works at the pharmacy that he and a colleague set up. But few people have money for medicine anymore. He sells about \$7 worth of medication per day.

Last year, Mr. Garba sold his car when the gas subsidies were removed, and now takes a tuk-tuk to work. Unable to power the generator, he reads medicine labels at the pharmacy by the light of a small solar lantern. He can only afford to buy rice and cassava in small quantities.

Life under the previous government was very expensive, he

said, but nothing like today.

"It's very, very bad," he said.

It's gotten so dire that there have been several deadly stampedes for free or discounted rice distributed by the government — including one in March at a university in the central state of Nasarawa where seven students were killed.

The vast majority of Nigerians work in the informal sector, with no salaries, unions, or safety net. And because of skyrocketing inflation, many can no longer afford basics, like food.

Mr. Tinubu promised to create a million jobs and quadruple the size of the economy within a decade, but has not said how. The International Monetary Fund said last month the state has started subsidizing fuel and electricity again — though the government has not acknowledged this.

"There's still very little clarity — if any — on where the economy is headed, what the priorities are," said Zainab Usman, a political economist and director of the Africa Program at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

A spate of new crypto-mining games that promise to generate income the more the user plays has people across Nigeria spending all day tapping on their smartphone screens, desperate to earn a few dollars.

People tap as they pray, in mosques and churches. Children tap under desks at school. Mourners tap at funerals.

Many Nigerians desperately hope that hours spent tapping on smartphone cryptocurrency apps will eventually earn them a bit of cash. One man, Rabiu Biyora, says he made millions of naira this way.

There's no guarantee any of them will ever benefit from the hours they put in mindlessly tapping.

Then again, they can't count on the national currency, the naira

The government has twice devalued the naira in the past year, trying to enable it to float more freely and attract foreign investment. The upshot: It's lost nearly 70 percent of its value against the dollar.

Nigeria cannot produce enough food for its growing population; food imports rise 11 percent annually. The currency devaluation caused those imports — already expensive because of high tariffs — to explode in price.

Nigerians can become paupers almost overnight. So they're searching for anything that might hold its value — or ideally, get them rich.

"People are looking for me everywhere," said Rabiu Biyora, the undisputed king of tapping in Kano, opening one of his five foldable phones to add to his 2.7 billion taps on the TapSwap app. "Not to attack me, but to collect something from me."

A relaxed, businesslike 39-year-old followed everywhere by young tech-savvy acolytes, Mr. Biyora would only say that he made "over \$10,000" from the previous tapping craze.

With the proceeds from his tapping, Rabiu Biyora is opening an office in Kano to promote and educate people on cryptocurrencies. Nigeria already has the world's second highest cryptocurrency adoption rate.

He profits from everyone else's taps, so he encourages them in posts on social media, and by providing free internet to anyone willing to sit outside his house. Nigerians don't need much encouragement — despite the risks and volatility, Nigeria has the second highest cryptocurrency adoption rate in the world.

So every evening, struggling young men gather by Mr. Biyora's home and tap.

In much of Nigeria, it's normal to share with your neighbors and give alms to the poor.

Every day, people come to the gate of Kano's Freedom Radio station to drop off sheets of paper containing heartfelt appeals for help paying medical bills or school fees, or to recover from some disaster.

A radio presenter chooses three to read out daily, and often a sympathetic listener calls in to pay the supplicant's bill.

But lately the appeals have multiplied, and offers of help have dried up.

Good Samaritans used to come to the E.R. and pay strangers' bills for them, Mr. Garba said. That rarely happens now either.

Still, Mr. Garba said, the number of patients coming to his hospital has almost halved in recent months.

Many of the sick never even make it. They can't afford the 20-cent bus ride.

**Ruth Maclean is the West Africa Bureau chief for The Times.**

## ...NYT's jaundiced report on Nigeria's current economic situation

RUTH Maclean and Ismail Auwal's feature story with the title 'Nigeria Confronts Its Worst Economic Crisis in a Generation', published on June 11, reflected the typical predetermined, reductionist, derogatory, and denigrating way foreign media establishments reported African countries for several decades.

