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If I am Free, No One Dares Try Violence In South East - Nnamdi Kanu



From left: Alh. Shuaib Oyedokun, wife of the celebrant, Mrs. Abimbola Alabi, celebrant, Senator Olu Alabi, Osun State Governor, Senator Ademola Adeleke, former Osun State Governor, Prince Olagunsoye Oyinlola, former APC National Secretary, Senator Iyiola Omisore and South West PDP Chairman, Hon. Kamoru Ajisafe @ the 80th Birthday of Senator Olu Alabi held at the Ebeneseri Mansion, opposite Osun State High Court, Okefia, Osogbo, Osun State. Photo: AKINOLAARIYO

By: BAYO AKAMO,
Ibadan

Detained leader of the proscribed Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), Nnamdi Kanu yesterday, disassociated himself from the prolonged violence in the South Eastern part of the country. Kanu said this while speaking with newsmen immediately after the Federal High Court in Abuja denied him bail in charges bordering on terrorism slammed against him by the federal government. He vowed that those behind the violence leading to wanton killings of their fellow brothers and sisters and burning of property under the guise

of being IPOB members would not be spared.

According to the IPOB leader, the violence persisted because he is being held in the custody of Department of State Services (DSS) adding, if released, there would be peace in the entire South-East region of the country.

"Anybody committing crime cannot go free. I swear it. Anybody committing crime in the South East cannot go free. They are doing it because I am in the DSS custody. If I were to be outside, nobody can try that," he said.

Kanu added, "I suspect that some people in government are complicit. They are making money with the insecurity. They know if Nnamdi Kanu is

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*Frowns at ratio of security personnel
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Tragedy: Lassa Fever Claims Medical Personnel In Ebonyi

By; M K P U M A ENYINNA, Abakaliki

As a result of the outbreak of Lassa Fever in some parts of Ebonyi State persists, one medical personnel has lost her life while trying to rescue other patients at AE--FUTHA.

It was gathered that the medical personnel whose name was given as Ewogu Nkechi, a nurse from Alex

Egwueme Federal University Teaching Hospital, Abakaliki (AE--FUTHA), while trying to save other patients infected with Lassa fever, also contacted it and died last weekend according to a close source from the hospital and was buried immediately based on Lassa fever control protocol.

She was a staff of the Federal Hospital and

worked at the emergency department of AE--FUTHA since December 2019.

She was a graduate of Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki and hailed from Ikwo Local Government Area of Ebonyi State.

When contacted for his reaction, the Commissioner for Health in Ebonyi State, Dr. Moses Ekuma confirmed the outbreak of Lassa Fever in

the state, saying that the state epidemiologist and other health personnels are on top the outbreak.

‘Actually, there is outbreak of Lassa Fever, it is not only in Ebonyi State. It affected other places more especially, those areas that are prone to it. The state epidemiologist and other health team are on top of it to ensure its prevention and control,’ he said.



Mass School Kidnapping Underlies An Attack On Nigeria's Future - CSWN

*Frowns at ratio of security personnel to Nigeria's over 200m inhabitants

By; JACOB ONJEWU DICKSON

Christian Solidarity Worldwide Nigeria (CSWN) has said that it views the spike in frequent mass kidnappings in both schools and communities of vulnerable Nigerians as an attack on Nigeria's future growth and development.

This was expressed in a statement signed by Research and Press Officer, CSW-N, Reuben Buhari, made available to newsmen in Kaduna yesterday.

"About 10 years ago, April 2014, Nigeria got a rude awakening to the menace of large school abductions when 276 students of Government Secondary School Chibok were herded into the bush. Years later almost 100 of

those girls are yet to return. In between that kidnapping and today, we have had other large-scale school abductions all across certain northern states that include the 2018 abduction of 110 school girls in Dapchi, Yobe state; the 2020 abduction of about 300 boys from a secondary school in Kankara, Katsina state.

"Others are the 2021 abduction of 317 School girls of Government Girls Secondary School, Jangebe, Zamfara State; the 2021 abduction of 39 students of Federal College of Forestry Mechanization, Afaka, the Baptist school abduction of 121 students, the Greenfield University abduction, etc," it said.

CSWN said that the latest was the abduction of 287 school children and some

teachers from LEA primary school, Kuriga in Chikun local government area of Kaduna state on March 7, 2024 and the abduction of 87 people from Kajuru station in Kajuru local government area of Kaduna state on March 17, 2024.

"This local government area has recently seen a spike in kidnappings: within a week, about 30 people were kidnapped from different communities, including that of Friday 16th March, where 15 people were kidnapped from Dogon noma village. Chikun is another local government in Kaduna state that is witnessing an upward surge in kidnapping.

"These serial abductions that are almost normative in frequencies underline both a retrogressive

response from duty-bearers and a lack of intelligence utilization.

"This has placed a heavy burden on the government and security agencies to fashion out better response techniques to these incidents that haven't shown signs of abating," the statement said.

It informed that the Chief Executive Officer of CSWN, Reverend Yunusa Nmadu noted that the ratio of security personnel to Nigeria's approximately 200+ million inhabitants hasn't helped the situation.

"in addition to increasing personnel to meet demands, technology should also be deployed, effective border control, stiffer penalties of perpetrators and reduction in corruption would go a long way in improving the security situation in the country." He said.

We're Committed To Protection Of Lives, Property Of Kano People, Gov Yusuf Assures

By; JACOB ONJEWU DICKSON

The Kano State Governor, Alhaji Abba Kabir Yusuf, has expressed his resolute commitment to safeguarding the lives and property of the people within the state.

Governor Yusuf said this, while hosting Kano's security leaders for an iftar gathering at the Government House in Kano.

This was contained in a statement issued by the governor's spokesperson, Sunusi Bature Dawakin Tofa, yesterday.

In the statement, the governor lauded the security agencies for their indispensable role in ensuring the security and welfare of the citizens, recognizing and valuing their contributions.

Governor Yusuf reiterated his administration's firm dedication to strengthening the security framework to effectively deliver the essential services expected by both the government and the people of Kano.

He also revealed that his government has commenced the procurement of food supplies for distribution, with security personnel being among the beneficiaries of the

initiative.

Additionally, he commended the Federal Government, specifically President Ahmed Bola Tinubu, for approving the allocation of food supplies to be distributed to the vulnerable populations throughout the state in the near future.

Seizing the opportunity, the governor encouraged the attendees to continue to implore Almighty Allah and offer prayers unceasingly for peace, stability, and prosperity in Kano State and across Nigeria during this sacred month of Ramadan.

Several security personnel, including Commissioner of Police Muhammad Hussaini Gumel, Brigadier General M.A Sadiq of the 3 Brigade of the Nigerian Army stationed at Bukavu Barracks, and Commander J. K Adedeji of the Naval Logistics College in Dawakin Tofa, expressed their gratitude for the support provided by the Kano State Government to the security agencies.

They reaffirmed their unwavering commitment to ensuring the security of Kano State, depicting the iftar gathering as a forum for discussing crucial matters essential for improving the operational effectiveness of security agencies in Kano.



Gov Yusuf

Killing Of 16 Soldiers: Northern Group Calls For Justice, Professionalism In Identifying Perpetrators

By; AMOS TAUNA, Kaduna

The Northern Christian Youth Professionals (NCYP) has condemned the killing of 16 soldiers of the Nigerian Army of Okuama community in Ughelli South local government area of Delta State.

A statement issued yesterday by the chairman, Isaac Abrak, cautioned the military against revenge, insisting that justice must be served to honour the sacrifices of the brave servicemen that were murdered.

He appealed to the Nigerian Army to conduct a thorough and transparent investigation into the incident, ensuring that justice is pursued professionally and without

harming innocent civilians.

The chairman further explained their hearts go to the families of the fallen soldiers, and stood in solidarity with the Nigerian Army during the time of mourning.

The statement called for the swift identification and prosecution of those responsible for what it called "the heinous act".

It noted, "History has shown that heavy-handed responses can exacerbate tensions and hinder military and public cooperation."

The statement appealed to Bola Ahmed Tinubu and state governors to prioritize the revitalisation of the forest guards to tackle criminals hiding in the forests.

Withheld Salaries: Our 7 Days Warning Strike Legal, In Line With Labour Laws - NASU

**Says FG waivers not for ASUU alone*

By; BAYO AKAMO, Ibadan

The University of Ibadan Chairman of the Non Academic Staff Union of Universities, (NASU), Comrade Femi Ogunlade yesterday, declared that the ongoing seven days warning strike embarked upon by the union is legal, in line with labour laws and labour rules.

Featuring on Fresh FM, Ibadan live interview programme, the NASU Chairman insisted that the Federal Government waivers on the withheld salaries was for all the unions in the universities and not ASUU alone.

He pointed out that the striking unions, NASU and the SSANU followed all the laid down labour

rules on industrial action, saying "our strike is legal, we followed labour laws and labour rules".

According to Comrade Ogunlade the striking unions before commencing on the warning strike gave government ultimatum, sent letters, with their leaders at the National level engaging those in charge in several meetings before embarking on the warning strike.

He emphasised that the union may have no other option than to embark on total strike after the ongoing 7 days strike if the Federal Government failed to pay them the withheld salaries.

The NASU Chairman stressed that on the FG

waivers on the withheld salaries, it was unfortunate that the waivers was only been mis interpreted to mean that it is for the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) members alone, adding that it was wrong for those in charge of the payment of the withheld salaries to be implementing the waivers for ASUU alone leaving other unions in the Universities unattended to.

Comrade Ogunlade maintained that the time has come for those in charge of the payment of the withheld salaries to comply with the order of President Bola Tinubu and effect payment of the withheld salaries to other unions in the Universities as done for ASUU

members

"Let me say it clearly here that the Federal Government gives the waivers on the withheld salaries to all the unions in the Universities not to the ASUU alone. It should be implemented as such", he said.

The NASU Chairman added, "It should be noted that ASUU is not the only union in the Nigeria Universities. Other unions too should be paid their withheld salaries".

"We want them to know we are relevant, the Federal Government waiver is for all the unions in the Universities. It is not for ASUU alone. Paying only ASUU members is a slap on our face".

