

**Adultery:** Court Sentences  
Zazzau Palace Guard, 3  
Others To 12 Months **Page 4**

**Polls:** Operation Hadin  
Kai Releases Distress  
Calls Lines **Story on Page 4**

## 2023 Polls: No Politician Can Force Self On Nigerians - Ooni ● Warns against violent conduct

By: BAYO AKAMO, Ibadan

The Ooni of Ife and the Co - Chairman of the National Council of Traditional Rulers of Nigeria (NCTRN), Oba Adeyeye Enitan Ogunwusi on Thursday, cautioned politicians against violent conduct before, during and after the 2023 general elections.

Ooni Ogunwusi gave the caution during a 'State of the Nation' address at his Ile Oodua Palace, Ile-Ife as this year's general elections kick off tomorrow.

The Ooni emphasized that there is no need for the politicians in the country to be desperate in their quest for power especially in this general elections.

"No politician can force his or herself on Nigerians and this is why our politicians should avoid being desperate in their quest for power. If you don't win today, it may be

Story Continued on Page 2

**Kwara Govt Supports Artisans  
With N265m Palliatives To  
Ease Currency, Fuel Crisis **P. 5****

\*Gov urges calm as FG tackles naira redesign issue

\*Your support for us started since 2020 - Artisans

Story on Page 2



**Presidential Polls: IGP Deploys  
3 CPs, 4 DCPs, 6 ACPs To Kaduna**

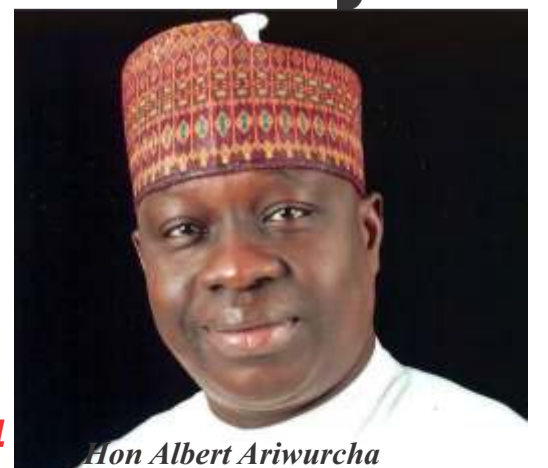


3 L-R: Adviser Association of Master Bakers and Caterers of Nigeria (AMBCN) Kwara State Chapter Alhaji Musbau Omuiyadun; State Chairman AMBCN Alhaji Alaba Akano; Governor AbdulRahman AbdulRazaq; Secretary Bakers Association of Nigeria Babalola Oladimeji; Acting General Manager Kwara State Social Investment Programme (KWASSIP) Abdulquawiy Olododo; Akimu Adebayo; Chief Oyinloye Michael; Mojirade Akanmu; and Director General Kwara APC Campaign Council Alhaji Yahaya Sariki; during the presentation of cheque for palliatives to AMBCN, at Government House, Ilorin, on Wednesday.

## Saturday Polls: North Is Sealed For Atiku, Ex-Lawmaker Says

\*Insists Atiku is a problem solver

\*Says PDP candidate has keys to padlocks that will unlock Nigeria's great destiny **Story on Page 4**



Hon Albert Ariwurcha

# 2023 Polls: No Politician Can Force Self On Nigerians - Ooni

## \*Warns against violent conduct

your turn tomorrow and this is why I am imploring office seekers not to destroy tomorrow with inactions of today", he said.

Ooni Ogunwusi added, "I call on Nigerians especially the youth population which is the largest to partake in the polls as enshrined in constitution and not violate any of the processes."

The royal father maintained that Nigeria as a country has already been through a lot including the recent fuel scarcity among others, we can't afford more trouble.

"The umpires especially the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) must work to give Nigerians a free fair and credible polls, while the security agents should maintain their status as defender of our constitution by creating enabling environment and not bully



electorates".

Speaking further, Ooni Ogunwusi tasked traditional rulers across the country to remain apolitical and neutral as fathers that we are to all politicians and electorates, saying, "we must not be seen promoting political parties or politicians".

"To we traditional rulers, I implore us to remain apolitical and neutral as fathers that we are to all politicians and electorates. We must not be seen promoting political parties or politicians."

# UN Agencies Express Concern Over Soaring Maternal Deaths, Urge Countries To Reduce Trend

By ; MATTHEW UKACHUNWA, Lagos

A report, "Trends In Maternal Mortality," released by United Nations agencies has shown that a woman dies every two minutes due to pregnancy or childbirth.

The UN agencies, World Health Organization (WHO) and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and others said that the new data show major setbacks for maternal health in many parts of the world.

They pointed out that the new data has highlighted stark disparities in healthcare access.

"Every two minutes, a woman dies during pregnancy or childbirth, according to the latest estimates released in a report by United Nations agencies today.

"This report, Trends in maternal mortality, reveals alarming setbacks for women's health over recent years, as maternal deaths either increased or stagnated in nearly all regions of the world," the UN bodies pointed out in a news statement issued on 23rd February 2023.

"While pregnancy should be a time of immense hope and a positive experience for all women, it is tragically still a shockingly dangerous experience for millions around the world who lack access to high quality, respectful health care," Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO), said. "These new statistics reveal the urgent need to ensure every woman and girl has access to critical health services before, during and after childbirth, and that they can fully exercise their reproductive rights."

The report, which tracked maternal deaths nationally, regionally and globally from 2000 to 2020, shows there were an estimated 287 000 maternal deaths worldwide in 2020.

The above figure marked only a slight decrease from 309,000 in 2016 when the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) came into effect, the report noted.

The UN organs said that while the report presents some significant progress in reducing maternal deaths between 2000 and 2015, gains largely stalled, or in some cases even reversed, after this point.

According to them, in two of the eight UN regions – Europe and Northern America, and Latin America and the Caribbean – the maternal mortality rate increased from 2016 to 2020, by 17 per cent and 15 per cent respectively.

They explained that elsewhere, the rate stagnated, stressing that the report noted, however, that progress is possible.

Citing example, WHO and UNICEF said that two regions – Australia and New Zealand, and Central and Southern Asia – experienced significant declines (by 35 per cent and 16% respectively) in their maternal mortality rates during the same period, as did 31 countries across the world.

"For millions of families, the miracle of childbirth is marred by the tragedy of maternal deaths," UNICEF Executive Director Catherine Russell, said. "No mother should have to fear for her life while bringing a baby into the world, especially when the knowledge and tools to treat common complications exist.

Equity in healthcare gives every mother, no matter who they are or where they are, a fair chance at a safe delivery and a healthy future with their family."

In total numbers, maternal deaths continue to be largely concentrated in the poorest parts of the world and in countries affected by conflict. In 2020, about 70% of all maternal deaths were in sub-Saharan Africa. In nine countries facing severe humanitarian crises, maternal mortality rates were more than double the world average (551 maternal deaths per 100 000 live births, compared to 223 globally).

"This report provides yet another stark reminder of the urgent need to double down on our commitment to women and adolescent health," said Juan Pablo Uribe, Global Director for Health, Nutrition and Population at the World Bank, and Director of the Global Financing Facility. "With immediate action, more investments in primary health care and stronger, more resilient health systems, we can save lives, improve health and well-being, and advance the rights of and opportunities for women and adolescents."

Severe bleeding, high blood pressure, pregnancy-related infections, complications from unsafe abortion, and underlying conditions that can be aggravated by pregnancy (such as HIV/AIDS and malaria) are the leading causes of maternal deaths. These are all largely preventable and treatable with access to high-quality and respectful healthcare, the report highlighted.

It stated that community-centered primary healthcare can

meet the needs of women, children and adolescents and enable equitable access to critical services such as assisted births and pre- and postnatal care, childhood vaccinations, nutrition and family planning. However, underfunding of primary health care systems, a lack of trained health care workers, and weak supply chains for medical products are threatening progress, the report said.

Roughly a third of women do not have even four of a recommended eight antenatal checks or receive essential postnatal care, while some 270 million women lack access to modern family planning methods. Exercising control over their reproductive health – particularly decisions about if and when to have children – is critical to ensure that women can plan and space childbearing and protect their health. Inequities related to income, education, race or ethnicity further increase risks for marginalized pregnant women, who have the least access to essential maternity care but are most likely to experience underlying health problems in pregnancy, the UN agencies' report elaborated.

"It is unacceptable that so many women continue to die needlessly in pregnancy and childbirth. Over 280,000 fatalities in a single year is unconscionable," UNFPA Executive Director Dr. Natalia Kanem, said. "We can and must do better by urgently investing in family planning and filling the global shortage of 900,000 midwives so that every woman

can get the lifesaving care she needs. We have the tools, knowledge and resources to end preventable maternal deaths; what we need now is the political will."

They added that COVID-19 pandemic may have further held back progress on maternal health. Noting the current data series ends in 2020, more data will be needed to show the true impacts of the pandemic on maternal deaths. However, COVID-19 infections can increase risks during pregnancy, so countries should take action to ensure pregnant women and those planning pregnancies have access to COVID-19 vaccines and effective antenatal care.

"Reducing maternal mortality remains one of the most pressing global health challenges," said John Wilmoth, Director of the Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. "Ending preventable maternal deaths and providing universal access to quality maternal health care require sustained national and international efforts and unwavering commitments, particularly for the most vulnerable populations. It is our collective responsibility to ensure that every mother, everywhere, survives childbirth, so that she and her children can thrive."

The report revealed that the world must significantly accelerate progress to meet global targets for reducing maternal deaths, or else risk the lives of over 1 million more women by 2030.

# Presidential Polls: IGP Deploys 3 CPS, 4 DCPs, 6 ACPs To Kaduna

By: JACOB ONJEWU DICKSON

In compliance with the Inspector General of Police (IGPs) directives, three Commissioners of Police and other senior officers deployed to Kaduna State to provide water tight security before during and after the 2023 elections, have resumed duty and are strategizing in order to provide effective election security in all the nooks and crannies of the state.

This was contained in a statement signed by the Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), DSP Muhammad Jalige, made available to our correspondent yesterday in Kaduna.

The newly posted officers headed by Commissioner of Police CP Babaji Sunday psc (+) assured the good people of Kaduna State and all political actors of absolute neutrality and a level playing field for them to

exercise their civic responsibilities for voting or be voted for in the forthcoming presidential and National Assembly as well as governorship and State Assembly elections and equally warned the agents of destabilization to have a rethink as officers and men are adequately provided to deal decisively with any recalcitrant element. The officers posted to the command to secure and safeguard the electorate

and electoral processes are; CP Sunday Babaji psc (+) C P K a d u n a Command, CP Shehu S. Gwarzo, CP Northern senatorial zone (Zaria) and CP Paul Omata, CP Southern Kaduna senatorial zone (Kafanchan).

Others are, DCP Patrick Daoor 2i/c Southern Kaduna senatorial zone, DCP Magaji Samaila incharge Zaria, Sabon Gari, Kudan and Makarfi LGAs respectively, while

DCP Abdulazeez Sani is to take charge of Kubau, Ikara, Soba and Lere LGAs

Other ACPs deployed include, Princewill Ijeoma, Mohammed Shamsuddeen, Garba Sule Yaro among others.

"This deployment became necessary to ensure no stone is left unturned in providing a conducive atmosphere for the good people of Kaduna State to exercise their franchise and also to conduct the

2023 general elections devoid of Polical thuggery and other menaces before, during and after the 2023 election," the statement said.

The CP called on all citizens to give their maximum cooperation in ensuring safety of all and to take advantage of the command's designated emergency contact as follows; 08075391105 and 07039675856 when in distress.



## Adultery: Court Sentences Zazzau Palace Guard, 3 Others To 12 Months

By; SANIALIYU, Zaria

The Chief Magistrates Court sitting at Chediya GRA Zaria, Kaduna State has sentenced a Zazzau palace guard and three others to one-year imprisonment each or alternative of fine of N50,000 each.

Delivering judgment yesterday, the Chief Magistrate, Abubakar Lamido said, the court was satisfied with the confessional statement made in the Police report which was admitted as exhibits.

He said the court has not found the defendants with any criminal case before any court of law, hence they are to serve 12

calendar months instead of 24 months in the correctional center or a fine of N50,000 each.

It would be recalled that the five men, including a dismissed palace guard, appeared before a Chief Magistrates' Court in Zaria, Kaduna State, over alleged adultery and criminal conspiracy on Jan. 11.

The offences contravene Sections 59 and 368 of the Kaduna State Law 2017

The convicts are Ismaila Abubakar (Dismissed Palace Guard), Hussaini Abubakar and Kabiru Shuaibu, Nafiu Kabiru, while Ibrahim Abdullahi was earlier freed when the Court discovered that he was innocent.

## NITDA Sets Up Digital Economy Training Centre At MAAUN Kano

By; MUSTAPHA I M R A N A ABDULLAHI, Kaduna

The National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA), has set up a Digital Economy Training Centre at the Maryam Abacha American University of Nigeria (MAAUN), Kano.

The Centre, located at the School of Computing, has already been equipped with the necessary facilities for the training of students of the university. The facilities that have been put in place at the Centre include computer sets and their accessories, solar power, Generator, standing fans, printer, and Internet facilities.

Speaking after the installation of the facilities, the President of MAAUN, Prof. (Dr.) Mohammad Israr commended the agency

for the gesture.

He charged the students to make the best use of the centre in order to acquire the needed digital skills training for the socio-economic development of the country.

Also speaking, the Vice President Administration, Dr. Habib Awais Abubakar also lauded the agency for setting up the centre which he said would go along way in promoting Information and Technology (IT) driven economy in the country.

He however, called on the staff to ensure proper maintenance of the facilities so as safeguard them from damage.

Other principal officers that accompanied the President during the inspection include Director Founder's office, Dr. Aliyu Mirnga, and Hajia Maimuna Saidu Bello, Senior Admin Officer.

## Saturday Polls: North Is Sealed For Atiku, Ex-Lawmaker Says

*\*Insists Atiku is a problem solver*

*\*Says PDP candidate has keys to padlocks that will unlock Nigeria's great destiny*

By; JACOB ONJEWU DICKSON

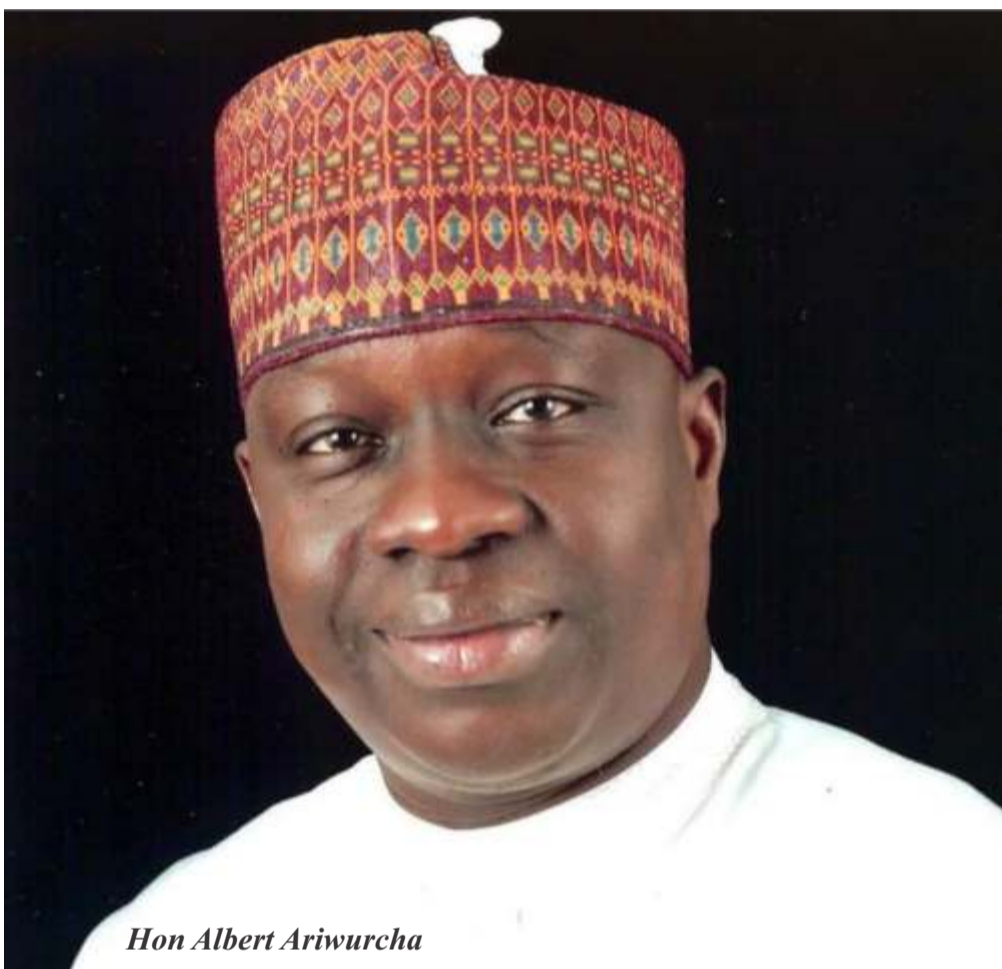
In less than 24 hours for the polling booths to open for voters to cast their ballot papers on who they want to succeed Muhammadu Buhari as the next Nigerian President, a former lawmaker in the Green Chambers of the National Assembly, Honourable Albert Sylvanus Atiwurcha has said that Alhaji Atiku Abubakar is by God's willing, going to win the coming election.