Because of the misleading slant of the report, we need to clear up some misconceptions conveyed by the reporters as regards the economic policies of the Tinubu administration that came into power at the end of May 2023.

Most significant about the report was that it painted the dire experiences of some Nigerians amid the inflationary spiral of the last year and blamed it all on the policies of the new administration. The report, based on several interviews, is at best jaundiced, all gloom and doom, as it never mentioned the positive aspects in the same economy as well as the ameliorative policies being implemented by the central and state governments.

To be sure, President Tinubu did not create the economic problems Nigeria faces today. He inherited them. As a respected economist in our country, once put it, Tinubu inherited a dead economy. The economy was bleeding and needed quick surgery to avoid being plunged into the abyss, as happened in Zimbabwe and Venezuela. This was the background to the policy direction taken by the government in May/June 2023: the abrogation of the fuel subsidy regime and the unification of the

multiple exchange rates.

For decades, Nigeria had maintained a fuel subsidy regime that gulped \$84.39 billion between 2005 and 2022 from the public treasury in a country with huge infrastructural deficits and in high need of better social services for its citizens. The state oil firm, NNPC, the sole importer, had amassed trillions of naira in debts for absorbing the unsustainable subsidy payments in its books. By the time President Tinubu took over the leadership of the country, there was no provision made for fuel subsidy payments in the national budget beyond June 2023. The budget itself had a striking feature: it planned to spend 97 percent of revenue servicing debt, with little left for recurrent or capital expenditure. The previous government had resorted to massive borrowing to cover such costs. Like oil, the exchange rate was also being subsidized by the government, with an estimated \$1.5 billion spent monthly by the CBN to 'defend' the currency against the unquenchable demand for the dollar by the country's import-dependent economy. By keeping the rate low, arbitrage grew as a gulf existed between the official rate and the rate being used by over 5000 BDCs that were previously licensed by the Central Bank. What was more, the country was failing to fulfil its remittance obligations to airlines and other foreign businesses, such

that FDIs and investment in the oil sector dried up, and notably Emirate Airlines cut off the Nigerian route.

President Tinubu had to deal with the cancer of public finance on the first day by rolling back the subsidy regime and the generosity that spread to neighbouring countries. Then, his administration floated the naira.

After some months of the storm, with the naira sliding as low as N1,900 to the US dollar, some stability is being restored, though there remain some challenges. The exchange rate is now below N1500 to the dollar, and there are prospects that the naira could regain its muscle and appreciate to between N1000 and N1200 before the end of the year. The economy recorded a trade surplus of N6.52 trillion in Q1, as against a deficit of N1.4 trillion in Q4 of 2023. Portfolio investors have streamed in as long-term investors. When Diageo wanted to sell its stake in Guinness Nigeria, it had the Singaporean conglomerate, Tolaram, ready for the uptake. With the World Bank extending a \$2.25 billion loan and other loans by the AfDB and Afreximbank coming in, Nigeria has become bankable again. This is all because the reforms being implemented have restored some confidence.

The inflationary rate is slowing down, as shown in the figures released by the National Bureau of Statistics for April. Food inflation remains the biggest challenge, and the government is working very hard to rein it in with increased agricultural production. The Tinubu administration and the 36 states are working assiduously to produce food

in abundance to reduce the cost. Some state governments, such as Lagos and Akwa Ibom, have set up retail shops to sell raw food items to residents at a lower price than the market price. The Tinubu government, in November last year, in consonance with its food emergency declaration, invested heavily in dry-season farming, giving farmers incentives to produce wheat, maize, and rice. The CBN has donated N100 billion worth of fertiliser to farmers, and numerous incentives are being implemented. In the western part of Nigeria, the six governors have announced plans to invest massively in agriculture.

With all the plans being executed, inflation, especially food inflation, will soon be tamed.

Nigeria is not the only country in the world facing a rising cost of living crisis. The USA, too, is contending with a similar crisis, with families finding it hard to make ends meet. US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen raised this concern recently. Europe is similarly in the throes of a cost-of-living crisis. As those countries are trying to confront the problem, the Tinubu administration is also working hard to overturn the economic problems in Nigeria.