Yahaya Bello: Arewa Youth Forum Threatens Massive Protest Against EFCC

**Demands closing of case using legal means available*

By; JACOB ONJEWU DICKSON

The Arewa Youth Forum (AYF) has while calling on the President Bola Ahmed Tinubu-led Federal Government, to step in to save the integrity of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) from the clutches of those it described as selfish politicians, has threatened a massive protest in Abuja if immediate past governor of Kogi State, Yahaya Bello is not left off the hook.

AYF expressed this in a statement, signed by its General Secretary, Ahmed Aliyu Usman, made available to newsmen in Kaduna on March 19, 2024.

"The AYF is using this medium to state that in defiance to the above, we will not hesitate to mobilize the youth to march the streets of FCT-Abuja in protest to expose the sponsors and the people behind it publicly," the group warned.

The Arewa Youth Forum which is the premier umbrella platform of all youth organisations in Northern Nigeria, having structures in 19-Nineteen Northern States, the FCT Abuja, some Southern states and the diaspora, said that it has watched with keen interest the unfolding developments concerning the unholy act of tarnishing the image of former Kogi State Governor, His Excellency, Alhaji Yahaya Bello (GYB), through using the anti-corruption czar, EFCC, an action they consider as a desperate and selfish move by villains disguising themselves as politicians.

"The AYF like other well-meaning Nigerians, woke up to the news that the EFCC has, in an amended charge, accused



the former Governor of diverting Kogi State Government funds in September 2015, 4-months before he assumed the position of a governor.

"To any right thinking person and in any saner clime, this charge is not only laughable, but further portrays the EFCC as an agency deeply infested with personalities whose intents and actions are at variance with the noble act that established it as well as that of Mr. President to defeat corruption activities in Nigeria.

"Available reports and facts have it that,

His Excellency, Alhaji Yahaya Bello could not have as of September 2015, conspired with anyone, including the Government House Cashier, Mallam Abdulsalami Hudu, to convert any money belonging to the State Government.

"It should also be noted that GYB before becoming the Governor of Kogi State, had not in any way any financial dealings with the Kogi State Government, which could have permitted him to convert for his personal use, whopping monies

belonging to the Kogi State Government; a scenario that will put anyone in doubt because it does not add up and makes no sense," the statement said.

AYF said that the question begging for answers is, did the Kogi State Government come out in any way to declare its money missing?

"We believe even the lay man on the street knows the answer; A CAPITAL NO!" The statement said.

According to the statement titled, "EFCC'S Political Agenda Against

Governor Yahaya Bello: A Baseless And Selfish Connivance Of Rogue Politicians With The Economic And Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC)" AYF said that

they are therefore, calling on selfish political actors to desist from their campaign of calumny against GYB.

"Heartwarmingly, Kogi State has been ranked and adjudged, both locally and internationally, as a state with sound financial transparency and accountability," it added..

The Arewa Youth Forum therefore, called on the EFCC Chairman to Apologise to Nigerians.

"Tender unreserved apologies by way of an opened letter duly signed, to His Excellency, Alhaji Yahaya Bello, the good and peace loving people of Kogi State and Nigerians at large for making us a laughing stock in the comity of nations. Close the case forthwith, using legal means available.

"On a final note, we wish to note that the developments at the commission to a larger extent, betray the determination of His Excellency, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, GCFR to retool and rejig the agency and make it more vibrant in preventing and fighting corruption in a genuine and objective manner within the ambit of the extant rule of law.

"We are of the view that the current EFCC leadership seems to have picked up the gauntlet from where Bawa left it. This is too frustrating and needs to be checked and addressed by all and sundry," it said.

Abuja Better With Unelected Leader - Ugandan Mayor

By; BASHIR BELLO DOLLARS, Abuja

The Mayor of Entebbe in Uganda, Fabrice Rulinda has disclosed that the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Abuja is better without an elected political leader.

According to Rulinda, an appointed leader in Abuja who is not thinking about the next election, can focus on developing the city unlike someone who is thinking on how to get votes.

"Abuja is better off not having an elected political leader. Abuja should not have a mayor," Rulinda said while giving his view on the discussion whether Abuja, Nigeria's capital city should have a Mayor.

"Politicians consider votes more than development. If Abuja should have a Mayor, an elected politician might be thinking about how to win the next election and not development. So, having an appointee as the head in Abuja is better," Rulinda, adding that elections have not given Africa the real effect it ought to, calling for a rethink.

According to Rulinda, the continent has been copying democracy from the western world but does not adopt a system that will lead to the growth and development of the continent.

Rulinda stated this in Abuja ahead of this year's colloquium organized by Haske Satumari Foundation which will open conversation on electoral and Judicial Reforms.



Rulinda

Rulinda, who is a special guest at the annual colloquium with the theme: "Electoral And Judicial Reforms: The Imperatives on Nigeria's Democracy, Governance, Leadership and its selection processes will be joined by Nigerian leaders including former President Goodluck Jonathan, the Executive Governor of Plateau State, Barr Caleb Manasseh Mutfwang, Human Rights activist and lead council, Falana and Falana Chambers, Mr Femi Falana SAN, former Senate President, Abubakar Bukola

Saraki amongst others on Thursday.

"Election has not had the effect we thought it will have," Rulinda said, while calling for electoral reforms and attitudinal change from politicians.

"Elections in Africa are decided based on who bought the most sugar, salt, and share most of the money and there must be a return on investment.

"Do our electorate understand democracy? Electorates wait for money, the politicians give them the money and after winning, they recoup their money. This is

bad," Rulinda said.

While urging Africans and African leaders to understand the true meaning of democracy, Rulinda said if there is no democracy in homes and families - which is the smallest unit of the society, then the system used at home should be applied in politics.

"Many think election time is time to make money. For the Mayor, Governor and other elective offices after the election, if they share money with the electorates, they may go silent for the next four years," Rulinda

said while decrying how many politicians don't work with their opponents after winning election.

"The one who wins and will not work with the one who loses. If the interest is for development, we must work together for a common interest. We need to develop our own kind of governance," Rulinda said, insisting that only honest conversation like the up coming Haske Kudla Foundation Colloquium will help in chatting a new way of democratic practice in Africa.

"When we start having honest conversations that make us uncomfortable like the one we will have on Thursday, things will work right. We must be intentional as Africans in developing our democracy.

"We need to do away with foolish things like tribalism, ethnicity and religion. Let's start looking for ideas and think on how to develop," Rulinda said, adding that politicians are part of the problem in Africa.

"We now have more takers than givers. African politicians are not benevolent. They got it from the people, refused to invest in the country and moved to Europe. There is corruption in the west but they don't take their wealth to other continents.

"African leaders need to understand that their governance needs to be for their people. When we say people, it is not your immediate family but the generality of the people that voted for you," Rulinda said.

If I am Free, No One Dares Try Violence In South East -Nnamdi Kanu

outside, in two minutes this nonsense will stop.

"Who is the bagger or idiot that will speak when I am talking. That I will give an order in the East who is the idiot that I will give an order that will counter it? Nobody can. I am Nnamdi Kanu. Rubbish!" He declared.

The IPOB leader stressed, "Anybody involved in any form of violence in the East in the name of IPOB is a goner and they know it. Let me come out of this mess, only two minutes, there will be peace in the East", he said.

Kanu had earlier through his lawyer, Alloy Ejimofor applied orally to Justice Binta Nyako of the Federal High Court, Abuja handling his trial that he be relocated out of the custody of the DSS to Kuje Correctional Center, Abuja.

He alleged that the DSS operatives are infringing on his fundamental rights by interfering with his conversations with his lawyers and family members, and that under such a situation, he cannot have the opportunity of preparing himself for his defense

in the terrorism charges brought against him by the federal government.

Justice Nyako however, declined the request on the grounds that, the court had earlier delivered a ruling on the application and rejected the request and that the best option open to Kanu is to go the Court of Appeal to challenge the earlier ruling rather than coming back with the same application.

The court adjourned trial till April 17.



Nnamdi Kanu

NAPTIP Docks Renowned Abuja Based Doctor, 3 Others Over Alleged Organ Harvesting

By; **RAYMOND TEDUNJAYE, Lagos**

Four persons, including an Abuja based prominent medical doctor have been arraigned by the National Agency for Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) for alleged organ harvest.

The medical doctor identified as Dr. Christopher Otorbor, 51, and the three others, were dragged before a High Court of the FCT sitting in Zuba, presided over by Hon. Justice Keziah Ogbonnaya for the alleged offence.

In a statement made available to our correspondent, the Communication Officer of the Agency Adekoye Vincent named the three accomplices as Emmanuel Muiyiwa Olorunlaye, male, 36, Chikaodili Ugochukwu, Female, 37, and Dr. Aremu Abayomi, male, 43 years.

According to the statement, "Dr. Otorbor is the CEO of Alliance Hospital, located in the Garki area of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja.

"He has been enmeshed in the alleged organ harvest controversy since the past year, involving some victims.

"Arraigned with him, are Emmanuel Muiyiwa Olorunlaye, male (36 years), Chikaodili Ugochukwu, Female (37 years), and Dr. Aremu Abayomi, male (43 years).

"Following months of thorough investigation, a prima facie case was established against the defendants, implicating them in varying degrees of culpability for offences related to organ removal, as stipulated under section 20 of the Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Enforcement and Administration Act, 2015.

"They all pleaded not guilty to the charges.

"Ruling on the bail application by counsels to the defendants, the defendants have been ordered to report to the Corporate Headquarters of NAPTIP, Abuja on a daily basis with effect from Tuesday 19th March 2024 and also deposit their traveling documents with the court.

"The Judge also granted the request of counsels in the case for accelerated hearing and subsequently adjourned to May 6th – 9th and 13th – 16th, 2024, for the commencement of the trial."

Kwara Garment Factory Trains Supervisors Ahead Official Take Off



By; **BILIQIS ONAOLAPO OLAJUMOKE, Ilorin**

Kwara State Garment Factory is gearing up for its official launch by providing intensive training to its newly hired supervisors, a statement said at the weekend.