Albert, a vibrant grassroots politician who represented the Hong/Gombi Federal Constituency (2003-2007) area of Adamawa State and left indestructible developmental records, said that Atiku is a problem solver and got the Northern endorsement to win the election.

According to him, the opinion of voters and opinion moulders is showing that the North is sealed up for the victory of Atiku Abubakar, the People's Democratic Party (PDP) Presidential Candidate.

He said Atiku's enduring leadership legacies and ineffaceable human development records have stood him out as the prepared and ready-made president to liberate the country.

Albert who has been touring many communities of Northern Nigeria preaching the



Hon Albert Ariwurcha

good tidings Atiku reopresents, opined that the PDP candidate is the leader whose time has come and Nigerians will yet breathe a new fresh air of good leadership.

Albert after a trip to the communities of Hong Local Government Area granted an interview to our correspondent and revealed that Adamawa is saturated with Atiku's message of becoming the next President.

"By the permutation and the views of political pundits and analysts, what I'm seeing and what we are

working on the ground, this coming Saturday God willing, we will all celebrate the victory of Atiku, which is going to be a victory for all Nigerians," Albert said. He further made a call to all eligible voters in other geopolitical zones to consider Atiku Abubakar as the best candidate among the rest in terms of what he got to offer for the development of Nigeria.

"Voting for Atiku is a simple message that all votes will be counted for development and everyone that will vote for

him will never regret his/her votes to be a waste.

"All votes for Atiku will be translated to people's mandate and the mandate will turn to goodness and jubilation throughout his eight years in office.

"Let us consolidate our votes to ensure Atiku's victory, outside Atiku, there is no hope for Nigerians and the future is bleak. Only him has the keys to all padlocks that will unlock Nigeria's great destiny. So don't waste your votes on anybody other than Atiku Abubakar." Albert added

## Polls: Operation Hadin Kai Releases Distress Calls Lines

By; SADIQ ABUBAKAR, Maiduguri

Headquarters Joint Task Force, North East Operation Hadin Kai Maiduguri, Borno State, has released distress calls lines for the general public to use and report any suspicious element or move during the 2023 general elections for rapid response from the military across the North Eastern part of the country.

The approved telephone lines which are available at all the three sectors of the theater command, are said to

be specifically for the monitoring and reporting of security breach, illegalities and suspicious acts or any act of rampage, violence by any individual or group or association in the North East Region.

The Theater Command urged the general public to call the numbers below and report any suspicious act or moves that poses a threat to peaceful conduct of the 2023 General Elections in the North Eastern region of Nigeria.

A statement issued and made available to journalists in Maiduguri

on Thursday, said the regency calls lines include:

1. HEADQUARTERS JTF (NORTH EAST) OPERATION HADINKAI 09041555348 07068527741
2. SECTOR 1 OPERATION HADIN KAI AND 7 DIVISION NIGERIANARMY08033592680
3. SECTOR 2 OPERATION HADIN KAI DAMATURU 09116135889 08065682446
4. SECTOR 3 OPERATION HADIN KAI MONGONU 08030609719 (WhatsApp only)

# Kwara Govt Supports Artisans With N265m Palliatives To Ease Currency, Fuel Crisis

*\*Gov urges calm as FG tackles naira redesign issue*

*\*Your support for us started since 2020 - Artisans*

By: BILIQIS OLAJUMOKE  
ONAOOLAPO, Ilorin

**K**wara State Governor AbdulRahman AbdulRazaq has presented cheques totalling N267m to different artisan groups, a fulfilment of the administration's pledge to give palliatives to various vulnerable groups that have been hard hit by the naira redesign crisis and fuel scarcity.

The governor said the support for the artisans should translate to ease on the people who enjoy the services of the different economic groups.

The benefitting groups were the Association of Master Bakers and Caterers of Nigeria (AMBCN) which got N100m; Tricycle Owners Association of Nigeria (TOAN) (N30m); Okada Riders Association of Nigeria – ORAN (N30m); Road Transport Employers Association of Nigeria (RTEAN) (N50m); National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW) (N50m); and Nigeria Union of Tailors, Kwara State branch (N7m).

Presenting the palliatives to the important players in the informal sector, AbdulRazaq appreciated their different crucial roles to serve the public and assist the local economy.

"This is a challenging period for everyone, particularly the transporters and artisans as a whole. There is scarcity of cash in the country. You also face the high cost of spare parts. How do you survive this? We know there is a light at the end of the tunnel. We know your challenges and hope everything will be over

soon," the Governor told the transporters' associations in Ilorin on Wednesday evening.

AbdulRazaq also said the government is aware of the difficult time that bakers are going through, thereby presenting them the palliatives to keep them afloat and prevent job losses, which might hurt the economy and social stability.

"Everyone who consumes bread knows how important your product is. You make sure people get the best bread to eat, even though the prices of the ingredients you are using are not stable. Sometimes, you run at a loss. We are aware of this challenge and felt we needed to support you in our own little way," he added, applauding their commitment to meeting the expectations of their customers without compromising standards.

State Chairman for NURTW, AbdulRazaq Ariwoola, for his part, thanked the Governor for his government's serial support for transporters in the state which he said started since 2020 after the outbreak of covid-19 pandemic.

"We appreciate Your Excellency

for this intervention. This is not the first time you are supporting us, and we know it will not be the end. You have satisfied us, and we will equally repay your kind gesture," he said.

AMBCN's State Chairman and owner of Alaba Bread, Alhaji Abdulfatai Alaba, said: "We master bakers are happy with what His Excellency has done. It has never happened before. You can count on our support, because doing so will give us an opportunity to enjoy more dividends from your

government and serve the general public."

The associations acknowledged the giant strides of AbdulRazaq's government, especially in the areas of road, health, and education infrastructure.

Comrade Babalola Oladimeji, AMBCN's Secretary, in his remarks, said: "We have never had it so good in Kwara State so good in terms of governance and inclusion. For the short time you have become the Governor of this state, a lot of things have

changed. In those days, everything was in shambles. Talk of road, water, payment of salaries and pension, and education. You have changed all these positively".

The Governor had on February 9, 2023, promised to give palliatives, including cash transfers, to different vulnerable groups to reduce hardships associated with the recent naira redesign policy and fuel scarcity in the country.



L-R: Adviser Association of Master Bakers and Caterers of Nigeria (AMBCN) Kwara State Chapter Alhaji Musbau Omuiyadun; State Chairman AMBCN Alhaji Alaba Akano; Governor AbdulRahman AbdulRazaq; Secretary Bakers Association of Nigeria Babalola Oladimeji; Acting General Manager Kwara State Social Investment Programme (KWASSIP) Abdulquawiy Olododo; Akimu Adebayo; Chief Oyinloye Michael; Mojirade Akanmu; and Director General Kwara APC Campaign Council Alhaji Yahaya Sariki; during the presentation of cheque for palliatives to AMBCN, at Government House, Ilorin, on Wednesday



L-R: Chairman Road Transport Employers Association of Nigeria (RTEAN) Kwara State Chapter Alhaji AbdulRahman Olayinka; Chairman National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW) Kwara State Chapter Alhaji AbdulRasaki Ariwo; Special Assistant on Transport Hon. Orire Ibrahim; Acting General Manager Kwara State Social Investment Programme Abdulquawiy Olododo; Governor AbdulRahman AbdulRazaq; Deputy President Nigeria Labour Congress Comr. Najeem Usman Yasin; Chairman Tricycle Owners Association of Nigeria (TOAN) Alhaji Saliu Gidado; and Chairman Okada Riders Association of Nigeria (ORAN) Ajewole Gabriel; during presentation of palliatives' cheques to NURTW, RTEAN, TOAN, and ORAN, at Government House, Ilorin, on Wednesday.



L-R: Abubakar Yunus; Olaniyi Ayanda; Alhaji Isiaka Adesina Ojoo; Acting General Manager Kwara State Social Investment Programme Abdulquawiy Olododo; Governor AbdulRahman AbdulRazaq; President Nigeria Union of Tailors Kwara State Chapter Alhaji Oyeyemi Mudashiru; and President of Artisan Kwara State Alhaji Jimoh Adesina Ayinla; during the presentation of cheque for palliatives to Nigeria Union Of Tailors, at Government House, Ilorin, on Wednesday.

## We Must Vote Out Old Politicians, Chikun/Kajuru ADC Reps Candidate Says

By; USMAN NASIDI, Kaduna

**A**head of the forthcoming general elections of the Presidential, Senatorial and House of Representatives slated for February 25, 2023, the Chikun/Kajuru Federal Constituency Kaduna State, candidate of the African Democratic Congress (ADC), Hauwa Abdullahi Gambo has called on electorates to ensure they vote for credible candidates not just for political parties.

Hauwa Gambo expressed this on Wednesday in Kaduna during a press briefing, saying that bad leadership and governance result from making the wrong choices during the elections.

She added that, It's not the

president or governors that determine what happens in the society, but the legislators and for that reason, the electorate must ensure they vote for credible candidates because without credible legislators, the governors and president would be handicapped from giving the citizens the life they deserve.

Hauwa said that, "If you want to herald a new era in the leadership, governance and lives of Nigerians, we must remember not to vote in old politicians, because they have been there for the past years and they have failed to deliver to us the quality of life and leadership we deserve.

"We are God given people, because Nigeria is blessed, we must no

longer tolerate bad leadership and bad governance, the only way we can accept to do away with that is by voting different, by voting with conscience, by voting capacity and quality.

"I want to call on all of us to ensure that we go to the polls on Saturday peacefully and calmly to vote for our choice of credible candidates. Do not engage or indulge violence or in any manner of corrupt activities at the polls, because all will go to affect the kind of leaders we bring into power," she advised.

"I want to remind us all, that Nigeria is the only country we have, we therefore, owe it a responsibility and duty to do it right and the only way we can do right is by

exercising our civic responsibility to vote right and also ensuring that the elections are peaceful, credible, violence free and we can begin to build a new Nigeria.

"My people, this one is for you because you deserve the best that life has to offer, but that depends on you, it depends on your choice, it depends on who you vote into power to represent you in the national assembly on Saturday," Hauwa said.

Finally, the ADC House of Representatives candidate, called on all Chikun/Kajuru Federal Constituency electorate, to ensure that they vote for the life they want to live in the next four years, because it is right there on their thumbs to use it well.



ADC Chikun/Kajuru candidate (middle) during the press briefing

## 2023 Census: NPC Organizes Capacity Building Workshop For Ebonyi Journalists

By; MKPUMAENYINNA, Abakaliki

**A**head of this year's 2023 Population and Housing Census in Nigeria, the National Population Commission (NPC) Ebonyi State has organized a one-day capacity building workshop on effective reporting in preparation for the 2023 Population and Housing Census. The capacity building workshop which took place at Osborne La Palm Resort, Abakaliki was attended by journalists from different media organizations.

The NPC Federal Commissioner in charge of Ebonyi State, Hon. Darlington Okereke while delivering his keynote address, said that any organization that strives to achieve success must constantly convey information to its stakeholders of which the media is very important in order to secure their cooperation and support.

"For a people-oriented organization such as the National Population Commission, constant and effective engagement with the media is a crucial first step. It must take in the attainment of its constitutional mandate of generating data for national planning."

According to Hon. Okereke, with the approval of Mr. President for the conduct of the next Population and Housing Census in April 2023, preparations are in top gear for the successful implementation of the census project across the country, adding that census is a national event and it is mandatory for every citizen to participate by presenting themselves to be counted.

He, therefore, called for the support of all stakeholders to deliver to the country a credible and reliable data for sustainable development planning.

Earlier in her remarks, the state Director NPC Ebonyi State, Barr. Mrs. Julia Nneka Manyike noted that in a bid to achieve maximum success in the 2023 Population and Housing Census, it is imperative for the commission to re-strategize in order to properly educate and enlighten Nigerians on the need to support the successful conduct of the 2023 census.

She said that the commission has deemed it fit to collaborate with journalists for effective delivery of their mandate to ensure a successful 2023 Population and Housing Census.

She further explained, "The aim of the one-day state level capacity building workshop is to improve the quantity and quality of media contents on the 2023 Population and Housing Census and the specific objectives which amongst other things, are to strengthen journalists understanding and application of basic concepts in census taking; to neutralize negative prejudices, misperception and misrepresentation on the census exercise among sections of the Nigerian media and to update journalists on the status of preparatory activities for the 2023 census.

Also, while making her presentations on "How to generate Media Contents on the 2023 Population and Housing Census, the HOD PAD, Mrs. Nwachukwu N.C urged journalists to use their various editorial contents positively to ensure the success of 2023 Population and Housing Census because of its role and significance in the national planning.

## Decamped Aide To Delta Deputy Speaker Makes U-turn, Returns To PDP

### *\*Says APC lacks focus, cohesion*

By; JACOB ONJEWU DICKSON

**A**Former Aide to the Deputy Speaker, Delta State House of Assembly, Honourable Ochor Ochor, Mr. Chuks Ukpese has describe the All Progressives Congress (APC) as a party without focus and cohesion, which is only existing in the imagination of few elements in the state.

Ukpese, who was the Private Secretary, and Domestic Assistant to the Deputy Speaker, stated this on Wednesday, February

22, 2023 when he visited his former boss to apologise for his actions and embarrassment caused the leadership of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in the state.

The former aide, who was escorted to the reconciliation meeting by Hon Evivie, Ovuakpoye, Member Representing Isoko South Constituency, said that he decided to retrace his footsteps immediately he realized the mistake he had made, which was through the handiwork of some APC

members who deceived him to leave his boss, and the PDP, for better opportunities in the opposition party.

"I have comeback to apologise to you my Oga, and also to our great party, the PDP.

"I took a wrong decision to decamp to the APC, I was deceived by those who told me there are better opportunities in the other party, but when I got there, I saw the party.

"The APC is nothing but a group of people who lack focus, and cohesion. I have

realized my mistakes, I am sorry for what I did to you and the party," he said.

In his response, the Deputy Speaker, Rt. Hon Ochor Ochor, welcomed him back, and said it is always proper for man to forgive, when an offender realizes his or her mistake and comes forward to apologise.