Our country faced economic difficulties in the past, an experience that has been captured in folk songs. Just like we overcame then, we shall overcome our present difficulties very soon.

**Bayo Onanuga, Special Adviser to President Tinubu on Information and Strategy**



# Sports

## Super Eagles and Finidi's resignation

By VICTOR ALI

TO say that Nigerians are addictively passionate about football, particularly when it concerns the country's senior national team, the Super Eagles, is stating the obvious. The patriotism and zealotry exhibited by Super Eagles fans during the national team's engagements in competitions like the Nations Cup, World Cup, continental competitions and event friendly matches are legendary.

The aged and young, boys and girls, men and women and even persons living with disabilities are united when it comes to supporting the Super Eagles. In fact, it is arguably the flame that keeps the flame of Nigeria's unity aglow, irrespective of religion, region or tribe. It knows no bound.

Needless to say, the coaching or managerial sector in the football industry is as important as the players who are on the field of play. The coach or coaches galvanize the skills and talents of players by working out winning strategies.

The last time the Super Eagles participated in a competitive soccer event was at the Nations Cup held this year in Coted'Ivoire where Nigeria's Portuguese coach, Jose Peseiro, guided the team to win the silver medal. Thereafter, Peseiro voluntarily resigned his appointment.

As the hunt for Portuguese-born football tactician's replacement began, the Alhaji Ibrahim Musa Gusua-led Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) eventually settled for another indigenous coach - ex-



Finidi

international, Finidi George. He was unveiled early this year by chieftains of the Glass House in Abuja as the new coach of the Super Eagles.

However, in a twist of events, just last Friday, June 14, 2023 (with barely few months on the job) Finidi George quit the scene by tendering this resignation letter. This was after two abysmal World Cup qualifying matches against Bafana Bafana of South Africa (where they played a

one-one draw at the Godswill Akpabio International Stadium, Uyo) and suffered a two-one defeat in the hands of the Squirrels of Benin Republic - Nigeria's next-door neighbours.

Born on April 15, 1971, Finidi George's football playing career cut across several clubs in many countries around the world. He laced his boots for Calabar Rovers (1989), Iwuaneawu Nationale (1990), Sharks

of Port-Harcourt (1991-1993), Ajax Amsterdam (1993-96), Real Betis (1996-2000), Real Mallorca (2000-21), Ipswich Town (2001-2003) and went back to Real Mallorca (2004).

Finidi George's international career spanned the period 1991-2002 where he donned the Super Eagles jersey with 62 appearances to his credit. Finidi George, it must be reckoned, was a prominent figure in that spectacular USA 84 World Cup Super Eagles squad.

His managerial career started with Enyimba International of Aba (2021-2024) from where he was appointed Head Coach of the Super Eagles. But his sudden resignation from that 'hot seat' of Coach of the Super Eagles has sent tongues wagging.

What led to Finidi's resignation as the Head Coach of the Super Eagles after playing only two World Cup qualifiers? Although he himself did not give a clear-cup reason for his decision to resign, it may however not be unconnected with the charged atmosphere enroute the World Cup qualifiers.

Indeed, the long held notion that the foreign based Super Eagles players often look down on local coaches might have come into play here. Anyone who watched the one all draw match with Bafana Bafana at the Godswill Akabio International Stadium, Uyo, would know that the commitment and zeal to win was just not there in the Nigerian team.

And with the shock 2-1 defeat in the hands of the Squirrels of Benin Republic, it was just a matter of time for Finidi to throw in the towel. Although there are some couple of matches left in the qualifiers, there is

no guarantee that the foreign-based players would perform any differently from their last two engagements.

Indeed, Nigerian coaches (indigenous if you want) have never found it easy managing the Super Eagles. From both the players, particularly the foreign-based, to officials of the Nigeria Football Federation (NFF), indigenous coaches have always had a raw deal.