"Led by experts from StarSew, the factory's technical partners who are industry leaders in the

field of Garment Machinery supply and training in the Middle East and North Africa, this training focuses on mastering the operation of cutting-edge machinery, some of which are exclusive to the factory in the country," according to the statement by the factory's managing director, Hajia Olubukola Kifayat Adedeji.

"Following the supervisor

training, the factory will proceed with comprehensive induction sessions for its workforce, assigning them to various departments to optimise efficiency.

"This training is integral to our production process. Our goal is not only to be the largest but also the most proficient and professional in the industry."

The statement said the

factory will commence training other categories of workers in three weeks' time, prioritizing safety and skill development.

"Upon completing the supervisor training, the factory will initiate batch training sessions for its workforce, with each batch comprising 150 individuals," the statement added.



We Already Know Olubadan Designate, Coronation To Be Announce After Oba Balogun's Burial - High Chief Ladoja

**Ibadan High Chiefs pay homage to Olubadan designate*

By; BAYO AKAMO, Ibadan

The Otun Olubadan of Ibadanland and former governor of Oyo State, High Chief Rashidi Ladoja on Friday, disclosed that Ibadan already has Olubadan designate

High Chief Ladoja said this while speaking after the visit of Olubadan in Council members to the

residence of the new Olubadan designate, Oba Owolabi Olakulehin at his Alalubosa area of Ibadan.

The former governor stressed after a closed door meeting with the Olubadan designate, that there is no question about who becomes the next Olubadan.

According to High Chief Ladoja, "There is no date yet for the coronation of

new Olubadan, but the date shall be announced as soon as the burial rites for the deceased is completed.

"The departed monarch (Oba Balogun) came from the Otun line, the next monarch will be from Balogun line, so the head of Balogun line is the Balogun of Ibadanland, who has become the Olubadan designate", he said.

High Chief Ladoja added, "We all know that Ibadan does things accordingly, if a king dies, we already know who is next, we refer to him as designate"

"We are here to formalize what next after the burial rite of the deceased would have been completed, we also discussed how to give befitting burial to the deceased.



High Chief Rashidi Ladoja and other members of Olubadan in Council visiting the Olubadan designate in Ibadan on Friday

Akwa Ibom Govt Spends N100bn On 77 Roads

By; PATRICK TITUS, Uyo

The Akwa Ibom State Government had said that it has disbursed over N100 billion on the construction of 77 road projects in the state since the inception on May 29, 2023

Commissioner for Information, Comrade Ini Ememobong who disclosed this after the State Executive Council (Exco) meeting last Thursday, gave a breakdown of the 77

roads as 36 new roads initiated by the current administration while 41 roads were inherited from the immediate past administration.

Comrade also said that the Exco has also approved the development of ARISE Park and the construction of tourist recreational center with road networks and pedestrian bridge in Uyo, the state capital.

He added that the Exco has approved the execution of water projects in 11

communities across the state to guarantee access to portable water supply for the benefiting communities.

Also decided by the Exco according to the Information Commissioner was the commissioning of 2 Models schools to wit: Christ the King School and Ewet Primary School fixed for May 7, 2024. where pupils will be given free School bags, shoes, and uniforms.

He said the Exco which

had non-statutory members in attendance at the first instance was presided over by the state governor, Pastor Umo Eno who granted assent to two bills recently passed by the State House of Assembly.

These are Akwa Ibom State Bulk Purchase Agency establishment Bill and Akwa Ibom State Infrastructure and Asset Management and Maintenance Agency Bill. Comrade Ememobong stated.

PDP Urges Tinubu To Review 2024 Budget

By; AMOS TAUNA, Kaduna

The Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), has called on President Bola Ahmed Tinubu to restore the integrity of the 2024 budget by immediately ordering an open investigation into the alleged insertion as well as a holistic review of the budget.

A statement issued by the party's National Publicity Secretary, Debo Ologunagba, said that the PDP stands by its demand that Senator Akpabio should report at the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) for investigation into the alleged looting of N108 billion belonging to the people of Akwa Ibom State and the N86 billion alleged contract scam under his watch as the Governor of Akwa Ibom State and the Minister of Niger Delta Affairs respectively.

The party also slammed the Senator Godswill Akpabio-led All Progressives Congress (APC) leadership in the Senate for seeking to use diversionary press statements to suppress the demand for an open investigation into the alleged improper insertion of N3.7 trillion for non-existing projects in the 2024 budget.

"The PDP asserts that from the incoherent, knee-jerk and dismissive statement issued by the APC leadership in the Senate on Thursday, March 14, 2024, it is clear that it is jittery that an open and detailed investigation into the allegation will further expose the perpetrators and how money was allegedly shared among APC lawmakers," the party alleged.

It noted that the press statement further confirmed the presence of an APC budget cabal in the Senate and that the Senator Akpabio-led APC leadership is insensitive and does not care about the welfare of the Nigerian people.

"It is highly provocative that at this time when Nigerians are passing through severe economic hardship, the APC leadership in the Senate is busy defending and frustrating investigation into allegation of massive manipulation and looting of resources meant for the wellbeing of the citizens," the statement explained.

It said that the Akpabio-led APC leadership in the Senate ought to know that no amount of threats, harassment, suspension of whistleblowers and attempts to blackmail the opposition through diversionary press statements and sponsored articles in a section of the media can suppress the demand for an open investigation into the alleged budget padding which is already in the public domain.

The statement explained that the PDP and Nigerians are not deterred by attacks by the APC leadership in the Senate that is a clear case of corruption fighting back in the face of public scrutiny.

More importantly, the statement said that the failure by the Akpabio-led APC leadership to allow for investigation into the budget padding allegation constitutes a huge smear on the image of the Senate and destroys its rectitude and integrity to perform its Constitutional duty to investigate and oversight other public institutions; a situation that spells doom to our Constitutional democracy if not immediately checked.

If Senator Akpabio has nothing to fear, the statement observed, he should immediately recall Senator Abdul Ningi and allow for an open and detailed investigation into the allegation of discrete insertion of N3.7 trillion into the 2024 budget.

The statement said, "Our Party, standing shoulder to shoulder with Nigerians, insists that Senator Akpabio should step aside and allow for a credible investigation, as he cannot be a judge in this matter."

I Joined Cultism To Protect My Mother - Rivers Cultist Confesses

By ; RAYMOND TEDUNJAYE, Lagos

A suspected cultist arrested by operatives of the Rivers State Police Command has confessed that he joined the outlawed group in order to protect his mother from incessant assault by his step father.

Identified as Gift Justice Hart, a 20-year-old indigene of Bonny Local Government Area and a member of the Dey-Bam Cult Group, made the revelation while being interrogated by detectives.

Cultism in Rivers State has been a primary concern for all security stakeholders as it is not a stand-alone phenomenon.

Little wonder the Rivers State Police Command has taken a firm stand against cultism. Under the remarkable leadership of an operational Commissioner of Police, CP Tunji Disu, the command is gaining ground in the brazen fight against cultism in Rivers State.

According to report, Gift is a child born out of wedlock and lives with his mother and her partner from Green Compound. He said he had no relationship with his biological father, even though he had seen him on a few occasions and had a knowledge of where he lived. His mother had catered for him and his education since he was born.

After finishing his secondary education at Community Secondary School Bonny, he enrolled in a scaffolding workshop at Berger Road, Bonny, under the tutelage of a famous scaffold trainer, Mina. While undergoing the training,



he met another trainee, Raphael Green, with whom he forged a friendship.

The friendship bond became stronger when they realised they had similar situations at home. Raphael was also living with his mother, who was in a relationship with another man from Peter-side compound who was not his father, and that relationship yielded four children. This was in addition to the three children she had gotten from another man from the Pepple compound.

The young men also had similarities in the condition that both their mothers were being physically assaulted by their partners.

Raphael, feeling the need to protect his mother from her partner, went to speak with some of his old classmates at Bonny National Grammar School who were notorious cultists. They offered to 'blend' him into their cult group, Dey-Bam, and he eagerly consented.

They took him to the Bonny Sand filled on a select night, where he was blindfolded and badly beaten before he was given a gin mixed with blood. There, his journey of cultism began at the tender age of 18. He proceeded to reveal his identity to his mother's partner and threatened to hurt him if the beating continued. The mother's partner has since left the mother.

For Gift, his foray into cultism started a year after Raphael. He was particularly frustrated that he could not confront his mother's partner, Biowuma. Biowuma was a cult leader in the Iceland cult group and was notorious for coordinating cult activities in the Bonny Local Government Area. He was a feared person, and Gift decided to join a rival cult group so that he could match him.

He stated to the Police that after his final WAEC SSCE paper at age 17, he went to one Idamina in Green compound, a senior member of Dey-Bam cultist in Bonny Local Government and demanded to be onboarded. His demand was accepted, and he was initiated at the Bonny Sand-filled.

After he recovered from the initiation, he immediately confronted Biowuma, who laughed off his confrontation and warned him sternly to stay out of his business. As the tension between him and his mother's live-in partner grew, Gift later left his mother's house to live with Raphael and other members of the Dey-Bam group. On a separate day, Biowuma had an altercation with Gift's mother and proceeded to beat her up. When Gift got wind of it, he visited his mother's house and fought with him. In the fight, he attacked him with a stick, breaking his head in the process. He ran off after the fight, but his mother's partner continued to search for him to retaliate.

However, in September 2023, Biowuma was arrested for leading members of the Iceland

cult to steal construction equipment from the Local Government Council, and he was incarcerated after trial.

That spared Gift a reprisal attack but did not prevent the Police from nabbing him, Raphael, and other Dey-Bam cultists after a cult clash between rival cult groups, Iceland and Dey-Bam, in Bonny left a victim brutally amputated on his left wrist.

The Police had used soft targets to locate the hideouts of the cultists, and on February 21, 2024, stormed the residence where the young men lived with other Dey-Bam cultists.

They were arrested and taken to the Bonny Division of the Rivers State Police Command and later transferred to the Anti-Cultism Unit.