He however, charged him to go forward and work for the victory of the PDP in the forthcoming elections in his local government area, and the state.



# Waziri Atiku Presidency Is My Conviction For A Better Nigeria - James Iniaya

*Mr. James Iniaya is a staunch supporter and believer in the ambition of Waziri Atiku Abubakar, the Presidential Candidate of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP). He is a member of the Presidential Campaign Council. In an interview with journalists in Uyo, he gave an insight into a new Nigeria that Nigerians desire with Atiku as the next President of the country. PATRICK TITUS was there for New Nigerian. Excerpts:*

**You are known as a close ally of the PDP presidential candidate in the February 25 election, Waziri Atiku Abubakar over the years, What would you say has sustained the relationship?**

Well, I will not lay claims to monopoly of friendship with Waziri Atiku Abubakar because I am fully aware that he has a multitude of friends across the length and breadth of the country and beyond. He has political friends, social friends and business friends. He keeps international friends. He makes friendships out of his philanthropic services to humanity. He has made friends because of his flare for educational investments and development. So, Waziri Atiku Abubakar is a man who keeps relationships and he has a knowledge of the men who come to him and the relationships go a long way. For the number of years I've known him, I can say as well that he is faithful to his relationships with them.

So I would say that one of the things I have found endearing about him is that he is not a uni-directional individual. Atiku Abubakar is a business man and as you very well know, I am a business man. He is a politician and I enjoy politicking. Atiku is a leader and I love his leadership style. You will find out as well in Atiku Abubakar's leadership style, that he is a very loyal follower. So for these years I have known him, I don't find anything that is discriminatory and offensive about him or anything that is particularly personal about him.

He is a man who gives his life in the interest of all. With those bits I've found about Atiku, I have loved to work with him. I first got to know Atiku on the platform of the People's Democratic Movement [PDM]. I won't be vast with details on the founding of this movement, but I know that late General Yar'Adua and his friends were the founders, and Atiku Abubakar was there. I met him again when he became Vice President of this country. I have been part of his political life and activities. There has been every reason why I will just stick to our relationship. For all of us who seek leadership in this nation, the focus is the service of Nigeria and if there's anything contrary to the nation or country Nigeria, then that aspiration doesn't have value.

You will find with Atiku Abubakar that his burden and resolve is all about a great and better Nigeria. His leadership agenda has always been geared towards the common good of the nation. Those are some of the things I've found about him and his political movement. When we founded Advanced Congress of Democrats [ACD], I was there, and when the negotiation was held to merge ACD with AD to found Action Congress [AC],

I was with him.

Do not forget that he contested the presidential election on the platform of Action Congress. I was gladly there with him and of course, that is when I was the governorship candidate of AC in Akwa Ibom State. So for me, there is every reason for me and over 200 million Nigerians to find Atiku Abubakar trustworthy and deserving of the presidency of this country. He fits it.

**He has contested a few times before now but couldn't make it to Aso Rock, what gives you the hope that your friend would have a chance this time around?**

People have passions and dreams and as I said, I have known Atiku Abubakar. He is a man who lives by his convictions, he has lived by the dream he has of a new Nigeria and he is driven by this dream and it is not to question what the chances are. He is the President. 25th February will tell. Atiku Abubakar has made bare his dreams for Nigeria back by a capable presidential campaign council and Nigerians have heard him clearly. I have heard him clearly and I can tell you; never have I been more convinced than I am today that he is the next president of Nigeria. I had told you that I have known Atiku for many years. I have known him to be a man who has purpose, I have known him to be focused and unyielding on issues he believes in. He is unwavering. I know he carries the dream of the new Nigeria and if I find a man who identifies with the dream of the Nigerian people, that is the person who deserves the support of the



*James Iniaya*

Nigerian people. He is a worthy servant. Did you follow his campaigns and interactions closely? He did not only outline the Nigeria challenges, but went ahead to proffer solutions. If you ask me, Atiku Abubakar is the President of Nigeria beginning 29th May, 2023. It is not an issue for questioning, even if we have to put the plans and programmes of other candidates for the people on a scale, Waziri Atiku Abubakar towers above all. Nigerians must not be driven by the sentiments of statistical data rhetorics that are inapplicable to our circumstances. We appeal to Nigerians to listen to the realities of issues brought to the table by Presidential candidates. We must not be taken advantage of on account of the woeful state of affairs. Let's look at the knowledge and the ability of the respective Presidential Candidates to address those challenges. I haven't heard

these presidential candidates tell us in clear terms how they want to confront insecurity, food insufficiency, how they plan to deal with the industrial problems of the nation. Only Atiku does. It is not enough to tell me you will make Nigeria a productive economy... but How? Some people told us in 2015 presidential election campaigns that they will make the Naira to be at parity with the dollar. That has not happened. Rather, things are getting worse. I have heard my presidential candidate and by the grace of God the next president of Nigeria tell me of how he intends to do it.

**You're from the South-South region of the country and it is obvious that your people, some leaders of your party to be specific, are not comfortable with another Northern President after**

*Continued on Page 8*

# INEC Commences Distribution Of Sensitive, Non-sensitive Materials In Kwara

By; BILIQIS OLAJUMOKE  
ONAOLOPO, Ilorin

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in Kwara State has commenced the distribution of sensitive and non-sensitive materials across the sixteen local government areas of the state.

Addressing newsmen in Ilorin shortly after the dispatch of the election material from Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) Ilorin zone, the state Residents Electoral Commissioner, Mallam Attahiru Madami said local councils far away from the state capital will be attended to first.

He said the Commission has concluded arrangements to ensure credible conduct of the election.

Madami explained that items to be distributed include, ballot

papers, for Presidential, Senatorial and House of Representatives, result sheets and collation forms.

He said other items are the Bimodal Voter Accreditation system (BVAS) as well as the provisions of Number of voters to the political parties.

He urged the residents of the state to conduct themselves peacefully before during and after that elections.

In his remarks on behalf of the other political parties in the state, the Director General Atiku/Okowa campaign council in Kwara state, Dr Mahmoud Ajeigbe expressed satisfaction with the conduct of INEC during this period.

He urged INEC to provide level playing field for all political parties and ensure free, fair and credible elections in the state.



## Waziri Atiku Presidency Is My Conviction For A Better Nigeria - James Iniaya

**President Buhari. They had wanted a Southern President. How would you reconcile that or do you share in their emotions?**

When you say my people, I am sure you are talking about the South and political leaders or the leadership of the PDP from the South. The leadership of the PDP went into a negotiating room even before the primaries of the political parties. We don't know what they negotiated and what transpired at negotiation. If they were very clear as to what they negotiated or did not agree on, we will not be hearing and seeing some of the things we hear and see. If they were unanimous in disagreement with what they negotiated, I mean somebody like Governor Udom Emmanuel, we know him for his character, won't stand down and accept the chairmanship of of PDP presidential campaign council, the governor of Delta state will not accept the Vice Presidency of this country. You see, these are men of principle. You go into a negotiating room and the negotiation collapses, then you will need to let your followers understand what you negotiated and agreed on. But the issue that became a screamer is the resignation of the National Chairman. We don't mind Atiku Abubakar continuing as our presidential candidate; that is what we heard in the streets.

We are talking of the presidency of Nigeria.

I would have been satisfied if we were firm to say no to the participation of a Northern PDP Presidential Aspirant in the party primary. For me, I have assumed that the South-South political Leaders in the PDP opened the door to the Presidential Aspirants of the North. Thereafter, we found ourselves box and can't do otherwise.

We are loyal followers and we remain in the party to follow.

**Do you think the activities of the Governor of Rivers State, Nyesom Wike could have negative effects on the**

**presidential ambition of Atiku Abubakar and by extension PDP?**

Well, I don't know what Governor Nyesom Wike is doing. I don't live in Rivers State. I am a member of the Peoples Democratic Party in Akwa Ibom State and not in Rivers. Whatever he is doing I concede to him that he is a leader and has the right to act as he deems fit. But I also like Nigerians to be conscious of the fact that the people of Rivers State have their understanding of what they want in Nigeria and the election of the 25th of February 2023. They are politically enlightened so they won't be led otherwise in the exercise of their franchise. We cannot for the time being say that it will be positive or negative but we are sure that our party will win even in Rivers State.

**As an entrepreneur, you are in position to advise your friend whom you are so optimistic is the next president of Nigeria: what would be topmost on your priority list, considering the policies that will make Nigeria work again?**

If I'm given an opportunity to talk with my Presidential candidate, I will say as a priority, let's confront insecurity head long. As a young man in this country, I used to drive alone at night from Calabar to Kaduna and from Calabar to Lagos without the fear of bandits, kidnappers, etc. But all that changed. I would advise him to confront insecurity head long. I do not know anybody that said "If I perish, I perish" and perished. Damn everybody and interests. He has to confront it in all the states. Let us have peace and security in this nation so that lives will return to normalcy. Again what I will say is that we must make deliberate policies that stimulate the micro and small scale enterprises. We must be deliberate in the programs that stimulate agricultural investment. We must not look at the mono economy again. Thankfully there is a diversification of our economy in recent times but we must give life to it. I believe

when we do these and secure safety to life and property, people are happy and they are moving freely for their businesses, we will begin to return to the days of Glory. But listen to this I will tell my president we must de-emphasize ethnicity, tribalism, nepotism and religious bigotry in our national lives. These have killed Nigeria. Everything we do today is seen in the prism of what village you come from, what ethnic group you come from, where and what you worship. We must insist on remaining a secular. It is our secularism that should be non-negotiable. Let's begin to look at competence. Those are the few things I would tell my president.

**In Akwa Ibom State specifically, Atiku Abubakar is accused of masterminding the liquidation of the Aluminium Smelting Company, Ikot Abasi and NNMC, Oku Iboku. As a business man, what do you think is the implication of this?**

The site of NNMC and ALSCON leave me bitter most of the time. Do not forget that NNMC is right in my backyard. Incidentally, the businesses of government are marked SECRET, and facts surrounding them are hearsays. I am unable to responsibly comment on the privatisation debate and I doubt very much that it will impact our electoral fortunes.

**Chief Olusegun Obasanjo was the president when Atiku Abubakar was the Vice. Obasanjo has come out on several occasions to caution Nigerians against trusting his former Vice with the number one office in Nigeria, Do you want to fault the former president sir?**

This same President Olusegun Obasanjo endorsed Waziri Atiku Abubakar in 2019, didn't he? He endorsed this government of APC that has failed us woefully. How does the same man deny a man he endorsed previously?

I would love all Nigerians to look up to God who knows it all. We are only men.

We know in parts. The approximately 200 million Nigerians are at liberty to think and make their choices in life. Each Nigerian has the free will to adopt his or her preferred candidate and vote as you please. But, to think we are in a Nigeria that is anymore going to be influenced by the choice of the political leaders is an error because these leaders failed us woefully in their endorsements previously. So, I don't need to worry my head over such cautions.

**Sir, what do you have to tell Nigerians out there concerning Saturday, 25th February, 2023?**

Well, I would say that up to this moment, I will commend the Independent National Electoral Commission. I will also say we have the Electoral Act 2022 that is helping in at least smoothening the rough edges of our political process. We are not there yet.

I was born in this country before it became an independent nation and I have not been able to find comfort anywhere else in this world except Nigeria. There is no country we have been given by God like Nigeria, Nigeria is ours. We all have equal rights to this country. Please love Nigeria, guard the affairs of Nigeria jealously. On the 25th of February, go out and vote for that candidate you know will take this nation out of the present darkness. And I have spoken about Waziri Atiku Abubakar as the only presidential candidate that resolve the current Nigeria crises. That is my conviction. That is what I have to say. Atiku fits it.

**You have not spoken about Akwa Ibom State and the forthcoming elections. What are the chances of PDP in the face of litigations and the growing presence of the other political parties?**

The position of Akwa Ibom State is very unique. God has favoured PDP in Akwa Ibom State and we are confident all the PDP candidates will be returned elected.

# Kaduna APC Support Groups Stage 2km Walk For Tinubu, Uba Sani

**By: IBRAHIMADAMU, Kaduna**  
Various All Progressives Congress (APC) support groups have staged a two-kilometre walk for Senator Bola Tinubu and Senator Uba Sani in Kaduna yesterday. The rally which took off from Magajin Gari along Ahmadu Bello Way and ended up at the popular NEPA Roundabout, had sea of supporters mobilized from several communities across the state, chanting solidarity

songs exulting leadership virtues of the presidential and Kaduna governorship candidates of the APC. While addressing pressmen, coordinator of the groups Musa Bawa said the rally became imperative to show the world the robust supports of the two candidates of APC in Kaduna. "We are out in our members today to show our solidarities for Tinubu and Uba Sani as We gear up to cast our votes this Saturday for these exemplary leaders who

have distinguished themselves in service to country. "The crowd would have been more than this if we decided to pull out others but not to cause traffic inconveniences for road users. "This outing of today is a testimony that APC is still the party to beat in 2023 general elections despite the erroneous narrative peddled to discredit our party. "I am assuring you that Kaduna state is for APC and will remain so even after this election," he assured.



# Zulum Hands 9 Armoured Vehicles To Borno Police

## \*Pledges more support, lauds Buhari, IGP

By; SADIQABUBAKAR, Maiduguri

Governor Babagana Umara Zulum on Tuesday, handed over nine armoured personnel carriers (APCs) to the Borno Command of the Nigerian Police Force to increase their capacity in crime prevention and responses.

Commissioner of Police in the state, Abdu Umar, received the APCs during a brief ceremony held in Maiduguri.

Zulum at the presentation, commended the Borno Police Command and other security establishments for their extreme commitment in the fight against Boko Haram and preventing other crimes

across the 27 local government areas of the state.

Our correspondent reports that Governor Zulum has, in nearly four years, released more than 1,300 patrol vehicles to a combination of the military, police, DSS, the paramilitary and volunteers in the civilian JTF, hunters and vigilantes who have formations in all of Borno's 27 local government areas.

Meanwhile, Governor Zulum has promised to approve more armoured personnel carriers and other forms of support to the Nigerian Police and other security outfits working to restore peace in Borno State.

“Our administration will continue to support the Nigerian Police to deliver their objectives of protecting lives and properties of citizens. We will buy more APCs and Insha Allah we will extend more pf our support to all the security agencies” Zulum said.

The governor commended President Muhammadu Buhari for his ceaseless commitment in the fight against insurgents which has significantly helped in Borno's ongoing stability.

“For us in Borno State, there is nothing we can say rather than to thank the federal government under the leadership of President Muhammadu Buhari for

restoring peace and stability in Borno State. This can never be feasible without the support of the Nigerian military, the Nigerian Police, the DSS, NSCDC, paramilitary and our volunteers”, Zulum said.

Zulum also paid tribute to the Inspector General of Police, Alkali Baba Usman.

“Let me commend the Inspector General of Police, Alkali Baba Usman, for the giant stride he has been making in reforming the Nigerian Police and ensuring peace and stability in the country since he assumed the mantle of leadership as the IGP”, the Governor noted.



# Vote For Atiku, SOKAPU, Leaders Tell Southern Kaduna

By; JACOB ONJEWU DICKSON

At the head of Saturdays general elections, the Southern Kaduna Peoples Union (SOKAPU), and the Southern Kaduna Leadership Council (SKLC) have unanimously asked the people in the region to vote for the Candidate of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Alhaji Atiku Abubakar.

For an alternative, the Southern Kaduna groups said the people are also of the discretion, to choose between Atiku Abubakar and Peter Obi, but added that the candidacy of Bola Ahmed Tinubu is not inclusive.

Addressing a press Conference on Thursday in Kaduna, the SOKAPU President, Mr. Dio Maisamari and the Chairman, Southern Kaduna Leadership Council, Mr Dary Akau said the Saturday's election is fundamental to the people of the region, especially as in the past

eight years their people have suffered untold deprivations and dehumanization from the exclusiveness and discriminatory practices of the present party and government in power.