Chief Adegboyega Onigbinde, Stephen Keshi (alias 'Big Boss'), Sunday Oliseh, Samson Siasia and Augustine Egwavo, all whom have coached the national team, have tasted this bitter pill of uncertainty while on the job. Finidi George must have seen the hand writing on the wall and decided to quit before he gets the red card.

As things now stand, qualification for the World Cup is sure going to be a tough task. Whoever is going to take charge after Finidi George should brace-up for myriads of challenges. This will range from Super Eagles fans' anxieties and even open hostilities to deliberate administrative bottlenecks from officials of the NFF.

Administrative ineptitude and lack of long-term planning have been the bane of officials at the Glass House. Also, in-fighting, intrigues and haywire politics have been the norm rather than the exception in Nigeria's football ruling house. How, for example, do you change a coach at the beginning or middle of a qualification campaign? And should the coach under-perform or outrightly fail, who is to blame? The Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) should put its house in order. That is the bottom line.

### Plateau Utd's continental ticket chase suffers setback

Stories By ANDRE BISYIT

THE dream of Plateau United Football Club of Jos of securing the continental ticket has suffered a setback after visiting Kano Pillars held them to a 1-1 draw on their home soil on Sunday.

Despite Pillars playing the game with short one even before half time, when the centre referee awarded a red card to one of their strikers for a bad tackle, they were not demoralized.

Patrick Mancha, Chief Coach, Plateau United FC, highlighted some of the reasons that led his boys' dismal performance.

He explained, "All I can say, the boys did their best, coupled with the fact that certain factors also contributed in the outcome of the game. We travelled all the way from Lagos and arrived Jos a day to the game, but still they had come out to play. Pillars also did well in the match."

"We weren't at our best and can't apportion blame on

anybody. But we can make further efforts in our remaining game."

With one more game against Enyimba to the end of the season, the coach reaffirmed

the team's commitment to snatching the three maximum points, hoping that their injured players recover before the game.

Ahmed Garba of Kano Pillars

expressed happiness with his player's ability to overcome the pressure of playing with short one, adding that immediately the centre referee awarded them the red

card, he had to change the formation, to which his boys adhered.

Garab stated that the league had improved tremendously in

terms of officiating and facilities which, he said, encouraged the players to put more efforts and assured that they would continue to work hard for their next game against Lobi Stars.

### Eagles captain to support grassroots talent hunt

Super Eagles captain, Ahmed Musa, has promised to support any public spirited individuals and organizations who meant well for the teaming youth in Plateau State and the nation at large.

He stated this in an interview with the press during a two-day Scouting Football Tournament organized by Corner Flag Connections, in conjunction with the Real Talent FC of Spain and UK, through the Plateau State Football Association, held at the New Jos Stadium recently.

The tournament, which featured over 15 teams and had under-15 and 23 categories, was aimed at picking talents that would be groomed.

He maintained that without such tournaments, he would

not have been where he was today and encouraged the participants to be serious as their future was already bright.

"We need more of these kinds of tournaments. I remember when I was a kid, I attended the under-15 tournament of Plateau Radio Television, PRTV, and I was the highest goal scorer in one of the tournaments. With sports, we can achieve a lot and want the state government not to focus their attention only on Plateau United and Mighty Jets, we have a lot of other teams in the state," he said.

He donated N300,000 to each of the participating teams to boost their morale.

Austin Amutu, who plays for a club in Saudi Arabia and started his career in Jos, said he was delighted to be part of the programme and attended in person to encourage the young players.

He disclosed: "I think, when I was coming up, the tournament I attended was the PRTV and Pepsi football tournament only. But now we have many of such tournaments which are giving the young players the opportunity to showcase their talents."

He promised to help the young players to succeed in order to be able to fend for themselves.

"I train with young players whenever I come home in

order to give them a sense of belonging and feel that one day they can also be there," he added.

Stephen Michael, who also started his football career in Jos and is now playing in a Ukrainian club, disclosed that he was overwhelmed by the caliber of players he saw at the tournament and assured of his support to enable them move forward.