Investigations are ongoing, and the suspects have been cooperative.

Reacting to this development, the Commissioner of Police, Rivers State Police Command, CP Tunji Disu, has expressed concern over the increasing relationship between dysfunctional homes and crime. He noted that, like Gift and Raphael, a significant number of criminals had a troubled childhood.

He charged parents/guardians with modelling good behaviour to their children/wards at all stages of their development, as the home is the most significant agent of socialisation.

He further gave a warning to all cultists in the state that the Rivers State Police is resolved to clamp them down.

Ningi: Group Condemns NASS Hasty Suspension Of Senator

By; KELVIN OKPARA, Enugu

A pressure group, under the platform of South East Youth Forum (SEYF), has condemned in strong terms, the hasty suspension handed down on Senator Abdul Ningi, representing Bauchi Central at the upper legislative chamber of Nigeria's NASS, for allegedly exposing the Senate over budget padding.

The group expressed disappointment that instead of investigating the veracity of Ningi's claims, the Senate quickly

suspended him, demanding that the lawmaker be immediately restored to his position and the "unlawful suspension," discontinued.

In a statement signed by President of SEYF, Comrade Engr. Gerald Isiwu, made available to newsmen on Friday in Enugu, the group pointed out that instead of suspending him for speaking the truth, Ningi, "deserves to be next president of Nigeria."

According to the statement, "it is quite said that truth is bitter and that is why

distinguished high ranking Sen. Abdul Ningi representing Bauchi Central at the National Assembly is facing an unjustifiable actions and threats by his fellow colleagues at the National Assembly for letting the cat out of the bag. "Sen. Ningi is a good citizen, a good leader with fear of God and heart of mercy on Nigerian citizens made clear statement or allegation that 2024 budget was padded to N3.7 trillion.

They added: "Sen. Ningi in good faith, because as a good leader with the

sympathy of the citizens of Nigeria understood the hardship in the living standard of the masses in abject poverty, who are dying of hunger and insecurity challenges in the country spoke out.

"Obviously, the leaders of the National Assembly are disappointed that Sen. Ningi exposed them and quickly acted wrongly by suspending him.

"Why not investigate the reality of the statement? Why not give him more opportunity to prove the allegations in a balance of probity?" they argued.

Rev Audu Reni Committed, Articulated In His Life Time - Baptist President

By; FUNMI ADERINTO, Kaduna

The President, Nigerian Baptist Convention, Dr. Israel A. Akanji on Friday, admonished Christians that it is time to go back to God when things seem to be hopeless for God to be glorified.

He stated this in a message during the funeral service of glorious exit of a legendary icon, Reverend Joseph Audu Reni, PhD, who died at the age of 66 in Kaduna.

He said our own way of handling situation is very important reading from book of Ecclesiastes 3 and Luke, "that there is a time to die, cast away, to sow together, a time to speak and a time to be silent, a time to love and a time to hate, in all circumstances let the Father glorify His name."

According to him, "Father glorify your name is appropriate word to use for every situation in life even when situation have gone so bad".

He added that, Dr. Reni was a pioneer, the first Christian in his community.

"He was the first Chairman, Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) in Abuja, he was the first to preach at Convention level in 1988," he said.

He disclosed that as a friend with the deceased, he recalls him as someone that was never envious or jealous.

"He is man who worked under anyone, he is a man of hope and never discouraged in any circumstances.

"However, the glory of God should be our focus that Father glorify your name as we pass through life challenges, man should not take the glory that belongs to God, but all glory should be given to the Father.

"When God is glorified, there is goodwill towards men, for the peace of God to come upon us.

"The home call of Dr. Reni is to glorify God, he pray for the family to see the hand of God in their lives.

"Therefore, Christians should live like Jesus Christ for his name to be glorified, the challenge is that a person's spirituality can be measured on how you position God in your life in the midst of suffering.

"We must believe that they are trials, but allow God to be in charge, it is seeking the revelation of God for our lives," he charged.

Meanwhile in a separate tribute, a Professor of Philosophy & Dean, Postgraduate School, the Nigerian Baptist Theology Seminary Ogbomoso, Nigeria, Rev. Simon Kolawole, PhD, described Rev. Joseph Audu Reni as a great servant of God, a man of great sacrifice, great commitment and great humility.

According to him, the deceased made great sacrifice for Baptist Theology Seminary in Kaduna when he served as Deputy President (Academics), adding that many of the items he used to work in his office were personal.

"Rev. Reni went to great lengths to get documents ready for meetings or to get a report/an

assignment ready. He demonstrated great commitment to Baptist Theological Seminary (BTS), Kaduna.

"His sacrifice and commitment are correlates of vision, love and passion, he was a man of great humility and sincerely, committed and articulated in his life time.

"The essence of life is making contributions and greatness is a factor of contributions. His life will continue to be a source of inspiration to other ministers for a very long time to come," he said.

Late Rev. Joseph Audu Reni of Rijah Clan was Born on January 31, 1958 to the family of Mr. & Mrs Reni Fadei (Both of blessed memories).

In his educational background, he attended LEA Primary School, Bagaji, Karu LGA, Nasarawa State 1972-1978, Government Teachers College, Obi, Lafia, Nasarawa State 1978-1983 (Grade II), The Baptist Theological Seminary Ogbomoso, Oyo state 1984-1987; 1994-1996, (Dip.Th; B.Th), Theological College of Northern Nigeria (TCNN), Bukuru, Jos Plateau state, 1998-2000; 2012-2017 (M.Th; PhD), Ahmadu Bello University (ABU), Zaria, 2005-2007 (PGDE) and Copenhagen University, Copenhagen, Denmark, 2014 (Certificate in church and culture programme).

Rev. Reni's working experience, included, Grade Two teacher, 1983-1984, Lecturer with ABU, Zaria 2006-2009, IJMB



Examiner, Institute of Education, ABU, Zaria 2005, Pastor, Sabo Baptist Church, 1986-1987, Pioneer Pastor of First Baptist Church Garki Abuja, 1987-1997, Pastor of Bishara Baptist church, New Kutunku, Gwagwalada, Abuja 2000-2002, Pastor of Sihiyona Baptist church, Samaru Zaria 2002-2010, Adjunct lecturer

with Baptist Theology Seminary, Kaduna 2009, lecturer with Baptist Theological Seminary, Kaduna 2010-2024.

Late Rev. Reni was a devoted Christian, who left behind his wife Mrs Roseline Reni, children and grand children, until his death, he was a lecturer with Baptist Theological Seminary in Kaduna.



Gov Mutfwang

Elections: Jonathan, Mutfwang, Falana, Ugandan Mayor For Haske Satumari Foundation Colloquium

By; JACOB ONJEWU DICKSON

Former Nigerian President, Goodluck Jonathan is among dignitaries that will grace this year's colloquium organized by Haske Satumari Foundation.

The annual colloquium with the theme, "Electoral And Judicial Reforms: The Imperatives on Nigeria's Democracy, Governance, Leadership and its Selection Processes" is holding at the Yar'Adua Centre Abuja on

March 21, 2024.

Others who will be speaking at this colloquium, include the Executive Governor of Plateau State, Barr Caleb Manasseh Mutfwang, human rights activist and lead council, Falana and Falana Chambers and the Mayor of Entebbe - Uganda, who will be the guest speaker.

Former Senate President, Abubakar Bukola Saraki is expected to share experiences on democracy and the legislative process.

The Haske Satumari Foundation annual colloquium has been shaping political and legal discussions in Nigeria since its introduction by the founder, Kudla Satumari.

Speaking to journalists, Satumari said this year's colloquium promises to be though provoking that will help in shaping political discuss as the country move towards amendment of the Constitution, the electoral act and Judicial Reforms.

Uba Sani Begins Distribution Of 128 Trucks Of Rice, Maize Worth N3.4bn To Kaduna's Poor, Vulnerable

By: FUNMIADERINTO, Kaduna

Governor of Kaduna State, Senator Uba Sani on Monday, commenced the distribution of 128 trucks of rice and maize worth N3.4 billion to the poor, vulnerable and underserved citizens of Kaduna State.

The governor disclosed this at the flagging off of the second batch of palliatives to Kaduna State citizens.

"We are targeting 200,000 (Two Hundred Thousand) Households, approximately 1,000,000 (One million) persons," he said. Governor Uba Sani said, "Our administration has identified poverty reduction in rural areas as key to unlocking the enormous potential of Kaduna State. We are equally determined to reach the urban poor and assist them to escape extreme poverty. We are also focusing on the revival and boosting of small businesses through the provision of financial support and improving Ease of Doing Business.

"In our continuing efforts, therefore, to tackle poverty headlong and respond to President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's charge to governors to take prompt and effective measures to alleviate the suffering of citizens in their respective states, the Kaduna State Government has taken some measures and lined up some steps which would be implemented immediately.

"The State Government set up a high-powered Palliatives Distribution Committee charged with developing an Implementation strategy/plan and executing the distribution of the palliatives in a fair and even manner. Members of the committee include representatives of Organized Labour (NLC and TUC), Civil Society Organizations, Persons with Disability, National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW), Jama'atu Nasril

Islam (JNI), Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), Traditional Institutions, Youth and Women Organizations, the Commissioner of Police, Director of DSS, Commandant of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps, and officials of the Kaduna State Government.

"The broad-based and inclusive committee underscores our determination to ensure transparency and fairness in the palliatives distribution process. It is also a key step towards the effective monitoring of the distribution exercise to check diversion of palliatives meant for the people. The Labour/CSOs driven process will help strengthen and deepen engagement between the demand and supply sides of governance.

"I am happy to inform you that today we are commencing the distribution of 128 Trucks of Rice and Maize worth N3.4 Billion to the poor, vulnerable and underserved citizens of Kaduna State. We are targeting 200,000 (two hundred thousand) households, approximately 1,000,000 (one million) persons.

"Few days after my assumption of office, I signed an executive order on financial inclusion to address the exclusion of the poor, under-served and vulnerable from financial services and ensure that they benefit from social intervention programs of Kaduna State and the Federal Government.