"From the foregoing, the decision of Southern Kaduna people on the choice of Presidential Candidate to support in the 2023 general election should be guided by our historical experiences over the past twenty-five years.

They explained that SOKAPU in collaboration with the Southern Kaduna Leadership Council (SKLC) have examined the situation on the ground and come to the conclusion that the Presidential Candidates that have shown enough concern over their problems and concerns are those who visited Southern Kaduna and discussed with their people.

"To this extent, the Presidential Candidates of the Peoples' Democratic

Party (PDP) and Labour Party (LP) came and discussed with our people and leaders, and were given the Southern Kaduna Charter for Socio-Political Engagement. Therefore, the choice for the Southern Kaduna people is between the PDP and LP.

"In considering where to go, and which party to support, we take into consideration the fact that we have benefited more where we have been included in governance and decision making, adding Politically and economically, the Southern Kaduna people have benefited more from the PDP than any other party in the history of Nigeria.

"Nevertheless, given the strength of the emotions arising from the oppression our people have suffered over the past 8 years, there is the tendency to align with the Labour Party, noting as leaders of Southern Kaduna, we take cognizance of the

sentiments and emotions of our people over the suffering they have gone through.

"We have examined the balance of forces on the ground in terms of structures, spread, capacity of the party and candidates to win the presidential election, hold and use the power to include the Southern Kaduna people in government.

"As Leaders of Southern Kaduna are advising our people to vote for the Party that has shown us inclusiveness, and the Party that has the inclination, desire and potential to concretely address our cares and concerns.

SOKAPU and SKLC therefore, advised the people of Southern Kaduna to support and vote for the Presidential Candidate that has shown commitment and willingness to be inclusive and address their interests. "Therefore, we are calling on our people to come out massively and vote in the presidential election," he declared.

## Court Dismisses APC's Suit Against LP Reps Candidate For Ogo Oluwa/Surulere Federal Constituency

*\*Awards N100, 000 costs against APC, 3 others*



Mr Adesoji Adedeji

By; BAYO AKAMO, Ibadan

With few hours to the February 25 polls, the Federal High Court sitting in Ibadan on Wednesday, dismissed a suit filed by the All Progressives Congress (APC) and three others to disqualify the Labour Party (LP) House of Representatives candidate for Ogo Oluwa/Surulere Federal Constituency, Mr Adesoji Adedeji, from contesting the Saturday's National Assembly election.

Justice Uche Nma Agomoh in his judgement, said there was no evidence before the court to support the case of the plaintiffs and consequently dismissed the case for being academic, stale and lacking in merit.

The judge awarded a total cost of N100, 000 against APC to be paid N50, 000 each to Adesoji's counsel, Sunday Aborisade and the lawyer for Labour Party, Kehinde Yekini and as well also cleared Adedeji to contest in Saturday's election, having been validly nominated by the Labour Party.

Justice Agomoh on the issue of locus standi of the plaintiffs to file the suit raised by Aborisade, agreed with him that those who filed the suit have no business doing as they are

not members of the Labour Party, describing them as "meddlesome interlopers and busybodies" who engaged themselves in what does not concern them.

On the issue of the suit been filed out of time, the judge also agreed with Adedeji's lawyer that pre-election matters are sui generis and that the case should have been filed within 14 days of the occurrence of the action the plaintiffs complained of.

New Nigerian recalled that in the suit filed on September 30, 2022 APC alongside other plaintiffs, namely Ajani Josiah, Chief Adewale Sunday, Adesiyiyan Semiu, claimed that Adedeji was nominated by Labour Party and Peoples Redemption Party (PRP) in violation of Sections 30, 34 and 35 of the Electoral Act.

The plaintiffs asked the court for an order to compel the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to bar Adesoji from participating in Saturday's election, having been purportedly nominated by two parties with the court earlier striking out an application for extension of time filed and moved by the counsel for the plaintiffs.

## General Elections: Go Out, Vote For Candidates Of Your Choice - Olubadan

*\*Says all eyes on INEC*

By; BAYO AKAMO, Ibadan

The Olubadan of Ibadanland, Oba Mahood Lekan Balogun on Thursday, asked Nigerians not to abandon the polls, but go out and vote for the candidates of their choice. Oba Lekan Balogun in a statement in Ibadan by his Personal Assistant (Media), Oladele Ogunsola on this year's general elections said there's the tendency for people to have apathy for the election, having been wearied by the prevailing problems.

The Olubadan said Nigerians should not allow the current discomfort across the country as a result of the redesign of Naira policy and fuel scarcity to

discourage them from exercising their civic duty by trooping out in large numbers to vote for their choice candidates in the election.

"We are about beginning another journey of four years and whatever we do now as far as the elections are concerned would play a very serious significance purpose in our respective lives in the next four years. So, the message to all is that, please, don't abandon the poll, go out and vote for the candidate of your choice", he said.

Oba Lekan Balogun added, "It is by going out to cast your votes that you would prevent others from choosing your leaders for you. In doing that, please, let's be orderly and peaceful in our conduct". "We must all be conscious

that by being unruly and trouble makers at the venue of the election, we are indirectly creating problem for our preferred candidates because the electoral umpire has every right under the law to cancel election in any place where the atmosphere is less conducive for proper conduct of election".

The Olubadan declared that all eyes are now on the Independent National Electoral Commission, (INEC) regarding the general elections, saying, "all eyes are on you, INEC for election that all of us can be proud of. Not only in Nigeria are you being watched, but from across the globe. Nigeria is the central focus of Africa and whatever we do is like we are projecting the entire

continent".

Oba Lekan Balogun maintained that there should be no going back in the INEC commitment to give the country a credible, free and fair election, saying the Commission has so far demonstrated commitment to the pledge of good conduct of the 2023 polls.

"So far so good, the electoral body has been faithful to its mandate as well as its time-table and it is hopeful that it would finish well. So, you cannot afford to fail and it is gratifying to note according to reports that the Federal Government has given you the maximum support necessary for effective and efficient service delivery"

## 2023 Polls: SDP Members Dump Party, Endorse Atiku, Adamawa Governor, Fintiri

*\*SDP dismisses reports, says party structures still intact*

By: TINA PHINEAS, Yola

As the nation prepares for the 2023 presidential elections, the Social Democratic Party (SDP) has collapsed its North-East structure into the People's Democratic Party (PDP).

The party also declared support for the Presidential candidate of the People's Democratic Party (PDP), Atiku Abubakar and Governor Ahmadu Umaru Fintiri who is seeking reelection. Leading the defection, North East zonal chairman of the party, Danjuma Chikel said the SDP took the decision after a thorough assessment of the chances of their own candidates across the northeast region in the forthcoming general elections.

Chikel, who made this known during a meeting with Governor, Ahmadu Umaru Fintiri in Yola, said 22 out of 34 Working Committee members of the party and 17 of the 21 local government chairmen dumped the SDP.

He decried the difficulty imposed on the masses by the All Progressives Congress (APC)-led administration and restated their decision to work for the victory of Atiku Abubakar as President.

"We have decided to join the winning team by collapsing our structures to support Atiku Abubakar and Governor Fintiri," Chikel said.

He pledged that the decampees will mobilize massively for the victory of all PDP candidates.

Responding, Governor Fintiri thanked the defectors for taking a bold decision in the interest of the country and the state, assuring them that they will not regret it.

He frowned at the challenges bedeviling the country at the moment, saying the Atiku project should be for the good of the country, calling on the defectors to come out en masse on election day to vote for all PDP

candidates come Saturday 25 February.

In a swift reaction, the Social Democratic Party (SDP) in Adamawa State, has dismissed the reported collapse of its structures into the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP).

A statement by the organizing secretary of the party, Hon Aziz Jibrilla urged the general public to disregard the purported fusion of the party as no such thing ever happened.

"The attention of the leadership of the Social Democratic Party (SDP) Adamawa State Chapter has been drawn to a claim that, the Party's structure has been fused into PDP.

"If not for putting the records straight, there should be no need to respond to falsehood and dubious action aimed to shortchange Governor Ahmadu Umaru Fintiri and his Party because the Organizer rented crowd to deceive his target which has been his stock in trade. "As a political force to reckon with in the forthcoming 2023 General Elections, the action is nothing more than show of desperation by the opposition PDP to create confusion using few unpatriotic and unprincipled elements among many just to attract political point.

"The claim by Danjuma Chikel that, 22 State Party Executives and 17 Local Government Chairmen of our Party (SDP) is untrue as we remain intact and ready to wrestle power on the 11th March, as newly elected Government by Adamawa electorate.

"We therefore, call on our Party faithfuls and supporters to remain calm and focus in the task of canvassing for Votes in all nook and crannies of the State until victory is attained.

"We also appeal to the Adamawa electorate to disregard the claim with a view to Vote for Dr. Umar Ardo as the next Governor with other candidates under SDP so that the state can be rescued from bad governance," the statement said.

## Tinubu Most Experienced Candidate To Deliver Growth, Jobs - APC Natl Youth Leader

By: JACOB ONJEWU DICKSON

Hon. Dayo Israel, the National Youth Leader of the All Progressives Congress (APC), has assured Nigerians and the international community of the superior competence and readiness of Bola Tinubu, the party's presidential candidate, to revamp the country's economy and provide growth opportunities to youths and businesses amid pressing global headwinds.

He gave the assurance during an interview on CNN Exchange, a prominent discussion show hosted by Zain Asher.

Israel, who defended the party's stewardship in the last seven years, explained that the economic challenges witnessed in the country form part of a negative global trend

triggered by the pandemic, climate change, and the war in Europe.

He noted that these issues and the disruptions they have caused to global trade interactions have equally prompted protests in major cities across the globe, including London, Washington, and Paris.

The challenges notwithstanding, he held that the candidate of his party has a better experience than his rivals in "navigating difficult situations" to deliver progress, pointing at his outstanding achievements as the governor of Lagos between 1999 and 2007.

Israel highlighted the party's achievements in the areas of infrastructure, social investments, and security, with specific mentions of several communities in the country's northern region where residents now live in peace and can move

freely due to the military's defeat of Boko Haram, a terror group responsible for bombings and killings. He also boasted of the faith ordinary Nigerians have in Bola Tinubu, the party's candidate, due to his celebrated success as the governor of Lagos where, together with seasoned technocrats, he completed reforms and introduced initiatives that culminated in the emergence of the coastal state as one of the largest economies in Africa.

"People know they can trust Tinubu because of his antecedents. He is a team player who has demonstrated his ability to assemble and guide highly-skilled administrators and experts to deliver growth opportunities to individuals and businesses. None of the other candidates have similar record or

experience," Israel said. Dismissing negative notions about the candidate's health conditions, the National Youth Leader reiterated his trips across the country and round-the-clock engagements to promote his Renewed Hope manifesto and obtain the support of important stakeholders.

"We are talking about a man who has worked the hardest in this campaign. Not only has he been around the country, he visited many states on more than one occasions, attending rallies, hosting town halls, and leading other several activities with the goal of selling his vision and winning the support of the public. I don't know of any sick person who can accomplish all of these and still remain standing and strong," he concluded.



## NAPTIP Rescues 2,743 Traffick Victims

By: AMOS TAUNA, Kaduna

About 2,743 trafficked victims have been rescued by the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP), its Director-General, Fatima Waziri-Azi, has disclosed. Speaking at a press conference in Abuja on Tuesday, she explained that 1,440 reported cases

of trafficking in persons were received by NAPTIP, saying that 412 external trafficking cases (28.6%) and 1,028 internal trafficking cases (71.4%). She further explained that 2,743 victims were rescued in collaboration with other sister law enforcement agencies with male children, 233 (8.5%); female children, 688 (25.1%); male adults,

363 (13.2%); and female adults, 1,459 (53.2%). According to her, "Victims of inward trafficking were 45, that is; victims trafficked into Nigeria; returned victims from abroad were 251; and intercepted victims were 1,484, that is; those who were on their way out of Nigeria." The Director-General said that most of the victims were trafficked by road

through their borders all across the country. She said that the agency also secured 80 convictions in 2022: 45 males and 35 females, stressing that the agency's counter-trafficking project, launched in collaboration with the Canadian Government, was to address human trafficking gradually.

# INEC Fully Ready For February 25 Elections - Oyo REC

*\*Says 2,305,903 expected to vote in Oyo State*

By; BAYO AKAMO, Ibadan

With few days to the February 25 polls, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) Resident Electoral Commissioner (REC) in Oyo State, Dr. Adeniran Rahmon Tella has hinted that INEC is now fully ready for election.

Speaking at the Oyo State NUJ Correspondents Chapel guest platform "Speak Out" held at the Chapel Secretariat, Mokola in Ibadan on Tuesday, the REC said 2,305,903 electorate are expected to vote in Oyo

State in the general elections.

Dr Tella emphasized that in its quest to ensure free, fair and generally acceptable election this year, the commission "is leaving no stone unturned at ensuring and conduct free, fair, credible elections with its preparations so far.

"I have the opportunity to tell you the level of our preparedness. The level of our preparedness has reached an advanced state in all stages. This is also an opportunity for us to again to come out and talk to you," he said.

Dr Tella stressed that in

Oyo State, a total of 2,305,903 electorate are expected to vote in the general elections and that eligible voters are expected to vote in all the 6,390 polling units spread across the 33 local government areas in the state.

Speaking further, the Resident Electoral Commissioner (REC) hinted that 2,305,903 Permanent Voter's Card, (PVC) have been collected meaning that 2,305,903 eligible voters are expected to vote in the 2023 general elections.

Dr Tella declared that of the 3,276,675 registered

voters in Oyo State, only 2,305,903 PVCs have been collected so far leaving a total of 760,766 PVCs uncollected.

The INEC then called on all eligible voters in and across the state to come out en mass and vote for candidates of their choice during the elections.

Dr Tella while tasking stakeholders in the 2023 general elections to cooperate with the commission to conduct free, fair and credible elections in the state gave the total number of polling units in the state as 6,390.

## Gov Makinde behind last minute cancellation of our mega rally -Oyo SDP

*\*Berates State Police Command*

By; BAYO AKAMO, Ibadan

The Oyo State chapter of the Social Democratic Party (SDP) on Tuesday alerted that Governor Seyi Makinde was behind the last minute cancellation of its mega rally by State Police Command.

Raising the alarm at a press conference, the Oyo State governorship candidate of the party, Barrister Michael Lana said the latest action of the State Police Command with the last minute cancellation of the party's planned mega rally in Ibadan was uncalled for.

Barrister Lana stressed that SDP leaders and members were surprised at the police action on the rally already slated to hold on Tuesday at Mapo Hall as the State Police Command advised the party to shift the rally till Wednesday.

"We are surprised at the attitude of the state Commissioner of Police, Adebawale Williams, who has turned himself to a personal police of the governor, rather than being the security chief of the state. At the beginning of the campaign season, the police directed all political parties to inform it of any political campaign or function, thus, on January 30, we duly informed the commissioner

of police of our mega rally, scheduled to hold today at Mapo Hall", he said.

Barrister Lana added, "our letter was duly acknowledged which was an indication that no other political party applied to use the venue or hold rally in the local government (Ibadan South-East).

"After spending lots of resources for preparation, the police called around 7am today and said the rally should be cancelled because the governor wants to hold a rally at the same venue".

Stressing that, "the plan is to cause a clash between the two parties but being a peaceful party, we have decided to bear the losses to avert bloodshed at Mapo Hall", the SDP governorship candidate said the Oyo State Commissioner of Police would be reported to relevant authorities, and that the Police Commissioner and the governor would be held responsible if anything happened to any of the party members.