Enyimba	Vs	Plateau United
Gombe United	Vs	Enugu Rangers
Akwa United	Vs	Rivers United
Kano Pillars	Vs	Lobi Stars
Kwara United	Vs	Heartland
Bendel	Vs	Bayalsa United
Remo Stars	Vs	Katsina United
Niger Tornadoes	Vs	Sunshine Stars
Shooting Stars	Vs	Sport Lagos
Doma United	Vs	Abia Warriors

		MP	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	Pts
1	Enugu Rangers	37	20	7	10	54	32	22	67
2	Remo Stars	37	19	5	13	51	38	13	62
3	Enyimba	37	18	6	13	44	33	11	60
4	Shooting Stars	37	17	8	12	47	34	13	59
5	Plateau United	37	18	4	15	53	38	15	58
6	Lobi Stars	37	17	7	13	46	42	4	58
7	Katsina United	37	15	10	12	41	37	4	55
8	Rivers Utd	37	15	8	14	50	39	11	53
9	Bendel Insurance	37	14	11	12	32	28	4	53
10	Abia Warriors	37	15	6	16	41	44	-3	51
11	Sunshine Stars	36	12	13	11	35	35	0	49
12	Kano Pillars	37	14	7	16	46	48	-2	49
13	Kwara Utd	37	11	15	11	34	37	-3	48
14	Niger Tornadoes	37	13	9	15	36	40	-4	48
15	Bayalsa Utd	37	12	11	14	44	50	-6	47
16	Akwa Utd	37	13	7	17	41	41	0	46
17	Sport Lagos	37	12	10	15	39	43	-4	46
18	Doma Utd	36	11	10	15	25	40	-15	43
19	Heartland	37	9	11	17	36	46	-10	38
20	Gombe Utd	37	8	7	22	20	76	-56	25



Plateau United



**Quest**



writer

CLEM OLUWOLE

FRAGMENT

*"The phenomenon of men swimming in other men's rivers has been occurring in different parts of this country in recent years. On January 2, 2015, a Maiduguri man was knifed to death after being caught swimming in another man's river in the bush. The river owner, Bulama Modu of Ngamma village, near Maiduguri, was arraigned and subsequently convicted a year later on a one-count charge of culpable homicide, not punishable with death, contrary to section 224 of the penal code. Bulama Modu bagged five years or a fine of N250,000 for his murderous effort".*

CLEM OLUWOLE

# Swimming in River Emirate

THE covetous practice of a man swimming in another man's river is as old as mankind. Recall the Biblical days when King David, standing in his balcony, sighted Bathsheba, the river belonging to one of his soldiers, taking her bath in a nearby roofless bathroom. He coveted her and decided to swim in the warm river. The adulterous encounter later resulted in a pregnancy. To shorten a long but familiar story, the king got the river owner, Uriah the Hittite, killed in the battle front to cover the crime he committed in the sex front.

Although King David might be immune to prosecution for his crime, his Creator ensured that he paid dearly by taking peace away from his household as exemplified by the rebellion led by one of his sons, named Absalom. Even the child Bathsheba bore for him from the swimming encounter was not spared.

On Friday, February 9, 2024, came a report from the sleepy town of Akure in Ondo state that an oil mogul, named Sesan Adelabu, alias Emirate, caught one of his security men swimming in his river and right on their matrimonial bed. What audacity! Enraged, he produced a machete and allegedly butchered the guard turned swimmer. He did not stop there. Emirate then pounced on his pretty wife, Bolu, in a manner that a cat would descend on a rat and hacked her to death. Mission accomplished, the billionaire turned against himself: he reached for a bottle of sniper and gulped down the deadly liquid. In one fell swoop, the household located at the Government Reservation Area (GRA) had three cadavers to contend with.

The phenomenon of men swimming in other men's rivers has been occurring in different parts of this country in recent years. On January 2, 2015, a Maiduguri man was knifed to death after being caught swimming in another man's river in the bush. The river owner, Bulama Modu of Ngamma village, near Maiduguri, was arraigned and subsequently convicted a year later on a one-count charge of culpable homicide, not punishable with death, contrary to section 224 of the penal code. Bulama Modu bagged five years or a fine of N250,000 for his murderous effort.