"We set for ourselves the target of facilitating the opening of 2.5 million bank accounts for poor, vulnerable and underserved citizens of Kaduna State," he said.

According to him, through their efforts, two million bank accounts have been opened.

"We are working assiduously to ensure that bank accounts are opened for the remaining 500,000 less privileged citizens

of Kaduna State.

"We have developed a credible Social Register for Cash Transfers. We shall fully develop the Cash Transfer System because it has been proven to be an effective social protection measure. It has been successful in reducing poverty and food insecurity in many countries.

"Because of the effective implementation of the Executive Order on Financial Inclusion, especially the opening of bank accounts and development of a credible Social Register, our previously excluded citizens are now able to benefit from Kaduna State and Federal Government's social intervention programs.

"We have commenced, with urgency, the following intervention programs to bring succour to the less privileged citizens of our state:

"The sum of N4.2 Billion has been earmarked for distribution of cash, grants, fertilizer, farm inputs and implements to vulnerable households, smallholder farmers, Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), Persons With Disability, Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), Orphans, Market Women and Youths.

"As I am speaking to you now, 9,800 poor and vulnerable households, including over 1000 persons with disability have started receiving alerts. They are receiving N50,000 (Fifty Thousand Naira) each.

"We have commenced the release of grants to 7,500 Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). The MSMEs are getting between N100,000 and N500,000, up to N1,000,000, depending on the size of the enterprise. Small businesses are the backbones of any economy. When we came to office in 2023, small businesses in Kaduna State were struggling to survive. Their number was less than 1000.

Through our administration's strategic interventions, targeted support, and strengthening of Ease of Doing Business, the number of MSMEs in Kaduna State have risen to 10,000.

"Fertilizer and other farm inputs and implements are being distributed to 5,091 farmers.

"N3.3 Billion has been released for payment of Pension and Gratuities, as well as Death Benefits to families of deceased civil servants. Beneficiaries have started receiving alerts. The total number of beneficiaries stands at 1338.

"Civil servants have started benefitting from our N500 Million Revolving Loan Scheme.

"Cumulatively, the Kaduna State Government is spending the sum of N11.4 Billion in the distribution of the second batch of palliatives. We shall continue to take all measures necessary to bring succour to the poor and vulnerable in our state. In the next two months, we shall commence the implementation of the 3rd Phase of our Palliatives Programme. It's a full package.

"We have put in place a robust security arrangement to protect the trucks conveying rice and maize to various locations. Any attempt by anybody or group to hijack or divert the trucks would be visited with the full weight of the law. We therefore solicit the full support and cooperation of our citizens to ensure a hitch-free palliatives distribution exercise.

"It is now my honour and privilege to flag-off the distribution of the second batch of palliatives to poor, vulnerable and underserved citizens, as well as small businesses in Kaduna State. God bless you all," he said.





COMMUNITY FOCUS

Benevolence: Creative Think Tank Lauds Dr. Chetachi's Community Giant Strides

*Says she's an embodiment of goodies, beacon of hope

By: AUSTINE AGBO EMMANUEL, Kaduna

Creative Think Tank for Poverty Alleviation and Empowerment Initiative has applauded Dr. Chetachi Nwoga Ecton's Community Giant Strides across the country and the world.

This is as the Media and Communication Department of the Creative Think Tank, said Dr. Chetachi Nwoga Ecton is an embodiment of goodies and a beacon of hope to all especially the less privilege.

In a statement made available to journalists in Kaduna on Tuesday by its Media Director, Comrade Amos Ham, the advocacy group noted that Nigerians need such a selfless individual at the hem of affairs, even as they stressed that her unwavering commitment to uplifting the downtrodden and empowering the marginalized is a testament to her remarkable character and visionary spirit. It would be recalled that Dr. Chetachi Nwoga Ecton, who is the founder of When-In-Need and Elimh Foundations have over the years bagged several awards of Honour and as well as Chieftaincy titles both at home and in abroad in recognition of her humanitarian aid.

In October, 2022 the Igbo Association welfare in Kaduna honoured her with Chieftaincy title as The Ada Ndigbo JJ Kaduna, while she holds the traditional title of Tir Ham, which was upgraded to Tir Hywiin Ham, that means "Preferred Daughter of the Ham land" in southern Kaduna.

Similarly, the American Management University, on the 12th Nov 2022, confer

an Honorary Doctorate Degree Award in Business Administration to Chief Dr. Chetachi Nwoga Ecton at the Shehu Musa Yaradua Centre Abuja through recommendations from the African Humanitarian Action Congress, organised by the African Goodwill award in 2022.

While the international women power conference Africa in 2022 honoured Dr. Chetachi Nwoga Ecton as one of the 50 most powerful women in the Diaspora, Global Impact award in 2021 in like manner awarded her as the Global Female philanthropy of the year. She also bagged the Lions Club Humanitarian award in 2016, all aimed to encourage her to do more for the people.

Comrade Amos Ham, while noting her giant strides asserted that Dr. Chetachi Nwoga Ecton, using her networks and relationships with private foundations and organizations of goodwill like the Order of Saint George, International Rotary Club, Corporate America and the International Community, has been able to mobilized an unprecedented effort of in-kind donations of medical supplies worth over \$1 million to communities in Nigeria.

Other interventions according to Amos includes, Construction of bridge in southern Kaduna, free medical services, provision of foods, feeding and clothing the orphans and widows, donation of free seedlings for farmers during planting season, free medical trip abroad for complicated surgery and medical conditions and many more.

The Creative Think Tank group said, "Dr. Nwoga Ecton's passion for service knows



no bounds, her tireless efforts in championing the cause of the vulnerable and disenfranchised have left an indelible mark on communities far and wide. Through her visionary leadership, she has pioneered transformative initiatives, bringing hope and dignity to those in need and inspiring countless others to join the noble pursuit of social justice and equality.

"With each endeavor, Dr. Chetachi Nwoga Ecton has demonstrated unparalleled competence, integrity, and compassion, earning the trust and admiration of all who have had the privilege of crossing paths with her. Her proven track record speaks volumes, showcasing her unparalleled ability to effect meaningful change and drive

sustainable development from the grassroots level up.

"As we stand at the precipice of a new era, filled with both challenges and opportunities, it is imperative that we entrust the helm of leadership to individuals of unparalleled caliber and unwavering dedication. Dr. Chetachi Nwoga Ecton embodies these qualities and more, her leadership transcending boundaries and inspiring hope in the hearts of millions.

"We affirm our unwavering belief in her ability to lead with integrity, compassion, and vision. Let us unite behind this beacon of hope, as together, we strive to build a world where justice, equality, and opportunity flourish for all."



Food Crisis: Opening Borders, Importation Won't Solve Problem - Female Bishop

*Says scarcity will persist until govt declares emergency in agric sector

*Advocates revival of farm settlements across LGAs, deployment of corp members to farm settlements

By; **KELVIN OKPARA, Enugu**

Against the backdrop of the lingering alarming food crisis and economic hardship ravaging Nigeria, the African-Head Coordinator of Ministers Prayer Network, Apostolic Women, and female Bishop, Deborah Macfoy Akachukwu, has asked governments at all levels to as a matter of urgency, start investing heavily in the agricultural sector, saying reopening of closed borders or importation of food won't solve the problem.

The Prophetess, who is also an agriculturalist by training, however, proffered some solutions she feels are capable of bringing about food sufficiency in the country, if sincerely applied by political leaders.

She insisted that for the challenge to be overcome, governments, particularly President Ahmed Bola Tinubu and state governors must muster the political will to invest massively in the agricultural sector, encourage establishment of farm settlements in local government areas, and deploy extension workers to such places, pointing out that abandoned government facilities could be used for such settlements.

The cleric added that the issue of alleged massive corruption in the distribution of subsidized farm implements such as fertilizers and soft loans to farmer by relevant government agencies, especially Ministry of Agriculture, should be looked into sincerely.

Bishop Akachukwu, who is the vision bearer of the popular Revival City International Retreat Conference Centre Enugu, spoke to newsmen in Enugu on the current hunger in the land, warning that if nothing is urgently done to address the situation, famine may be imminent in Nigeria.

She further opined that the time has come for the federal government to order the Nigerian Customs service NCS, to start granting duty waiver to imported foreign agricultural equipment, stressing that such development would equally help in boosting mechanized farming and massive food production in the country.

The woman of God, suggested that in the face of the crisis, the National Youths Service Corp (NYSC), should begin mass deployment of corp members to farm settlements and other Agricultural facilities as places of their primary assignments

She posited that if rural and mechanized farming are

encouraged with incentives, it would boost food production that would lead to exportation which will earn foreign exchange for the country.

"So, the time has come for governments at all levels to start prioritizing agriculture, give it the attention it deserve.

"Establishment of farm settlements in all the local government areas of the country, would no doubt, create massive employment for the teeming unemployed people.

"There is also need for governments to have a correct data base of genuine Farmers in various states, so as to address the issue of non farmers benefiting from government incentives more than those it is meant for.

"Government should improve seriously on the nation's food storage system, the silos must be functional, let's join hands together in promoting the agro sector for the interest of our people. Government should engage our universities agriculture professors in areas of research on improved seedlings of various crops.

"To ensure a robust and transparent system, government should also put in place a functional commodity board that would help in driving the food production space, activate all the



Bishop, Deborah Macfoy Akachukwu

River Basin Authorities across the country, as well as tackle the insecurity in the land headlong.

"Food is something that is consumed okay! And in Nigeria today, we have too many forces and factors that are colliding, they are battling with foreign exchange reserves, we are battling with foreign exchange rates, we are also battling with importation crisis.

"We are battling with so many things at the same time. So, if

you ask people to import food, it is going to worsen the present dollar exchange rate situation. So it's not going to be a solution. "It is going to maybe give people a small relief, but i think it is only going to worsen inflation itself, because as long as we're not exporting, and we're importing and inflation is not stable the cost of anything, as regarding purchased, has continue to aggravate.

Gombe LG Polls: Unveiling APC Candidates

By; **JACOB ONJEWU DICKSON**

As Gombe State gears up for the upcoming 2024 Local Government Councils Election to shape the future of governance at the grassroots level, the All Progressives Congress (APC) has unveiled its slate of candidates for chairmanship and deputy chairmanship positions.