The SDP governorship candidate stressed, "this is not the first time that Gov Makinde would try to undermine SDP because of the fear that we are the only party that can uproot him from the government house. "Two or three days ago, he



gathered some people to tell the people that we have stepped down for him. Knowing that this falsehood would be cleared at the rally, the governor quickly called the state Commissioner of Police to cancel our rally. It is obvious that the Commissioner was only informed of Makinde rally today."

Barrister Lana stressed, "this is gross abuse of power and breach of office on the part of the Commissioner of Police. All parties and candidates are equal. Had the commissioner been professional in his job, he

would know that we have the power to resist the cancellation, especially as it was done in the last minute. It is extremely injurious to us as our people had left far places as early as 5.30am in chartered vehicle to travel to Ibadan."

SDP Senatorial candidate in Oyo North, Honourable Mulikat Adeola, while speaking, said it was unfortunate that the rally was put off in the last minute, adding that the party members should troop out to Mapo Hall on Wednesday for the rally.

## Presidential Election: Joint Action Committee Of Northern Youth Backs Atiku

By; AMOS TAUNA, Kaduna

The Joint Action Committee of Northern Youth Associations (JCNYA), has thrown its support to Atiku Abubakar, the presidential candidate of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) for the forthcoming election.

Briefing newsmen in Kaduna on Wednesday, its convener, Murtala Abubakar, said that the members of the group cuts across the 19 Northern states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), saying, "It took us this long to arrive at this decision. Within this period, we note the footprints of President Buhari, took stock of his gains in the last seven years plus.

"We also x-rayed those battling to succeed him, especially in his political party the APC. But we came to the conclusion that they are not only worthy of the position, but are out struggling to get power for their selfish interests."

He observed that the contradictions, grandstanding, opposition within them and outright abuse of President Buhari by same people who once worshipped the ground Buhari walked on, shows their desperation to get to power by hook and crook, for their selfish interest, saying that thank God Nigerians have seen through their antics and pretences.

In pursuing his presidential ambition, the convener stated that twice Atiku Abubakar picked his running mates from the South as his running mate, an indication of his fairness and equity in carrying Nigerians alone irrespective of tribe, religion or section to move Nigeria forward.

"With this endorsement,

we are assuring all Nigerians, especially southerners that when Atiku is elected and sworn to office, which Nigerians would do on Saturday peacefully, we would hold his legs to the fire and ensure he remains the leader for all we have known him to be. We assure all that Atiku will not let them down. We promise as we want you to hold us responsible for this promise," he assured.

He added that they took the decision after taking into consideration, recent Abuja declaration by Arewa groups during the 10 years anniversary of the Northern Elders Forum and similar stand of the Arewa Consultative Forum (ACF) that was delivered in wisdom and gave qualities of the next President Nigeria needs, stressing that their endorsement and adoption of Atiku Abubakar is in that line as the qualities they described fits only Atiku Abubakar.

According to him, "To the youth of this country. We are the future of this great nation. The leader we elect on Saturday will make or mar Nigeria. We can not afford to elect some opportunists who will take us through hell for another 4 years. We need an Atiku who will lift the country out of dullness, secure, unite, develop and make us all proud."

He explained that the time is not to sit on the wall, it is the time to save Nigeria and Nigerians, adding that it is time to prepare their future, that of their children and unborn generation.

He stressed, "Atiku knows, understands, appreciates Nigeria and Nigerians just as he knows, understands and appreciates his loving family. Nigeria is Atiku's family."

# 2023 Polls: INEC Distributes Sensitive Materials To LG Offices In Kaduna

**By: USMANNASIDI, Kaduna**

In preparation for the upcoming general elections come February 25, 2023, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) Kaduna office, has flagged-off the distribution of sensitive materials to the 23 local government offices in the state.

Speaking during the event at the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) Kaduna Branch premises, the Administrative Secretary, Malam Muhammad Auwal Mashi, said that the commission is moving ahead of its task to ensure a smooth running of the activities.

Auwal Mashi, further explained that, the sensitive materials consist of the ballot papers and form EC8 for the presidential election, Senatorial and House of Representatives that will be held on February 25, 2023 and all the 23 local government electoral officers have been called from the field.

He added that, unlike the previous election of 2019, where they had almost above 90 political parties, this time around, there are only 18 political parties, and it's only in the presidential election that they are having all the parties contesting, but for other elections, the state commission is not having the complete candidates.

He said, "if you look at the quantity of the materials we are going to distribute, it's not as huge as it was in 2019, and hopefully, it is not going to take long to distribute to the various local government electoral offices.

"We just had an inter-agent meeting with the Inter-agency Consultative Committee on Election Security, and we made it clear to them that, we are taking the materials to the local government areas and our plan is for the security agencies to provide us with the security for the men and the materials to be taken to the LG offices, including those areas

where we have security challenges.

"It is a well-known fact that, Kaduna State has 4.3 million registered voters, so we should expect to have a similar number of votes because we do not wish to disenfranchise anybody, everyone that has registered in Kaduna is going to cast his vote on the election day," he stated.

"Similarly, we are in receipt of some of the monies that will be required for the execution of the election, but not for all aspects of the elections. For instance, there are some of the corps members we need to engage, so we intend to give them cash for their allowances, but not all their allowances for logistics and other things.

"We have also discussed with the NURTW and NATO that we are going to give them some part of their money in cash, and they have agreed to it, because the money will be given in four tranches and we have received

the first and second tranches, but the other two are meant for the next set of elections.

According to the commission's Administrative Secretary, the people should expect a very good election, because they started making arrangements for the 2023 elections immediately after the 2019 general elections and in between then and now, a lot has happened.

"For instance, the electoral act has been amended, there has been about at least 83 or so amendments, which has given us the lead way to conduct elections in the best possible way. And again, we are going to use the BVAS voting system that cannot be manipulated and will be the same that is going to be used to declare the elections," he noted.

Auwal Mashi, assured the general public that they are going to witness a very fair election and the likes of which have never been seen in the history of Nigeria.



# Uncle Focus Educational Consult Trains Kaduna Teachers On Digital Technology

By: **AUSTINE AGBO EMMANUEL, Kaduna**

Following the need to embrace the digital technology in contemporary global village, Uncle Focus Education Consult Nigeria Contract Limited, has organized a one-day conference for teachers in Chikun Local Government Area of Kaduna State to help build their capacity and efficiency in the teaching profession.

The Lead Consultant and Co-founder Uncle focus Educational Consult Nigeria Contract Limited, Mr. Ziniyet Godwin Hilary, said the vision is to make education in Kaduna State, Nigeria, Africa and the world at large, more efficient.

According to Hilary, Education is efficient on its own and so there is need to add more innovations to it so as to support schools, individuals, government, school owners and

children in every way possible to make education better.

Asking about the drive of the project, Hilary noted that the conference was inspired by the various engagements they had with teachers in 2022 with their determination to give the education sector a different look from what it is known through the application of modern technology.

He reiterated that, "we engaged over 1,500 teachers across public and private schools in Kaduna and outside the state and we realized there is a uniformity in their cry as teachers and it boils down to how their dignity as teachers have been trampled upon.

"They are the light and conscience of our society and we need to carry them on our shoulders because they are our heroes and we need to respect them. So this conference is bringing in teachers from both

private schools and public schools to talk and discuss on issues that bother them, issues of nation building, classroom engagement and how to make their teaching and learning easier and better.

He said the conference will educate the teachers on different topics like the role of teachers in nation building, the role of teachers in civic participation, dignity of a teacher, how a teacher can leverage on technology to make their work effective and easy in the classroom, among others.

The acting Education Secretary, Chikun Local Government Area, Mrs. Sarah Atu, while Fielding questions from Journalists on the benefits of the conference for teachers, said she seized the opportunity when the organization approached her with their proposal because the subject matter deals with upgrading the dignity of the

teacher which is a two phase of a thing.

Mrs. Sarah stressed that, "the teacher has to know that there is need to work towards promoting his dignity not only waiting for the government or any other body to promote his or her dignity.

"At this stage which we are, I know this conference came at the right time that is why we agreed and we liaised with the local government to see that my teachers are trained. Despite the crisis we have now on the issue of cash, the participants were supposed to be 1,500 to 2,000, but because of the crisis, we were unable to have all of them," she added.

Also speaking, the Chairman Nigeria Union of Teachers, (NUT) Chikun Local Government Area, Comrade Cyrus Hassan, applauded Uncle Focus for the kind gesture.

He said, "this conference is very

educative and I believe it's going to add value, dignity and respect to the teachers. I also believe it will go a long way to enlighten and educate them on so many things that they are supposed to know."

He disclosed that teachers in Kaduna State over the years, have gotten the required support in terms of training and encouragement to improve themselves while on the job, but the percentage is very low because the impact of the activities are not very effective. Cyrus called on the state government to double its efforts and ensure it meets the needs of Kaduna teachers, thereby improving the quality of their livelihood.

He lamented that incentives and other benefits for teachers in Kaduna State are not getting to them.



# Border Control: Kadafur Assures Of Support As Zulum Bags Nigerian Immigration Service Award



By; SADIQ ABUBAKAR, Maiduguri

**B**orno State Deputy Governor His Excellency, Dr. Umar Usman Kadafur on Tuesday, received on a courtesy visit, the Comptroller General of Immigration Services, who was in the state for a two-day official visit for the commissioning of the Personnel Training Resource

Centre at the Federal Secretariat. The deputy governor said the visit to the state by the Comptroller General is timely, considering the fact that elections are around the corner and the need to provide adequate security especially in the border areas is paramount.

Dr. Kadafur said the state government will continue to partner with the immigration

service to strengthen the existing cordial relationship with a view to controlling the state's porous borders between the three countries of Niger, Chad and Cameroon.

The deputy governor also commended the efforts of the immigration service in the state during repatriation of IDPs from neighbouring countries back to Nigeria.

The Comptroller General Immigration Services, Alhaji Isa Idris Jere acknowledged the efforts of the state government and his team for the full return of peace to the state, as well as numerous assistance to security agencies in the state.

The Comptroller General appealed for assistance in the area of logistics to curve the influx of illegal aliens,

smuggling and other illegal activities at the borders.

The Comptroller General was in company of senior officers and all state Comptrollers from the North East Zone and presented an award of excellence to the Borno State Governor, Professor Babagana Umara Zulum for outstanding performance for the return of peace in the state.

## A'Ibom Govt Approves N14bn Recapitalisation For Ibom Air

By; PATRICK TITUS, Uyo

**T**he Akwa Ibom State Government has approved the recapitalisation of its airline, Ibom Air to the tune of 14 billion Naira, in effort meant to raise and strengthen its capital base and ensure more service delivery and gain.

Commissioner for Information and Strategy, Comrade Ini Ememobong disclosed this to journalists on Saturday after the State Executive Council (Exco) meeting presided over by Governor Udom Emmanuel on



Friday in Uyo, the state capital.

According to Comrade Ememobong, the Exco also approved for "the execution of emergency works at the gully erosion sites in Cornelia Connelly College in Uyo as well as granted approval for the revitalisation of Akwa Ibom Water Company limited.

Other life touching projects that earned the approval of the council were, "approval for funds

to implement the Akwa Ibom State Social Investment and Poverty Alleviation Programme to ameliorate the cost of living crises and to support young entrepreneurs, in line with the 2023 Appropriation Law of the state.

"Approval for the payment of compensation for the acquisition of the site for Ibom Solutions Hub in Mbo Local Government Area

"Approved the Re-award of the contract for the construction of 8.5km Okoroette-

Elile-Amadaka -Kampa road in Eastern Obolo local government area. The contract previously awarded to Nigerpet structures limited was revoked and is now awarded to Hensek Integrated Services. Hon. Commissioner for Works was tasked to ensure the speedy and qualitative delivery of the project.

"Approved the award of 7.5 Km Ekim-Eyoabasi and Edikor-Udu-Okobo road in Udu Uko, Mbo and Oron Local Government Areas and the award of contract for construction of 5.5KM internal roads in Itu Local Government Area". Ememobong stated

About the newly licensed Ibom Utilities Company Limited, and based on the progress report presented by the Commissioner for Power and Petroleum Development, Dr. John James Etim, Council reassured that when fully operational, the Utilities Company would become the catalyst for the achievement of the power for all drive of the state government.

The Commissioner equally stated that the governor, Mr Udom Emmanuel who bemoaned the current economic situation in the country and its attendant impact on the people of the state, has sued for peace and understanding from the citizens as steps were being taken to ease the situation soon.

## Katsina: Mashi LGA Provides Free Dental Care To Over 100 Residents

By; SULAIMAN AHMED MISAU, Katsina

**O**ver one hundred people in Mashi Local Government Area of Katsina State have received free dental care service of teeth treatment and replacement.

Chairman of the local council, Alhaji Salisu Kallah Dan-kada who was represented by his vice, Alhaji Abubakar Adamu,

launched the medical outreach, stressing that the dental care services are part of the local council's efforts towards improving healthcare at the grassroots.

In their separate remarks, the Primary Healthcare Coordinator in the area, Alhaji Kabir Shehu Kaita and the coordinator of the dental services, Dr. Nura Muhammad Isah praised the foresight of the local council and concerned

individuals for the free dental care services to people.

Dr. Nura Muhammad Isah advised the beneficiaries of the programme to abide by medical advices given to them.

Also speaking, the All Progressives Congress (APC), chairman of the the local government area, Alhaji Ibrahim Dan Tani Fagam appealed to the beneficiaries of the dental care services to

reciprocate by electing APC candidates.

Speaking on behalf of the beneficiaries Malam Adamu Usman and Malama Maryam Adamu Mashi thanked the local government council and assured to abide by doctor's advices.

They also assured of praying for the sustenance of peace and stability before, during and after the forthcoming elections.

# In Bama, Zulum Unveils 3 Projects; Gives Business Owners N100m

By; SADIQ ABUBAKAR, Maiduguri

Governor Babagana Umara Zulum was in Bama town on Friday to unveil three capital projects one of which was constructed by the member representing Bama, Ngala and Kala-Balge at the House of Representatives, Dr Zainab Gimba.

Zulum opened Bama Central Mosque, a government lodge, and a skills acquisition centre which was built by Dr. Zainab

Gimba.

The governor alongside the Shehus of Bama and Dikwa, emirs of Gwoza and Askira, took part at the first post-commissioning Juma'at service. Thousands of indigenes of Bama, including elders and community leaders, members of the business community, religious leaders, politicians and other stakeholders also attended the Juma'at prayers.

Zulum, while in Bama, released N100 million to business owners

for stimulation of economic activities as the town struggles to recover from previous years of Boko Haram occupation, mass destructions and killings.

About 1,030 business owners benefited from Zulum's intervention.

Also, 10 beneficiaries who were medium size entrepreneurs, received N1 million each, and 20 others received N500,000 each.

Similarly, 100 small-sized business owners each received N200,000, another 300 business

owners got N100,000 and 600 micro-size business owners went away with N50,000 each.

Meanwhile, Governor Zulum same Friday, led All Progressives Congress (APC) stakeholders to a campaign rally in Bama, where thousands of supporters stormed a township stadium, venue of the rally.

The governor received thousands of decampes that included some ward executives from People's Democratic Party (PDP) and Social Democratic Party (SDP) and House of

Assembly aspirants from both parties.

Zulum traveled to Bama in company of APC's candidate for Borno Central, Barrister Kaka Shehu Lawan, member representing Bama, Ngala and Kala-Balge, Dr Zainab Gimba, members of the State House of Assembly for Bama Central and Gulumba Woloji.

The governor was hosted by transitional chairman of Bama Local Government Area, Grema Terab.