According to the report, Modu had told the court that when his river, Faltama Kundura, flowed from his house on the judgement day to attend a "wedding ceremony" of her friend in a neighbouring village, he became suspicious and stealthily tracked the flow. He had suspected the deceased named Bunu Zarami of having an eye on his spouse. So, he made sure he too never went off his radar.

Eventually, he tracked the duo to the bush where he found Bunu pants down and swimming energetically on top of his wife. He told the court that when the swimmer sighted him, he panicked, drew a dagger and wielded it menacingly in order to scare him ("an intruder") away. But the river owner took advantage of the shocking state the swimmer found himself momentarily, fended off the dagger and knifed him repeatedly until life deserted him.

The Maiduguri tragedy came not long after a similar episode took place in Bayelsa state where a 53-year-old man, Raphael Solomon, in a moment of rage shot dead a man believed to be his wife's lover while he was swimming vigorously like catfish in his river at a cassava processing mini plant located in the Aduku Community of Sagbama Local Government

Area. A close family source said the deceased lover boy, identified as 28-year-old Preye Bernard, was the owner of the cassava processing plant used by the couple to process their produce after cultivation in Odi community.

It was gathered that the angry husband, who had been informed of his wife's alleged immoral relationship with the younger and perhaps, more active swimmer, trailed her to the venue and caught them in the midst of the aqua hostilities, to use sportswriters' parlance.

When I was growing up, an uncle of mine told me that if someone threatens to shoot you while hostilities are at the peak or you are about to melt down, you will tell the gunner to open fire! I hope that was not what happened on the Aduku cassava farm that tragic day. Is my good old buddy, John Aduku, a retired Radio Nigeria correspondent, though from Idomaland, reading this piece?

But the average Yoruba man cannot waste his precious time monitoring his river wherever it flows. They have perfected all manner of checks to scare adulterous swimmers away from their rivers. The checks or traps include magun, cockcrow, agglutination and maje'la (don't eat okra or okro) just to mention

some. And this is how they function:

Magun (not to be confused with Mangun, a community in Plateau state) is a deterrent. It is planted in the river. Once an adulterous swimmer dives into the river, he will come out and somersault three times and thereafter answer his final summons.

The cockcrow is a trap. The swimmer, upon jumping into the river, will feel like crowing like a red-headed fowl. In fact, he will announce to the river that he wants to crow and there is no stopping him. The swimmer will announce his arrival in hell with a deafening crow after giving up the ghost.

Agglutination is a dog-based talisman. Once the swimmer jumps into the river, he stays trapped in it in the manner of mating dogs and the duo may remain inseparable until death will do them part!

Maje'la. This is a tricky one. You can swim adulterously and freely and get away with it. But the day the swimmer will answer the final summons is the day he tastes okro soup. So, if you see a man avoiding okro soup like a plague, it could be that he is an adulterous swimmer playing safe.

I once advised trigger-happy and knife-wielding spouses to apply any of the solutions listed above instead of dispensing

jungle justice that could backfire on them. Juju is not known to law. If any swimmer gets his just dessert while on an illicit swimming spree, the river owner cannot be held liable let alone suffer the kind of punishment the law prescribes for husbands who mete out jungle justice to their rivals.

Perhaps, Emirate was not privy to my advice. He ought not to have thrown away his life just because his wife let in an illegal swimmer into his river. As a mogul, there are millions of prettier ladies out there who would be willing to eat from his palms.

My late mum once told me that if a man hugs his early grave on account of a woman, more than a thousand and one of them will gather to weep on that grave, blaming him for being so unreasonable!

My parting shot: women who are married to rich men should know that they cannot eat their cake and have it. Most wealthy men are too busy investing their energy on making more money for the family to care about their rivers lying fallow for too long. They usually have little or no time, not to speak of energy, to swim. It is better for such women to opt out of such marriages than descend so low as to grant illegal entry to domestic servants to do the swimming on behalf of oga "patapata".