The list, which emanated following a consensus process, was submitted to the Gombe State Independent Electoral Commission (GOSIEC) and duly signed by the APC Chairman, Nitte Amangal, and Secretary, Abubakar Umar S. Goro.

It presents a lineup of individuals poised to lead

their respective local government areas with vision and a commitment to progress in line with the development agenda of Governor Muhammadu Inuwa Yahaya when given the mandate.

The submission of candidates signifies a significant step in the

democratic process in line with GOSIEC guidelines as parties prepare to engage voters and articulate their plans for development and service delivery.

The List is as follows:

1. Akko Local Government
Hon. Danladi Adamu (Chairman)
Habib Hassan (Deputy Chairman)
2. Balanga Local Government
Ibrahim Salisu (Chairman)
Philemon Ezra (Deputy Chairman)
3. Billiri Local Government
Mrs. Eglad Idris (Chairman)

Yila Maidawa (Deputy Chairman)

4. Dukku Local Government
Adamu Mohammed Waziri (Chairman)

Umar Manu Malala (Deputy Chairman)

5. Funakaye Local Government
Shu'aibu Abdulrahman (Chairman)

Umaru Busum (Deputy Chairman)

6. Gombe Local Government
Barr. Sani Ahmad Haruna (Chairman)

Mohammed Adamu Manga (Deputy Chairman)

7. Kaltungo Local Government
Hon. Iliya Suleiman (Chairman)

Mohammed Isa Umar (Deputy Chairman)

8. Kwami Local Government
Dr. Ahmad Wali Doho (Chairman)

Dahiru Ajiya Bojude (Deputy

Chairman)

9. Nafada Local Government
Babangida Adamu (Chairman)
Jabbo Magaji (Deputy Chairman)

10. Shongom Local Government
Hon. Binta Bello (Chairman)
Alfred Bobby (Deputy Chairman)

11. Yamaltu Deba Local Government
Abubakar Hassan Difa (Chairman)

Murtala Daqauna (Deputy Chairman)

The APC candidates for the forthcoming local government council election represent a diverse array of backgrounds and experiences, united by a shared commitment to advancing the interests of the people they seek to serve in the quest for a brighter future for Gombe State.



Zulum Approves N1bn For Teachers' Training, Distributes 58 Hilux, 3 Volkswagen Golf To 27 LGCs Education Secretaries

By; SADIQ ABUBAKAR, Maiduguri

Borno State Governor, Babagana Umara Zulum, has approved N1 billion for the training of basic-level teachers across the 27 local government areas of the state.

He announced the approval yesterday, while inaugurating the newly appointed 27 local government council education secretaries who will administer the affairs of primary education in their respective LGAs.

The governor noted that over 1,000 teachers who have O-Level certificates as their highest qualifications, will undergo additional training that would allow them to attain minimum teaching qualifications.

According to him, the training would cover teachers who do not have teaching qualifications but were found to be trainable based on the record of the competency test conducted.

Zulum added that his administration in 2019, when sworn in, embarked on rebuilding the devastated school infrastructures to provide enhanced learning outcomes which he said has resulted in dropping the number of out-of-school children to eight hundred thousand from over two million.

The governor charged the newly appointed education secretaries to live up to expectations and warned that anyone found to be underperforming would be

replaced.

"I must emphasise that with great privilege comes great responsibility. Therefore, I have directed the Honorable Commissioner for Education to furnish me with quarterly reports on the performance of each education secretary. Those failing to meet expectations will be replaced," Zulum said.

Meanwhile, Zulum, after inaugurating the education secretaries, distributed 58 utility vehicles, each receiving one Toyota Hilux double-cabin 4-wheel-drive pickup vehicle and one Volkswagen Golf 3 wagons as official utility vehicles for their supervisors and coordinators of primary schools across their localities.

The governor noted that the utility vehicles were meant to enhance mobility while warning that they should only be used for official purposes and be operated by authorised drivers.

Delivering his remarks, the Commissioner for Education, Science, Technology and Innovation, Engr Lawan Abba Wakilbe, said that the ministry will endeavor to select competent and qualified people to man the affairs of the primary schools and utility vehicles with a view to properly and adequately supervise and coordinate the activities and other roles of the LGCs education secretary while advertisement was placed in December, and about 126 individuals



Zulum Approves N1bn For Teachers' Training, Distributes 58 Hilux, 3 Volkswagen Golf To 27 LGCs Education Secretaries



Value Seeds Genetic Laboratory Will Enhance Nigeria's Food Security

By: SANIALIYU, Zaria

Recently, Value Seeds Limited established and launched a modern genetics laboratory which have sparked waves of excitement and anticipation within the agricultural community in Nigeria.

The genetics laboratory established is the first of its kind in West Africa sub region with the aim to enhance food production in Nigeria following the Federal Government's declaration of State of Emergency on Food Security.

The establishment of the genetics laboratory signifies a strategic investment by Value Seeds Limited to harness the power of genetic technology in crop breeding and improvement. The state-of-the-art equipment and cutting-edge research facilities in the laboratory shall

be used to conduct groundbreaking research and development initiatives aimed at enhancing crop traits such as yield, disease resistance, and environmental adaptability and will serve as a research and training hub to meet farmers' aspirations by ensuring up to date production of quality improved seeds thereby enhancing food production.

The President of Value Seeds Company, Sir George Zangir during the laboratory launch said the company is committed to making improved quality seeds available and affordable.

Value Seeds Limited is an indigenous seed production solution and development company incorporated in 2009 to lead the transformation of the seed system in West Africa, dealing with multiplication and distribution of seeds of staple

crops including maize, rice, soybeans, sorghum, millet and cowpea.

Within a period of 15 years, they have become a household brand especially with smallholder farmers by continuously commercializing innovative agricultural seed technologies that will increase farmers yields, enhance nutrition and build livelihoods through expertise, technology application and being a customer-centric seed company.

Value Seeds is committed to ensuring all stakeholders in the seed industry in Nigeria have access to quality seeds which will in turn ensure farmers meet their aspirations of high yield and increased income.

Accountability, Innovation, Integrity, Partnership and Professionalism remain their core values as they partner with

players in the seed industry to ensure Nigeria becomes seed sufficient and by extension food sufficient, which can only be achieved through effective collaboration with stakeholders. Value Seeds Limited over time, helped to increase farmers' yields per hectare by providing solution to the challenges of access to and affordability of quality inputs. The kit technology is a one-stop, all inputs kit that contains needed inputs for a smallholder farmer to produce a quarter hectare of rice or maize.

Top quality inputs of rice or maize seeds, fertilizers, crop protection products (herbicide, insecticide, fungicide) and pictorial production guide leaflet form the bundle.

The technology guarantees increased yields, higher income and better livelihood for farmers by significantly reducing the cost

of production, vulnerability to fake inputs and increasing access to best agronomic practices.

The company is set to nourish Nigeria with the "Queen of Cereals"- Maize which has become a very important crop in Nigeria over the past few decades, suppressing the cultivation of traditional crops such as sorghum and millet.

It is the most widely cultivated crop in the country from the wet evergreen climate of the forest zone to the dry ecology of the Sudan Savanna.

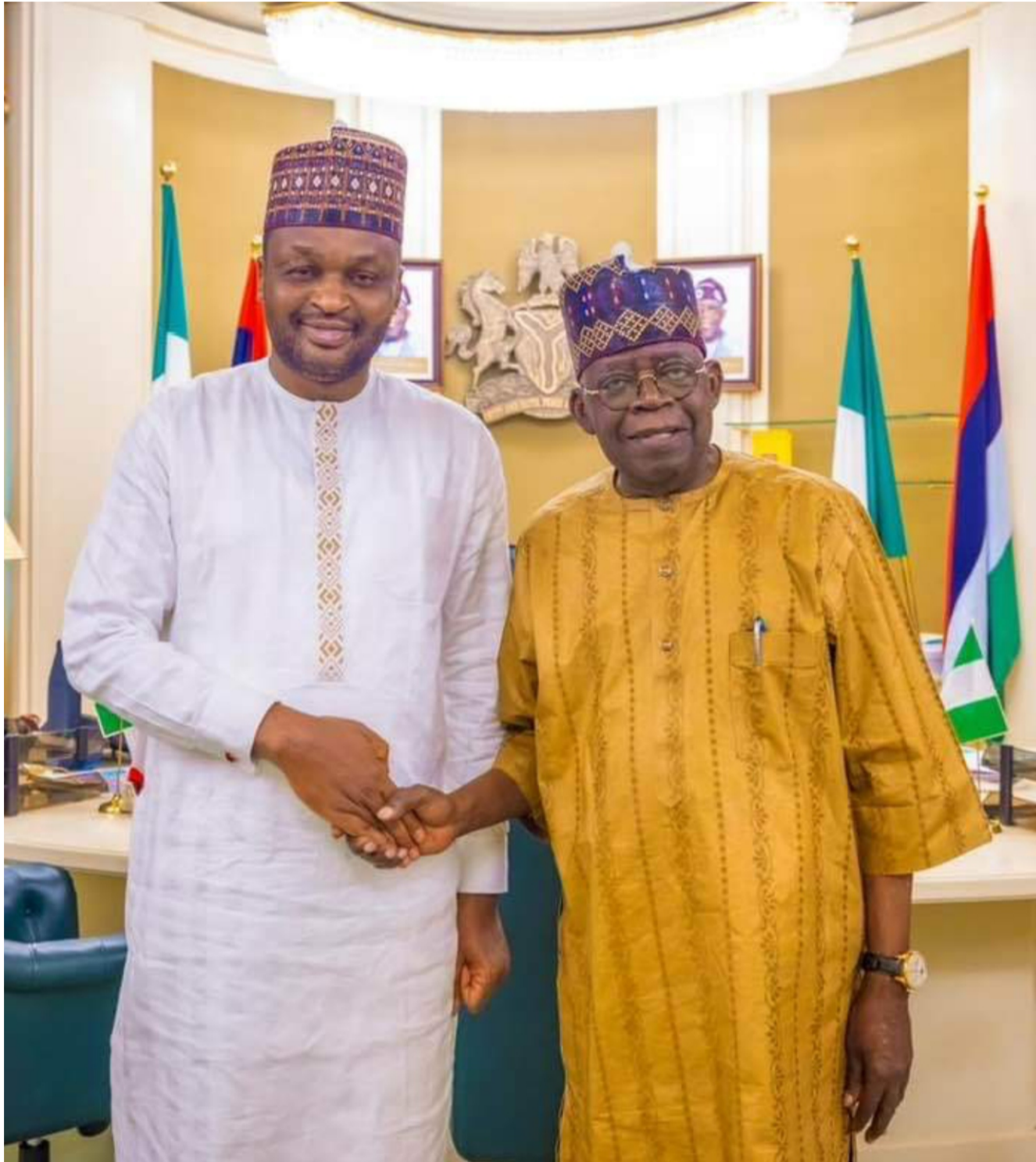
The crop is known as the "Queen of Cereals" due to its genetic potential and acceptability compared to other cereals.