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SPACE	COLOUR			BLACK AND WHITE		
	RATE	VAT	TOTAL	RATE	VAT	TOTAL
FULL PAGE	395,176.32	29,638.22	424,814.54	323,433.00	24,257.48	347,690.48
HALF PAGE	248,970.00	18,672.75	267,642.75	203,175.00	15,238.13	218,413.13
QUARTER PAGE	164,670.00	12,350.25	177,020.25	94,724.44	7,104.33	101,828.77
10" x 6 Col	364,320.00	27,324.00	391,644.00	245,005.20	18,375.39	263,380.59
10" x 5 Col	333,960.00	25,047.00	359,007.00	224,588.11	16,844.11	241,432.22
10" x 4 Col	242,880.00	18,216.00	261,096.00	163,336.80	12,250.26	175,587.06
10" x 3 Col	182,160.00	13,662.00	195,822.00	122,502.60	9,187.70	131,690.30
9" x 6 Col	327,888.00	24,591.60	352,479.60	220,504.68	16,537.85	237,042.53
9" x 5 Col	273,240.00	20,493.00	293,733.00	183,753.90	13,781.54	197,535.44
9" x 4 Col	218,592.00	16,394.40	234,986.40	147,003.12	11,025.23	158,028.35
9" x 3 Col	163,944.00	12,295.80	176,239.80	110,252.34	8,268.93	118,521.27
8" x 6 Col	291,456.00	21,859.20	313,315.20	196,004.16	14,700.31	210,704.47
8" x 5 Col	242,880.00	18,216.00	261,096.00	163,336.80	12,250.26	175,587.06
8" x 4 Col	194,304.00	14,572.80	208,876.80	130,669.44	9,800.21	140,469.65
8" x 3 Col	145,728.00	10,929.60	156,657.60	98,002.08	7,350.16	105,352.24
7" x 6 Col	255,024.00	19,126.80	274,150.80	171,503.64	12,862.77	184,366.41
7" x 5 Col	212,520.00	15,939.00	228,459.00	142,919.70	10,718.98	153,638.68
7" x 4 Col	170,016.00	12,751.20	182,767.20	114,335.76	8,575.18	122,910.94
6" x 6 Col	218,592.00	16,394.40	234,986.40	147,003.12	11,025.23	158,028.35
6" x 5 Col	182,160.00	13,662.00	195,822.00	122,502.60	9,187.70	131,690.30
6" x 4 Col	145,728.00	10,929.60	156,657.60	98,002.08	7,350.16	105,352.24
6" x 3 Col	109,296.00	8,197.20	117,493.20	73,501.56	5,512.62	79,014.18
6" x 2 Col	72,864.00	5,464.80	78,328.80	49,001.04	3,675.08	52,676.12
5" x 5 Col	151,800.00	11,385.00	163,185.00	102,085.50	7,656.41	109,741.91
5" x 4 Col	121,440.00	9,108.00	130,548.00	81,668.40	6,125.13	87,793.53
5" x 3 Col	91,080.00	6,831.00	97,911.00	61,251.30	4,593.85	65,845.15
5" x 2 Col	60,720.00	4,554.00	65,274.00	40,834.20	3,062.57	43,896.77
4" x 6 Col	145,728.00	10,929.60	156,657.60	98,002.08	7,350.16	105,352.24
4" x 5 Col	121,440.00	9,108.00	130,548.00	81,668.40	6,125.13	87,793.53
4" x 4 Col	97,152.00	7,286.40	104,438.40	65,334.72	4,900.10	70,234.82
4" x 3 Col	72,864.00	5,464.80	78,328.80	49,001.04	3,675.08	52,676.12
4" x 2 Col	48,576.00	3,643.20	52,219.20	32,667.36	2,450.05	35,117.41
3" x 3 Col	54,648.00	4,098.60	58,746.60	36,750.78	2,756.31	39,507.09
3" x 2 Col	36,432.00	2,732.40	39,164.40	24,500.52	1,837.54	26,338.06
2" x 2 Col	24,288.00	1,821.60	26,109.60	16,333.68	1,225.03	17,558.71
1" x 1 Col	6,072.00	455.40	6,527.40	4,083.42	306.26	4,389.68

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Depth	38.1 (CM)	Depth	-	15 (Inches)
Width	25.4 (CM)	Width	-	10 (Inches)

### POLITICAL RATE

SPACE	RATE	VAT	TOTAL
FRONT PAGE MAST HEAD EAR PIECE	461,622.86	34,621.71	496,244.57
FRONT PAGE SOLUS	787,474.29	59,060.57	846,534.86
FRONT PAGE STRIP	787,474.29	59,060.57	846,534.86
BACK PAGE EAR PIECE	420,889.54	31,566.72	452,456.26
FULL PAGE (COLOUR)	465,967.54	34,947.57	500,915.11
FULL PAGE (BLACK AND WHITE)	364,037.14	27,302.79	391,339.93
HALF PAGE (COLOUR)	303,285.71	22,746.43	326,032.14
HALF PAGE (BLACK AND WHITE)	247,500.00	18,562.50	266,062.50
QUARTER PAGE (COLOUR)	203,877.14	15,290.79	219,167.93
QUARTER PAGE (BLACK AND WHITE)	111,692.74	8,376.96	120,069.70

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S/NO	SIZE	RATE	VAT	TOTAL
1	Handling for the first 40 copies	120,000.00	9,000.00	129,000.00
2	Per 1000 Copies (1 Page)	28,000.00	2,100.00	30,100.00
3	Per 1000 Copies (Magazine 2-8 Pages)	50,000.00	3,750.00	53,750.00
4	Per 1000 Copies (Magazine above 8 pages)	80,000.00	6,000.00	86,000.00

### CLASSIFIEDS

S/NO	POSITION	SIZE	RATE	VAT	TOTAL
1	Registration of Trustees	3" x 2 Cols	6,857.14	514.29	7,371.43
2	Loss of Documents	2" x 2 Cols	4,400.00	330.00	4,730.00
3	Change of Name	Per Box	2,000.00	-	2,000.00

### SPECIAL POSITION

SPACE	RATE	VAT	TOTAL
FULL WRAP AROUND	6,750,000.00	506,250.00	7,256,250.00
HALF WRAP AROUND	4,500,000.00	337,500.00	4,837,500.00
PAGE 2 OR 3	400,000.00	30,000.00	430,000.00
PAGE 4 OR 5	375,000.00	28,125.00	403,125.00
PAGE 6 OR 7	325,000.00	24,375.00	349,375.00
FRONT PAGE MAST HEAD EAR PIECE	225,000.00	16,875.00	241,875.00
FRONT PAGE SOLUS	312,500.00	23,437.50	335,937.50
FRONT PAGE STRIP	375,000.00	28,125.00	403,125.00
BACK PAGE EAR PIECE	200,000.00	15,000.00	215,000.00
BACK PAGE STRIP	250,000.00	18,750.00	268,750.00
CENTRE SPREAD (COLOUR)	837,500.00	62,812.50	900,312.50
DOUBLE SPREAD (COLOUR)	700,000.00	52,500.00	752,500.00
CENTRE SPREAD (BLACK & WHITE)	575,000.00	43,125.00	618,125.00
DOUBLE SPREAD (BLACK & WHITE)	550,000.00	41,250.00	591,250.00
FRONT PAGE (10" X 6)	3,250,000.00	243,750.00	3,493,750.00
ROP STRIP (COLOUR)	125,000.00	9,375.00	134,375.00
ROP STRIP (BLACK & WHITE)	85,000.00	6,375.00	91,375.00

### PROPERTY AND IT, VACANCY, AGRIC, AND EVENTS/EDUCATION RATE

COLOUR				BLACK AND WHITE		
SPACE	RATE	VAT	TOTAL	RATE	VAT	TOTAL
7 X 3	108,571.43	8,142.86	116,714.29	62,857.14	4,714.29	67,571.43
6 X 3	102,857.14	7,714.29	110,571.43	57,142.86	4,285.71	61,428.57
6 X 2	45,428.57	3,407.14	48,835.71	32,857.14	2,421.43	34,707.14
5 X 3	53,428.57	4,007.14	57,435.71	37,428.57	2,807.14	40,235.71
5 X 2	42,571.43	3,192.86	45,764.29	24,857.14	1,864.29	26,721.43
4 X 3	47,714.29	3,578.57	51,292.86	30,571.43	2,292.86	32,864.29
4 X 2	33,142.86	2,485.71	35,628.57	21,714.29	1,628.57	23,342.86
3 X 3	34,571.43	2,592.86	37,164.29	23,142.86	1,735.71	24,878.57
3 X 2	22,857.14	1,714.29	24,571.43	14,285.71	1,071.43	15,357.14
2 X 2	16,000.00	1,200.00	17,200.00	9,142.86	685.71	9,828.57
2 X 1	7,714.28	578.57	8,292.85	4,975.71	373.18	5,348.89

# Protest Day 7: Over 120 Anti-corruption CSOs Give IGP 7-day Ultimatum To Arrest, Jail EFCC Boss

*\*Call on Buhari to urgently sanitise Commission, preserve his integrity*

By: ADO ADEBOYE, Akure

Over 120 frontline Anti-corruption Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), on Friday, held a massive town hall meeting, in Lagos, to round off their week-long protest against what they called "Politicisation of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Disobedience of Court Orders and Infringement on Human Rights of Nigerians" under the leadership of Abdulrasheed Bawa.

The protesters, who began to have a large following on social and conventional media, since their first public protest last Friday, gave the Inspector-General of Police a seven-day ultimatum to effect the Court order that committed Bawa to prison for contempt, noting that the EFCC's alleged desperate recruitment of "counter-CSOs" would not help the Commission. According to them, though the first phase of the protest ended on Friday, the CSOs would jointly and individually petition relevant international agencies, demanding sanctions against Bawa until he becomes law abiding and serves his jail term. Spokesperson for the Transparency and Accountability Group, Ayodeji Ologun, insisted that the EFCC boss could not appeal the contempt ruling without first obeying the order, saying the Nigerian authorities were dangerously toeing the path of anarchy with the incessant disobedience of court orders, especially by an agency set up to stamp out corruption.

He said the politicisation of the EFCC was evident in the slant of its operations, noting that while series of petitions were piled up unattended at the EFCC offices



on monumental corruption across Nigeria, the Commission's boss had allegedly demonstrated that his task was mainly political vendetta.

The activists kicked strongly against the EFCC's statement that they were hired CSOs, saying those on the struggle had been at the forefront of the fight against corruption for years and were well known for their doggedness and patriotism.

"When Bawa was still learning to wear his pants, or hiding in his parents' home, many of us here were already at the barricades fighting for democracy and the office he is enjoying today. Back then, nobody paid us to fight for justice. Whoever is saying we were paid to do this must be thoroughly examined. We are strictly activists, not political

jobbers," Director, Activists for Good Governance, Declan Ihehaire, said.

"We are saying President Buhari should sack Bawa and if he doesn't sack him, we are sure that whoever is coming on board, come May 29, 2023, will listen to us and have Bawa sacked," he added.

The CSOs accused the EFCC of greater corruption and called on President Muhammadu Buhari to immediately put machineries in motion to sanitise the Commission so that the war against criminals and corrupt elements in Nigeria would make a meaning.

"Go to EFCC office today, there won't be parking space. Most of them, who are police officers, drive different types of exotic cars that their colleagues who don't work with EFCC cannot

afford," Spokesperson for the Coalition of Anti-corruption Organisations, Olufemi Lawson, said.

Reviewing the protests so far, he stated, "For one week, we have, as a coalition, embarked on a sustained agitation for the removal of Mr Abdulrasheed Bawa as the Chairman of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission. The Coalition, comprising of over 120 active organisations, has been able to sustain this, despite sponsored blackmail, intimidation and campaign of calumny by agents of the embattled EFCC Chairman, Mr Bawa.

"Today, we have invited selected leaders of our various organizations, to further press home our demand, under an atmosphere of engagement with some more stakeholders, whom we have also invited to be part of us today.

"As frontline Anti-corruption activists, we wish to restate our uncompromising demand, for President Muhammadu Buhari to immediately relieve Mr Bawa of the position of the Chairman of the EFCC. Mr Bawa has lost the moral capacity to continually preside over such an important law enforcement agency, having become a signpost for disobedience to the rule of law, particularly express orders of our courts."

Lawson, who is also the Executive Director, Centre for Public Accountability, added, "This is just the first phase. We will be submitting petitions to

relevant international agencies and embassies demanding sanctions against Bawa until he becomes law-abiding. We can't allow our Judiciary be rubbished by anyone.

"We are by this medium, giving a seven-day ultimatum to President Muhammadu Buhari, in line with the mood of the nation currently, to direct the Inspector General of Police to effect the arrest order on Bawa and commit him to prison, as ordered by the court, after which our nationwide protests would resume."

He saluted the courage of various leaders and groups who had been part of the sustained agitation for Bawa to be sacked on account of disobedience of court orders, and had refused to be intimidated even in the face of obvious threats.

The 'Bawa Must Go' protests, which started a week ago, were led by CACOL Chairman, Debo Adeniran; Executive Director, Zero Graft Centre, Kolawole Sanchez-Jude; Chairman, Coalition Against Corruption and Bad Governance, Toyin Raheem; Executive Director, Centre for Public Accountability, Olufemi Lawson; Spokesperson for the Transparency and Accountability Group, Ayodeji Ologun; Director, Activists for Good Governance, Declan Ihehaire; and Ahmed Balogun of Media Rights Concern, among over 100 notable leaders of Anti-corruption CSOs.



# Atiku: Northerners Are Not Stupid!

By: ABDULLAHI BAYERO

Atiku Abubakar, Waziri Adamawa, the 77-year old presidential candidate of the People's Democratic Party, (PDP), in the 25th February, 2023, elections maybe an household name in the North, but he cannot lay claim to the 14 million followers of President Muhammadu Buhari of the All Progressives Congress (APC), in the region.

If anything, he symbolizes the sort of savagely self-serving professional politicians that Northerners and indeed all Nigerians have since started to shun. After a comfortable career in the 'plum' Nigeria Customs Service and more than three decades in politics, Atiku's only legacies are lucrative private enterprises such as the American University of Nigeria Yola, Intels Logistics and Adama Beverages Limited, makers of Faro drinks.

To start with, the North-East geopolitical zone of the country would not vote for Atiku Abubakar because the former vice-president neglected the region when he was in office between 1999 and 2007.

He could not record eight projects in his home zone in those eight years to the extent that even the road to his village, Ganye in Jada Local Government Area of Adamawa State, was recently constructed by the APC government of President Buhari. Between 2009 and 2019 when Boko Haram terrorists held sway especially in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa states, Atiku lived more abroad than at home and could not orchestrate any coordinated assistance using his celebrated clout at the national and international arenas.

Atiku Abubakar's sixth and hopefully last shot at Nigeria's presidency does not also enjoy the sympathy of the other geopolitical zones in the region. Perennial political peregrination has never been a respected practice in Northern politics. In 1993, he contested the Social Democratic Party presidential primaries losing to M.K.O. Abiola and Babagana Kingibe.

He was a presidential candidate of the Action Congress in the 2007 presidential election coming in third to Umaru Yar'Adua of the PDP and Muhammadu Buhari of the ANPP. He contested the presidential primaries of the PDP during the 2011 presidential election losing out to President Goodluck Jonathan. In 2014, he joined APC ahead of the 2015 presidential election and contested the presidential primaries losing to Buhari. In 2017, he returned to the PDP and was the party's presidential candidate during the 2019 presidential election, again losing to incumbent President Buhari.

To win this time, the former vice-president has tried to define himself as the northern candidate in the coming presidential elections. At the start of the campaigns in October 2022, he told the Arewa Town-hall Policy Dialogue in Kaduna that Northerners do not need an Igbo or Yoruba as president but "someone from the North."

According to him, "I think what the average northerner needs is somebody who is from the north and who also understands the other parts of Nigeria and who has been able to build bridges across the rest of the country. This is what the northerner needs. He doesn't need a



Atiku



Shettima

Yoruba candidate or an Igbo candidate." The era of divide-and-rule politics is over. How can someone campaigning as a unifier utter such anti-North and anti-unity claims?

Thus, while the Waziri Adamawa believes his path to power lies in the north, winning majority of the votes in the region would not be possible for the PDP candidate. He would have to contend not only against his two main opponents, Bola Ahmed Tinubu of the APC and Peter Obi of the Labour Party, he would also have to tame the rising profile of Rabiu Musa Kwankwaso-led New Nigeria People's Party (NNPP). His worst weakness, however, is the terrible track-record in delivering the dividends of democracy to the people.

Voters in the northwest region are still groaning and mourning over the multiple tragedies including the debilitating economic situation and devastating security condition traced back to the PDP's 16 locust years in power. Their embittered disposition is unlikely to translate into votes for the former vice-president. In particular, the populous states of Kano, Kaduna, Sokoto, Kebbi, Zamfara, Niger and Jigawa are all APC aficionados.

Any candidate who sees nothing wrong with the awful and pathetic state of affairs in the north is not worth voting for. The underdevelopment in the north was foisted by such northern leaders. In other words, the north undeveloped the north. Over the decades, the north has been held down by leaders of northern extraction who presided over Nigeria and saw nothing wrong with endemic poverty and misery culture. The coming polls promise to put paid to that.

Atiku's condemnation of the APC's Muslim-Muslim ticket is clearly a case of sour grapes because it makes Tinubu a strong candidate in the Muslim north. In contrast, the PDP's religiously diverse ticket hasn't earned him the same robust political mileage in Christian-dominated parts of the north. Rather, the Labour Party's Peter Obi is more favourably looked upon among some northern Christians.

The North is the most backward in

Nigeria judging from any developmental index. Based on the three Human Development Indexes, (HDI), namely life expectancy, education and per capita income, it is obvious that virtually all the states in the North fall below the HDI of 0.539 as of 2019. How would the region develop with a mass of illiterate citizenry? How do we turn this ugly scenario around other than by electing dedicated, progressive, visionary and committed leaders at both the federal and state levels?

The North is re-thinking and seeking a way out of the underdevelopment quagmire. It is no longer clinging onto the old attitudes that have failed the people. The 2023 general elections provide a historic opportunity for it to seek to change the unenviable narrative. The North is ready for a political paradigm shift. It intends to inject a new life into the leadership of the region and nation.

Like the leopard and its stubborn spots, Atiku cannot change his character of callous disregard for ordinary citizens. Only recently, he called on the Federal Government to not extend the deadline for the transition to the newly designed currency notes despite the outcry especially among the unbanked rural dwellers that constitute the bulk of the population of the North.

This call is reminiscent of his appeal for the repeal of Sharia law introduced after public demand by some Northern states with overwhelming Muslim majorities. It is also a flagrant violation of the religious and cultural rights of citizens as contained in the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and extant universal conventions.

However, Atiku's most pathetic political promise is the release of Nnamdi Kanu, founder of the IPOB and a worse perpetrator of atrocities against Northerners than even Chukwuemeka Ojukwu during his 30-months civil war. What manner of justice rewards aggressors and fails to even acknowledge the deaths and destruction meted on the victims? Would he offer the same treatment to Boko Haram's Abubakar Shekau and similar terrorists or is this just a depraved pitch by a desperate do-or-die

politician?

As if these travesties are not evil enough, the PDP contender also promised to do a single term in the presidency and hand-over to an Igbo candidate in 2027. This is the most undemocratic declaration ever made by a contestant in any democracy. How can a single candidate speak for the whole North and declare where his own successor would emerge even before his own election?

In the final days to voting, Atiku plans to unleash all manners of religious and tribal sentiments to sway voters in the North. Unfortunately for him, the North has since written him off as an untrustworthy and dishonest person not worthy of their bulk support. As an observer put it "Atiku thinks Buhari just woke up to get 14 million votes in the kitty from a section of the country because of ethnicity? No. Buhari built a legacy of honesty and forthrightness over the years while Atiku's legacies are direct opposites of these."

In 1999 at the launching of a book on Sa'adu Zungur written by Prof. M.A. Yakubu, the current Chairman of INEC at Arewa House in Kaduna, Atiku as the Vice President of Nigeria and the most senior political office holder from the North in the Federal Government at that time publicly pilloried all Northern leaders. He told his bewildered audience that the Northern leaders and elders were the people who failed the North and the nation. He said they were the ones who had caused the problems.

The Northern Elders Forum (NEF) in its recent statement declared that Atiku has no credentials to be a sole Northern presidential candidate. Their reason is that he has not been seen as somebody who is close to the North because he has not been fair to us. He is somebody having his base outside the North. According to Alhaji Seidu Baba, a founding member of the NEF, Northerners commonly view Atiku as an untrustworthy and dishonest person who does not deserve their massive votes during the 2023 poll.

Abdullahi Bayero writes from Kaduna

# Social Media and the 2023 Election Campaigns

By Jibrin Ibrahim

THE Centre for Democracy and Development has just published a major study on social media and the 2023 election campaigns which I summarise here. Currently, the number of active social media users in Nigeria has risen from 27 million, in 2019, to 36 million ahead of the 2023 elections. Given the challenge of prevailing misinformation and disinformation on social media platforms, and the way such disinformation can permeate into the media more generally, greater access to online information does not necessarily create more informed citizens. In fact, in Nigeria, it has confused the citizenry while entrenching pre-existing divides based on ethnicity and religion especially as malinformation, a deliberate sharing of genuine information with an intent to cause harm, thrives in this election season.

As the elections approach, we are witnessing renewed sophistication and organisation in the push for disinformation. Key players are focused on glorifying or delegitimising political candidates and undermining the credibility of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). At the same time online organisation remains largely informal, in part by design, with political parties driving disinformation behind the scenes through unofficial party accounts or hired influencers. In addition to the use of platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and WhatsApp, TikTok, with its predominantly video content that can bridge educational divides, is playing an increasingly important role. So too are Twitter Spaces, which are recorded and then shared, as a podcast, across social media platforms in ways that increases listenership.

“The disinformation ecosystem has created lucrative opportunities, particularly for youth. Some of the most prominent political influencers on social media, who are hired by political parties or individual candidates, earn up to N500,000 (US\$1200) a month, whilst those with smaller followings are likely to receive nearer N50,000 (US\$110).”

Cross-platform posting remains critical to understanding Nigeria's digital ecosystem as screen grabs or content from one platform can be shared across all others, broadening the reach beyond the number of direct users. Content also moves from online forums into offline spaces with soldiers of mouth spreading online content through streets talks, in motor parks and at newspaper stands.

This makes curbing disinformation very challenging in Nigeria. But at the same time these networks for the flow of information can also

promote democracy. Civic awareness of the continuous voter's registration process and the importance of participating has largely been driven by a sustained online campaign in the run-up to 2023, while the platforms can be used to fact check and hold elected and aspiring officials to account. Finding a balance that accentuates these positives and diminishes the negative aspects must be a priority as the elections approach.

In the 2019 elections, the Atikulated Youth Force, the social media team of the People's Democratic Party (PDP)'s presidential candidate, and the Buhari Media Centre (BMC), with links to the All Progressives Congress (APC), dominated the online discourse. Such groups are still present in 2023, although part of the BMC has now evolved to centre around APC presidential candidate, Bola Ahmed Tinubu, with his supporters identifying as being 'BATified'. However, they have been supplanted in 2023 by Obidients – the label used by the supporters of the Labour Party (LP) presidential candidate, Peter Obi. They are the most active online actors in this election.

In addition to promoting his candidacy, many have been accused of spreading disinformation. In fact, the candidate himself was compelled to call them to order in September 2022, after his presidential campaign was accused of using overzealous social media supporters to skew the narrative in his favour. Obi also distanced himself from any engagement of his supporters in any malicious campaigns against his opponents in a series of tweets. But such malevolent online campaigns engineered by all leading parties continue to be a prevailing feature of Nigeria's information ecosystem. The disinformation ecosystem has created lucrative opportunities, particularly for youth. Some of the most prominent political influencers on social media, who are hired by political parties or individual candidates, earn up to N500,000 (US\$1200) a month, whilst those with smaller followings are likely to receive nearer N50,000 (US\$110).

“Disinformation is being instrumentalised to entrench pre-existing social cleavages around ethnicity and religion in the 2023 election campaign. This is accentuated by the fact that the three major ethnic groups in Nigeria are fielding presidential candidates – Peter Obi (Igbo), Bola Tinubu (Yoruba) and Atiku Abubakar (Fulani/Hausa). Often, “photoshopped scenes or old images are being recirculated or utilised to cast one ethnicity against the other and delegitimise opposition”.”

In previous elections text and

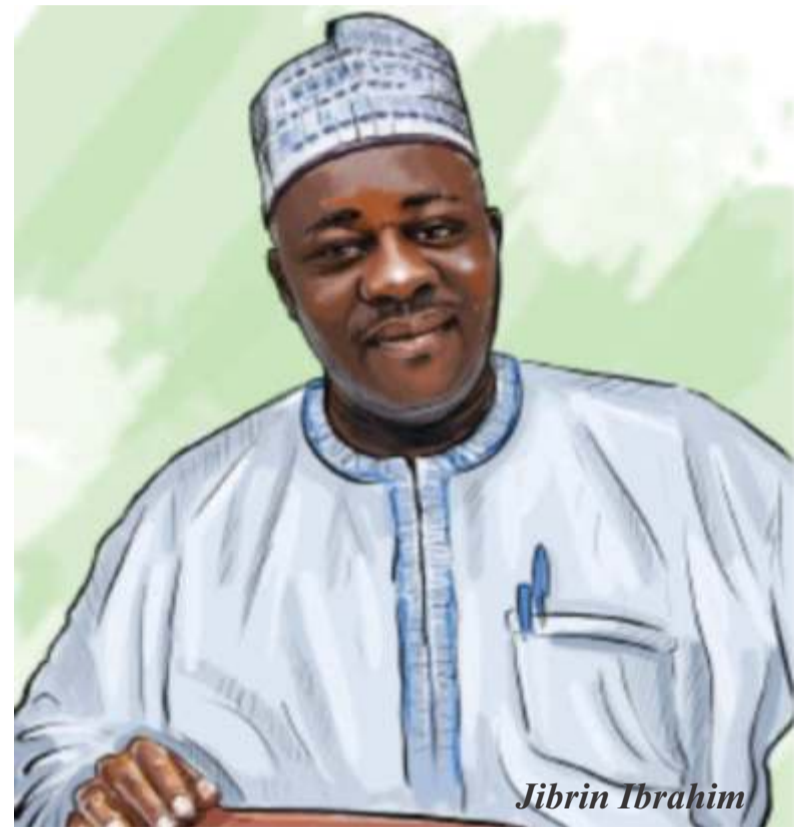
pictures were dominant but, in 2023, the emphasis is more on real time livestreaming of audio and video content on social media platforms. One of the innovations this year is the organisation of political song challenges as the one coordinated by Dauda Rara, a prominent northern political musician, and is called 'Jagaban Shine Gaba'. The challenge encouraged citizens to mime a song with creative videos and upload it to TikTok.

Rara and his team of judges reviewed the entries and awarded 12 cars, 30 iPhones and selected a further 50 individuals to receive N100,000 (\$220) each. Other political actors have also been promoting challenges that favour their candidates by offering gifts or rewards for those that generate the most viral content. Coupled with the TikTok's fairly lax community guidelines and limited enforcement, these challenges can be used to push disinformation “without those responsible being penalised” in the view of one user.

TikTok content also reaches individuals without an account through cross-posting, meaning that it can reach Nigerians with limited literacy when it comes to written text. It is much cheaper to send out jingles on TikTok, which previously had to be placed on radio and TV channels, and with phone sharing and cross-platform posting, the audience reached can still be significant.

WhatsApp remains utilised to coordinate election organisations, circulate audio and visuals, and has the largest reach in terms of direct numbers of users. Voicenotes remains critical, especially in local languages, with content regularly played and replayed to an audience that has no direct online access. Other closed network platforms like Telegram are also increasingly influential. These closed spaces are also used to help organise campaign rallies and other large gatherings both online and offline. The latter is a concern given that separatist groups, such as the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), have Telegram channels where they talk directly to supporters, spread disinformation, recruit adherents and plan offline activities.

“The example given is an outlier, but social media more regularly serves as a source of content inspiration for mainstream media. It is common to find issues trending on Twitter being discussed on morning or evening debate shows as this is what the audience is looking to hear. In that sense, media houses are bringing the online into the conventional media and into peoples' homes. And when they invite so-called 'political consultants' as experts into their studios, they invite disinformation



specialists. These individuals are often paid to peddle half-truths, promote conspiracy theories or attempt to legitimise false information flowing online.”

For all social media platforms, the line between the online and offline remains blurred. For example, during this election campaign cycle, a letter on with the official INEC letterhead, and purportedly signed by the INEC spokesperson, was released claiming to commence the investigation of the APC presidential candidate on drug related charges. However, this letter was a forgery and it originated on WhatsApp, moved quickly across social media, and was read out on national broadcast platforms such as Arise TV. There was never any investigation, nor was the statement issued by INEC, but in a rush to break the news, and possibly influenced by media partisanship, it became a mainstream story.

Fig 1 – Image of INEC fake press release alongside the rebuttal.

The example given is an outlier, but social media more regularly serves as a source of content inspiration for mainstream media. It is common to find issues trending on Twitter being discussed on morning or evening debate shows as this is what the audience is looking to hear. In that sense, media houses are bringing the online into the conventional media and into peoples' homes. And when they invite so-called 'political consultants' as experts into their studios, they invite disinformation specialists. These individuals are often paid to peddle half-truths, promote conspiracy theories or attempt to legitimise false information flowing online.

Disinformation is being instrumentalised to entrench pre-

existing social cleavages around ethnicity and religion in the 2023 election campaign. This is accentuated by the fact that the three major ethnic groups in Nigeria are fielding presidential candidates – Peter Obi (Igbo), Bola Tinubu (Yoruba) and Atiku Abubakar (Fulani/Hausa). Often, “photoshopped scenes or old images are being recirculated or utilised to cast one ethnicity against the other and delegitimise opposition”.

An example was a picture of the APC vice-presidential candidate, Kashim Shettima, showing him with what was claimed to be members of the Islamist militant group Boko Haram. The image was circulated widely on Twitter, WhatsApp and was even referred to by a television morning show producer. A factcheck eventually revealed that while Shettima was indeed sitting and having a meal with people, they were not Boko Haram members but nomadic Fulani parents whose children he had enrolled in secular schools in 2017.

Fig 2 – Image of Shettima eating a meal with nomadic Fulani parents. With the APC running a controversial Muslim-Muslim ticket, this falsehood appears to have been designed to appeal to, and prey on the fears of, Christian voters. Clearly, we must all be careful about what we see and hear on the social media.

**Ibrahim is a professor of Political Science and development consultant/expert, and Senior Fellow of the Centre for Democracy and Development. He is also the Chair of the Editorial Board of Abuja-based online newspaper, PREMIUM TIMES.**

# It's Easy Defending Criminality When You're Not the Victim

By Owei Lakemfa

**I** EXPECTED a backlash when on February 3, 2023, I published a piece: "Recreating the Holocaust in their own image." It came as expected. The various reactions reinforce my position that our world can be a far better place if only otherwise decent humans would not rationalise evil. But it is quite easy to rationalise criminality, if you are not the victim. To such decent people, I usually say, please put yourself in the position of the victim and see whether you will still hold the same position. But such a plea is usually a tall order as many seem set in their ways, are socially or religiously indoctrinated. It can be explosive, potentially dangerous or almost impossible to ask somebody who holds religious beliefs on a matter, to rethink his position.