Nigeria produces an average of 12.7 million tons of maize from 6.2 million hectares of land, making it Africa's largest producer of maize with an average yield of 4 tons/ha.



Meeting With Tinubu: Northern Elders Progressive Forum Hails Senator LA

**Tasks military on proactive measures*



President Tinubu with Sen. Lawal Usman

By; JACOB ONJEWU DICKSON

Northern Elders Progressive Forum, a socio-cultural group has commended the ongoing efforts of the Senator representing Kaduna Central in the Senate, Senator Lawal Usman Adamu (Mr LA) towards a secured sociopolitical atmosphere in Kaduna State.

The forum's commendation is coming few days after the compassionate lawmaker met President Bola Ahmed Tinubu to seek his presidential intervention towards the fight against insecurity and banditry challenges that have bedeviled some parts of the North, particularly his

constituency, Kaduna Central, where many innocent children and people have been kidnapped by the suspected bandits. In a statement signed by its North West Coordinator, Dr Usman Sani, the forum described the recent two-hour meeting with President Tinubu by the Senator in the Presidential Villa, Abuja, as a fruitful and great sacrifice for the people of Kaduna and Northwest despite their political differences. The group while appreciating his fatherly concern, urged President Tinubu to urgently extend the frontiers of cooperation with other stakeholders in the form of collaboration towards achieving greater goals in

the fight against banditry and criminal elements who have surrounded innocent Nigerians, especially in the Northwestern part of the country. The recent meeting between Mr President and Senator Lawal Usman Adamu to discuss and find a permanent solution against rampant kidnapping, attacks and other insecurity challenges in Kaduna and the north is one of the best efforts so far done by any politicians in the region. Such a singular effort is highly commendable, supportive, and wise to save many lives and properties of our people against bandits. The group also advised the military to use proactive

measures both kinetic and non-kinetic to bring down the continued challenges of insecurity affecting our people. President Tinubu should not relent in his efforts in his ongoing fight against insecurity and attending all other important security matters with opposition groups to achieve a greater goal of eradicating banditry activities in Kaduna, North, and the country as a whole. The forum therefore, called on reasonable Nigerians to support the Federal government's efforts through prayers and cooperation and stop playing politics with the issue of insecurity.

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Two Rail Track Vandals Were Arrested At Chidunu Village Of Chikun Local Govt

By; SANIALIYU, Zaria

Vandals have dismantled rail tracks at Chidunu village under Chikun Local Government Area of Kaduna State with almost definite intentions of coming back to evacuate the track rails and sleepers. In a statement issued by the Public Relations Officer Northern District, Alhaji Abdullahi and made available to New Nigerian said due to the fact that it was difficult to arrange for logistics to evacuate before it got dark and the volatility of that axis, we discussed with the local vigilantes/hunters to keep vigil on the stretch of the dismantled track.

He said, on Sunday, they got a report that the vandals/thieves were arrested during their illicit operation with two long trucks (trailers) loaded with rail track materials unfortunately the third truck which was a Canter truck was able to escape with some rail track

materials.

The case is at present with the NSCDC, O.C. Anti-Vandal for further investigation. At this moment, it can only be confirmed that the available suspects with the NSCDC are the two truck drivers.

According to the statement, arrangement is ongoing for a meeting with the NSCDC Command Kaduna State for follow up and to enable them give a more comprehensive report.

"Also early hours of Saturday 16th March, 2024 we got an information that rail track materials were stacked at Kankomi Railway Station, North Central District in Kaduna, our findings made us to realize that this was done by Vandals, so we alerted the local vigilantes for surveillance, eventually two suspects were arrested and are now with the Railway Police at Kaduna Junction Station. Investigation is on going".

Ramadan: Gov. Yusuf Donates Foodstuff To Govt House Staff

By; JACOB ONJEWU DICKSON

Kano State Governor, Alhaji Abba Kabir Yusuf has donated foodstuff worth millions of Naira to the teaming staff of the government House as part of his Ramadan Gesture to them.

This was contained in a statement issued by the governor's spokesperson, Sunusi Bature Dawakin Tofa on Sunday.

According to the statement, the foodstuff donated to the beneficiaries that range from GL1-GL 12 includes a 50kg bag of Rice, a carton of Macaroni, ten measures of millet, and the sum of N10,000 each.

Presenting the items in a special mood, the governor expressed gratitude to Allah for allowing him to make the gesture which is aimed at bringing success to his staff during the blessed month of Ramadan.

"Today is a special day not only for me but my staff at Government House because I have started fulfilling my electioneering campaign promises of improving welfare packages to civil servants" he explained.

The governor further disclosed that more goodies will be under way to the staffers especially when

they hold firm their individual and collective responsibilities.

"My relationship with you is not political therefore you can hold to your different opinions, but all I need from you is dedication, hard work, and prayers so that we can achieve what we are here for" the governor asserted

He then appealed to them to utilize the month of Ramadan by maximizing the act of Ibadat and also pray to the state and the nation for Allah's intervention, particularly in this trying period.

Earlier, the deputy Governor, Comrade Aminu Abdussalam Gwarzo commended the governor for his kind gesture, describing it as one of its kind ever in the state.

Comrade Abdussalam calls on the beneficiaries to reciprocate the gesture with a dedication to duties, trustworthiness, and prayers to the administration of Governor Abba Kabir Yusuf.

In their unanimous comments, the beneficiaries have described the Governor as teleworkers-friendly, confessing that this gesture is one of its kind and will go a long way in easing their hardships.

Kano Government, Media Trust Partner For Northwest Regional Conference On Security, Development

By: JACOB ONJEWU DICKSON

Kano State Government has agreed to partner with Media Trust Group (MTG) - publishers of the Daily Trust titles, Aminiya, Trust TV, Trust Radio, Digital Trust and Teen Trust on Northwest

regional security conference and other developmental strides.

The agreement was reached when the Chairman/Founder, Media Trust Group, Alhaji Kabiru Yusuf visited Governor Abba Kabir Yusuf of Kano State at the Government House yesterday.

A statement issued by Sanusi Bature Dawakin Tofa, the spokesperson to the Governor said the chairman of Media Trust visited Kano to intimate the governor on a plan to organise a security conference for the seven North Western states, strengthen the existing ties with the

company among other issues.

While responding, Governor Abba Kabir Yusuf said he is in total agreement with Media Trust on finding actionable solutions to the insecurity bedeviling the region.

"This initiative is timely, we are ready to provide all the necessary

logistics and moral support to ensure a hitch-free conference devoid of any politics, ethnic or religious sentiments," he said. The Governor also said Kano is ready to host the conference considering its strategic location geographically and otherwise.



FG, World Bank Impressed As Gov AbdulRazaq Flags Off New Agric Project In Kwara

By: BILIQIS ONAOLAPO OLAJUMOKE, Ilorin

Kwara State Governor, Abdulrahman AbdulRazaq has flagged off the Livestock Productivity and Resilience Support Project (L-PRES), a six-year \$500m food security programme supported by the World Bank and the Federal Government.

Both the Federal Government and World Bank commended the Governor for providing quality leadership and platforms for livestock value chain production and commercialisation in the state.

The administration has invested in the development of the livestock sector to maximise its potential, particularly in beef and dairy production, the Governor said at the flag off late Monday.

"Kwara has a comparative advantage in all areas of livestock production, particularly in beef and dairy production. It serves as forms of income and wealth for families to better access financial services. It is a major form of financial instrument to families, especially now that we are talking about financial inclusion,

improvement in standard of living, and improving our GDP in the state," he added.

"This is why our focus has been on developing, upgrading, and transforming the economy in terms of livestock development. This has had positive impacts on smallholder farmers while also reducing farmer-herder conflict in the state.

"We aim to ensure that the smallholder farmers become commercial farmers so that they can respond to demand for quality food from the urban centres, climate change, contribution to global economy and also ensure that families have adequate supply of animal protein and improved livelihood. "For these reasons, our administration keyed into programmes like the special agro processing zone and livestock productivity and resilience support project that we are flagging off today.

"Indeed, the utmost objective is in line with our administration's vision of uplifting the vulnerable, improving the activities of smallholder farmers, providing critical infrastructure for modern livestock production and also mitigating the clash

between pastoralists and crop farmers."

AbdulRazaq called for an improved coordination and synergy for the design and implementation of SAP-Z and L-PRES, given the similarities of the projects.

"We should also work alongside RAAMP (Rural Access and Agricultural Marketing Project) to make sure we deliver. We will strive to engage more progressively to make sure we deliver this project on time," he added.

The event was attended by the Chief of Staff Prince Mahe Abdulkadir; Commissioner for Agriculture Oloruntoyosi Adebayo Thomas; Senior Agricultural Economist World Bank Chidozie Anyin; Team Lead Livestock Productivity and Resilience Support Project (L-PRES) Emmanuel Sene; National Project Coordinator for L-PRES Sanusi Abubakar; and State APC Chairman Prince Sunday Fagbemi.