Sure, there were many who supported my simple act of drawing attention to the issues in the Palestine, especially the ongoing genocide and calling for a resolution in favour of a two-state solution in which Israel and the Palestine will live in secured borders, in peace and raise their families as good neighbours. The famous African novelist, Chinua Achebe, wrote: "Let the kite perch and let the eagle perch too – If one says no to the other, let his wing break."

"It does not make sense to wait until a people are wiped out before we agree there is genocide. The French slaughter of about two million Algerians in order to stop that country's independence and assimilate it, is no less a genocide than the Nazis massacre of six million Jews or the Belgian slaughter of 15 million Congolese. The first genocide of the 20th century involved 100,000 persons in Namibia. But it was a genocide because the Germans exterminated over 60,000 of the total 80,000 Herero people; that was eliminating 80 per cent of the people. It also killed over 10,000 of the Nama people. That figure may seem 'small' but it was 50 per cent of the Nama

people."

There are people I will not waste my time explaining matters to for they are far gone in their ways or are direct beneficiaries of evil. For instance, why would I waste precious time and space trying to persuade Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to stop his philistine or Nazist approach of genocide to the Palestinian issue when that is his political oxygen? Why would Netanyahu allow peace when violence, which he calls 'security', is the bait he uses to fish in Israeli political waters? Today, it is these criminal tactics that may save him and his wife, Sara, from going to jail having been indicted over three years ago, on charges of bribery, fraud and breach of trust.

However, there are decent people I feel obliged to take up issues with since there is a chance they can rethink their ways and work for a better humanity. I will restrict myself to reactions on an international platform I belong to but will not mention names because I have not sought their permission to do so.

One measured response was: "Using terms like genocide and extermination is so far from the truth that it amounts to slander." This line of thinking continued: "What's going on between Israel and the Palestinians isn't genocide. It's more complicated than that. Yes, you're right about Israeli displacement going on there. But it's nothing on a massive scale like what happened in other places in the region... that caused more casualties and destruction..."

A grave mistake in this type of analysis is that it assumes that genocide is based on the number of casualties, not the act itself. The Oxford Dictionary defines genocide as "the deliberate killing of a large number of people from a particular nation or ethnic group with the aim of destroying that nation or group."

It does not make sense to wait until a people are wiped out before we agree there is genocide. The French slaughter of about two million Algerians in

order to stop that country's independence and assimilate it, is no less a genocide than the Nazis massacre of six million Jews or the Belgian slaughter of 15 million Congolese. The first genocide of the 20th century involved 100,000 persons in Namibia. But it was a genocide because the Germans exterminated over 60,000 of the total 80,000 Herero people; that was eliminating 80 per cent of the people. It also killed over 10,000 of the Nama people. That figure may seem 'small' but it was 50 per cent of the Nama people.

In contrasting the Turkish genocide against the Armenians, he sought to rationalise it thus: "The difference with Israel is that it is also about its security. It's a small country that also feels threatened. Much of what they have been doing in the last 75 years of their existence is out of security." Incredible! So, Israel wants security, but denies security for its Palestinian neighbours? The truth is that both peoples need security and one cannot be secured by denying the other security.

On the continued theft of Palestinian lands, including East Jerusalem, which has seen Israeli illegal settlements increase from 115, 700 in the 1993 Peace Accords to over 350,000 within 20 years, a rationalisation is provided: "They want to split the Palestinian lands in the West Bank with Israeli settlements in between because it also prevents any future Palestinian state from consolidating and be possibly a threat." So, the plan is to deny the Palestinians a country in their indigenous homestead.

"Doubtlessly, Israel has fought and defeated big armies but only the uncritical will ascribe this to spiritual reasons and the belief that Israelis are "God's Chosen People". The truth is that all humans: Jews and Gentiles, Christians and Muslims, African Traditional religionists and Buddhists, are children of God. So, in reality, the Euro-Israelis are God-Choosing people who at the birth of their new state on



May 14, 1948 told the indigenous Jewish people that God had done too little in their lives to deserve a mention in the constitution of the new state."

While Israel brings foreigners, mainly Europeans to settle, it denies Palestinians forced abroad, their right to return home. A people who cried for centuries for a homeland, should not deprive other people a homeland which is what Israel is doing.

The current Israeli State is quite simply an European enclave. What Europeans did was to create a new country in the Middle East in the name of Israel and systematically nibble Palestinian lands by creating illegal settlements, hoping in the nearest future to make the indigenous people landless.

Doubtlessly, Israel has fought and defeated big armies but only the uncritical will ascribe this to spiritual reasons and the belief that Israelis are "God's Chosen People". The truth is that all humans: Jews and Gentiles, Christians and Muslims, African Traditional religionists and Buddhists, are children of God. So, in reality, the Euro-Israelis

are God-Choosing people who at the birth of their new state on May 14, 1948 told the indigenous Jewish people that God had done too little in their lives to deserve a mention in the constitution of the new state.

As for Israel's seeming invisibility in the battle field, more critical minds would look beyond the brilliance of its generals and the 'spiritual' to the enormous military and intelligence backup it receives from its mother continent and the United States. For the blind, especially in Africa who think the current Israeli state is the fulfilment of God's promise, they need to think again because Israel is not a Christian state. Indeed, nearly all those who created the current state of Israel, were atheists. These included its founding father, David Ben-Gurion, and former prime ministers, Moshe Dayan and Golda Meir.

We need to build peace in the Palestine, a land where three great religions: Judaism, Christianity and Islam meet. We need a new world in which all are born free and equal.

# Egypt 2023: Nigeria back on track For World Cup Ticket

**By: AYO OJEDOKUN, Lagos**  
Seven-time champions Nigeria steered their campaign back on the rails after defender Solomon Agbalaka's 71st minute header collected all three points from host nation Egypt at the Cairo International Stadium on Wednesday night. The defender met Muhammad Aminu's corner kick with a bullet header that Egypt's goalkeeper Mostafa Amin could do nothing about, and it is the host nation that now faces the stark possibility of elimination from the 23rd Africa U20 Cup of Nations.

After Nigeria lost her opening game by a lone goal to Senegal and the host nation could only putter to a scoreless draw against Mozambique, it was a given that both teams would tear at each other from the beginning. The hosts mounted the highest pressure in the first quarter-hour but shot wide when presented with the opportunity to nick it. Amin saved twice from Ibrahim Muhammad in the 28th minute but at the other end, eight minutes later, Abdelrahman El Sayed again blasted wide in front of Chijioke Aniagboso. Aniagboso did a tidy job throughout,

including saving point-blank shots on two occasions in a ferocious second half. Eight minutes after the restart, Ahmed Belasi could have put the North Africans ahead, but his header went wide with the goal begging. Ten minutes later, Aniagboso kept his calm to deny Rafaat Bayoumi, and two minutes later, Ibrahim Muhammad could have shot Nigeria ahead with a flash shot from the edge of the box that went narrowly wide. Aniagboso again came up big for Nigeria in the 66th minute, with substitute Omar El Saei confident he was on to a great thing.

Five minutes later, Agbalaka's bullet header put Nigeria in front, and despite opportunities for both teams afterwards, the scoreline remained unchanged. Senegal, who hammered Mozambique 3-0 in the earlier match, lead Group A with six points and have virtually sealed a quarter-final place. Three-pointer Nigeria stay in second place, and will be expected to overwhelm one-pointer Mozambique when both teams clash at the same venue on Saturday. Egypt have the daunting prospect of battling Senegal, with defeat sure to mean early elimination for the host nation.



## Election: Timi Frank Urges Northern Leaders, Clerics To Rally Support For Atiku's Presidency

*\*Says Tinubu, Obi have turned game to ethnic matters*

**By: JACOB ONJEWU DICKSON**  
Former Deputy National Publicity Secretary of the All Progressives Congress (APC), Comrade Timi Frank, has appealed to Northern leaders, Clerics and youths across the 19 Northern states to mobilise support for the candidate of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) Alhaji Atiku Abubakar, in the Saturday's election. Frank said the move becomes necessary because other two frontline contenders (Peter Obi and Bola Tinubu) have practically turned the game to ethnic and religious matters, hence the North should not put their son (Atiku) to shame during the election. In a statement released Thursday in Abuja, Frank, who is the United Liberation Movement for West Papua (ULMWP) Ambassador to East Africa and Middle East, said one of the candidates (Obi) has visited nearly all the Churches with various Pastors openly endorsing him while the other (Tinubu) has been playing ethnic politics of 'Emilokan' (It is my turn), hence the need for the Northern leaders and Clerics to speak the

truth to their followers as they go to Mosque on Friday. He said: "It is very important at this point in time for the Northern elders, Clerics and the youths not to sit on the fence but rally round Atiku Abubakar like some Yoruba leaders, faction of Afenifere and PANDEF have done to Peter Obi and Bola Tinubu based on religion and ethnic factors." "We have seen some Southern leaders like Chief Adebajo openly threatening war if a Southerner do not win this election. Again, the activities of the five Southern Governors who are all Christians are part of the plot against the North which must be resisted if Nigeria will continue as one. It is obvious that both Bola Tinubu and Peter Obi are ethnic champions. They have obviously ran ethnic and religion campaigns in such a way that place the North at the disadvantage if either of them win this election. "As a true Southner, I believe in one Nigeria and strongly believe too that only candidate that can unify Nigeria and make her remain as one is Atiku Abubakar, who already has a

Blueprint and determination to restructure Nigeria in such a way that will benefit the North, West, East and South. "I am, however, calling on Norther elders and other organisations in the North to take a bold step by publicly endorsing Atiku as Souther Pastors and other groups have endorsed Peter Obi and Bola Tinubu. "I also appeal to the North to forget about their party affiliations at this moment and come together as one behind Atiku Abubakar who is obviously different from other two ethnic and religious bigots," Frank said. He also called on President Muhammadu Buhari and the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) not to renege on their promises to deliver a free, fair and credible election. Frank warned that "if Bola Ahmed Tinubu emerge the next President, those around President Muhammadu Buhari and other Northern leaders will be the first set of casualties because we have seen how supporters of Tinubu already coming out to call the President names. For example, former



Timi Frank

governor of Edo state, Adams Oshiomhole, Governor Nasir El-rufai among others have recently said Buhari will soon expire once Bola Tinubu wins the election.

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**track For World**  
**Cup Ticket**

Story on Page 23

## Adamawa Women, Youth Assure Of Bloc Vote For Tinubu

*\*Senator Bent says APC's Muslim-Muslim ticket a good experiment for politics of religion to die in Nigeria*

By: JACOB ONJEWU DICKSON

A day to the Presidential election, an All Progressives Congress (APC) senior party woman and the party's critical stakeholder in Adamawa State, Senator Grace Jackson Bent has said that the Muslim-Muslim Presidential ticket of the party is a good experiment that one day in Nigeria, politics of religion will die.

Grace said this yesterday, while addressing hundreds of grassroots mobilizers for APC across the Southern Senatorial District of Adamawa with a call on them to vote for Chief Ahmed Bola Tinubu, the party's presidential flag bearer.

The gathering was mostly women and youth, who were hosted at Galaxy Hotel in Demsa Local Government Area of Numan Federation and were enjoined by Bent to shun blackmailers who are using religion for their selfish reasons. The Adamawa Southern Senatorial is a Christian

dominated district, which she said, should not be caged or be made sentimental over the Muslim-Muslim ticket, but rather, look at it as another hope for the country to one day have a Christian-Christian ticket also.

Grace who represented the Adamawa Southern Zone in 2007 to 2011 called the attention of the people to know that All Progressives Congress (APC) Presidential candidate, Senator Bola Tinubu is the only option of true leadership for the people of Nigeria, not on the basis of religion.

She said her good works while at the National Assembly gave her the "Goggo" which means Mother for all.

According to her, since people believe in her style of leadership, they should be rest assured that she will take them to where the dividends of democracy can be realized. And Tinubu has all the dividends as such, they should follow her to Nigeria's great destiny.

She charged them to ignore all rumbles of religious propaganda

against Tinubu and vote for him because of his carved niche of political proven track records.

Senator Grace came down to her people with the belief that all politics is local to strengthen her foundational base of no fault for Tinubu to get votes from her immediate constituency.

"I bring you the man of the moment, a builder of men and nation. Tinubu is a house-hold name in Nigerian politics. We don't have an option outside him, is the only joker for Saturday's election," Bent said.

She also told the people that Tinubu is hale and hearty, her interaction with him showed his mental alertness and physical fitness is in tact.

"He can even engage one for hours without being tired and therefore, disregard propaganda on his health status.

"Never allow anyone to deceive you that politics is religion, religion is of our mind, while politics is a game of interest. Come to think of it, we had many vice presidents before who are Christians, was there anything

good done for the Christians in the North?

"Today you are still following me because of the many good things I was able to bring to you while a Senator. Still follow me to take you to that place of rest with Tinubu. I will take you to him because is a leader who is pathfinding the road to Nigeria's great destiny.

"Make sure your votes are counted for Tinubu on Saturday and leave the rest to me. Don't try to waste your votes elsewhere, Tinubu by the Grace of God, is the next president of Nigeria," she said.

At the meeting, Hon Bema Ovaldi, Hon Anna Titsi Sini, Hajiya Sa'adadu Madawaki, and Alhaji Uba Dan'arewa who are APC notable men and women, charged the mammoth crowd to pay back the good works of Senator Bent by voting Tinubu. They collectively reiterated that Tinubu is a great politician in Nigeria with his loaded experience, he can hit the ground running with his handy blueprint of administration.

They worried that weaker politicians find politics of religion as their surviving strength. This they said, will end up during Tinubu's regime.

"We are all Christians and the Muslim-Muslim ticket is to further strengthen the oneness and togetherness of the country," Anna said.

"Grace is a Mother who has a direct link with Tinubu, the relationship is going to better off for the people of Adamawa. Make sure your votes are counted for Bola Tinubu that is the only weapon she will use to fight for your rights," Bema said. "The election of Nigeria has been perfected to favour Tinubu. Grace is one of Tinubu's right-hand woman. God has given us Grace to unite our country. Don't spoil this privilege for the people of Adamawa please," Uba said. The women, youth in high spirits, sang solidarity songs of APC winning the presidential election and assured Senator Grace Bent of bloc votes for Tinubu.

## Nigerian Students' Stakeholders Endorse Tinubu For President

By: JACOB ONJEWU DICKSON

A meeting of the national stakeholders or the Nigerian student's communities has just endorsed presidential candidate of the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) to succeed President Muhammadu Buhari in the coming Saturday's election

This decision was taken after an intensive meeting which ended Thursday evening in Abuja.

The students' stakeholders said Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu can be trust in the management of students affairs and human capital development.

In a statement signed by the President of the National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS) Umar Barambu, National Secretary, Vice President, the National

Vice President = Special Duties, Usman Kankia, NANS Senate President, NAUS President, NAPS President, NANCES President, MSS President, Vice President of Northern Students Union Government and Foundation of Christian Students among others, said Tinubu's Tinubu's track records is believable.

The statement said: "By the magnitude of infrastructure revolution under his leadership we can trust him.

By evidence of his campaigns and consultations, from party primaries to candidature, we accept his capabilities and capacity to lead Nigeria.

"By results of his mentorship and human capacity development, the hopes of a boy child/ girl Child /students achieving their dreams and life time ambition remain realistic.

"By proofs of creative models of funding in times of LG financial crisis, revenue shortfalls and political arm twisting, his ingenuity and robust team of players and multi-ethnic cabinet assures us of his innovative ability to terminate strikes and transform the education sector.

"In this regard and recognition of the roles played in the unity of the National Students Body and resolution of ASUU/ASUP crisis.

"It is our firm resolve to address and present our decision that Asiwaju Bola Ahmed TINUBU is hereby endorsed and chosen as our only and preferred candidate for the Saturday, Feb 25, 2023 election."



Tinubu