Oloruntoyosi said Kwara has hit positive milestones in the project because of the commitment of the Governor, adding: "It is not every state that has the privilege of high profile projects like

PRES and SAPZ, but due to the visionary leadership of His Excellency and the processes and policies that he has put in place, we are able to qualify and meet the very stringent requirements of these developmental projects."

She said the state is aligning all its "livestock transformational projects, including RAAMP, as they are dependent on one another. This will enable us to deliver the most impacts to Kwarans".

The L-PRES National Project Coordinator said they are excited at the enthusiasm so far shown by Governor AbdulRazaq to revamp and provide platforms for upgrading and modernisation of livestock value chain in the state.

The objectives of L-PRES development objective are to improve productivity, commercialisation, and resilience of targeted livestock value chain in Nigeria as well as strengthen the resilience of livelihood affected by farmers herders conflict, he added.

Abubakar added that Kwara is among the five states being visited during this implementation mission out of

fifteen states on the programme.

"This is in consideration of early fulfillment of readiness and eligibility criteria as stated in the project documents. Apart from the fact that Kwara has a largest disbursement of three million dollars, it is also the first state to appreciate disbursement twice since the inception of this project, having already been disbursed in the last quarter of the year 2023," he said.

"Your Excellency, our mission here in Kwara is for us to interface with the project implementation team at the state coordination office as well as the leadership of the Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

"We are very optimistic that Kwara will succeed in this regard, given the enabling environment granted by your administration and the enormous livestock potentials in the state, such as arable land animal feed production, large vegetation for grazing and considerable livestock population. This is also in addition to peaceful co-existence that exists among various ethnic groups in the state."

Counter-terrorism: Nigeria Needs Strategy Overhaul

By: ABIODUN KOMOLAFE

As of today, the basic problem with Nigeria on the war against terrorism is that she is following a defective strategic front. This is what the situation is and it is very sad! All the empirical evidence in the last ten or so years have shown that Nigeria has been following a wrong policy in her counterterrorism warfare and all eyes can see it.

The problem is that we are fighting unconventional warfare in which our security forces are not trained in terms of equipment, strategy and mindset. To get things right, the reboot must start from the military academy and the method of recruitment, for the people who are recruited to fight unconventional warfare might not be exactly the same as those who are recruited to fight conventional warfare. In other words, it is a multidimensional problem which must start from the military and its structure.

For Nigeria, her problem with terrorism dates back to the Maitatsine Riots of the early 1980s, during the Shehu Shagari era. A judicial enquiry was set up and its report was prophetic.

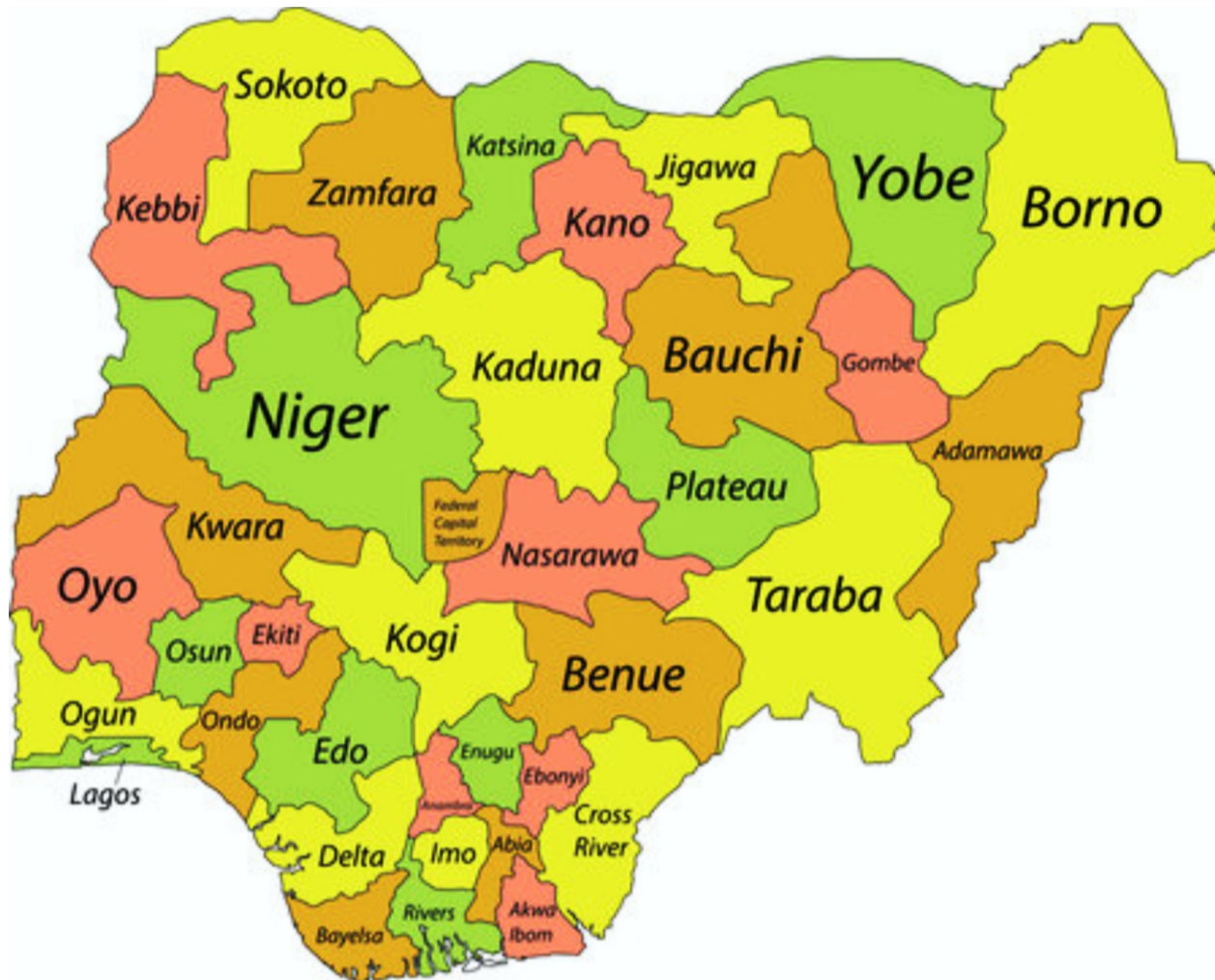
For example, it saw the plans being developed and suggested ways of ameliorating the social crisis which was bound to get deeper.

Had the judicial report on the Maitatsine Risings been taken seriously and implemented, starting from the time of Shagari, Nigeria would most certainly not have gotten to where it is at the moment, if not nipped in the bud.

It's not possible!

But the political will, even the interest, was not showing. That's why we are now spending about 20% of our national budget on something that was preventable. Regrettable, there is no end in sight! It is now inevitable for Nigeria to go back to the Maitatsine Report if she must find a solution. It is important dear fatherland learns from other places about how to prevent a never-ending war by engendering an effective Defence Budget.

In 1959, General Dwight Eisenhower in his last major speech as President of the United States of America, warned about the entrenchment of a military industrial complex. Of course, Eisenhower's warnings foretold the future. Unfortunately, Nigeria is among the countries that are currently bearing the brunt of not taking his forebodings about the future seriously. The fact of the matter is that the military industrial complex, once entrenched, becomes self-perpetuating, leading to ever-increasing Defence Budgets and never-ending wars. President John. F. Kennedy, who succeeded Eisenhower, took the warning seriously by appointing Robert McNamara, the then Chief Executive Officer of one of the world's largest corporations, Ford Motors, as his Defence



Secretary. McNamara's job was to devise and implement Planning, Programming, Budgeting Systems (PPBS) in order to streamline the Defence Budgeting System, eliminate waste and duplication and make it more effective.

In 1983, President Shagari, in his 2nd Term, brought in the late Omowaye Kuye as Director of Budget to work out a PPBS across the board, not just for the military but also Housing, Health, Roads and other sectors. Sadly, that regime did not last 100 days! Basically, if Nigeria is to avoid the trap of a never-ending terror war, it's time she devised her PPBS in order to have a more cost-effective Defence Budget which will at the same time robustly tackle terrorism. There is no alternative! The PPBS should also be applied to all the internal security mechanisms: Military, Police, Civil Defence, Intelligence Agency, even Customs Service.

That 287 innocent schoolchildren could be kidnapped from a school and Nigerians are moving on as if nothing has happened, it is not only surprising, but also infuriating. So, where are the Emirs and why are they keeping silent in the face of a deep cavity in their region's future?

For God's sake, is there something the suffering masses need to know which successive governments have been keeping away from us? By the way, who says Kuriga cannot happen to the Southwest and who says Ekiti cannot resurrect, especially in the region's low-hanging states? In rebooting therefore, it's better for other regions to learn fast and get fully prepared.

Since it may not be politically expedient to hire mercenaries, Nigeria must develop

and equip special forces with the fierce urgency of now even as technology such as sensors, drones, aerial surveillance systems, magnetics and artificial intelligence must not only be incorporated but also be at the heart of the reevaluation of the Defence package. Data scientists and forensic experts such as industrial chemists, biochemists and others in that mould must also be incorporated into the heart of the new strategic framework.

Nigeria has to start anew as she has already fallen into a trap. Those in authority are well-advised to move into the realm of critical thinking and take more than a cursory look at the magnificent works of the past such as the former Commander of the British Land Forces, Lt. General Frank Edward Kitson's path-breaking 'low intensity operations'. Originally published in 1979, about 17 contemptuous chapters of Kitson's work are still not published and that's on the orders of successive British governments, for it gives a valuable insight into the nature and strategies of the anti-insurgency warfare.

Throughout history, once policy is not separated from procurement, a never-ending war becomes an option because some people are bound to benefit from the spoils of a failed system. Tragically too, the more out-of-school children the country produces, the more it continues to feed the war machine because those untrained and uncatered-for children are ready recruits.

Since counterinsurgency war in Nigeria has become as big a business as the Ministry of Works, the country must reevaluate its spending pattern if it must

make headway. Feeding the procurement machine without working out the strategic imperative can only be likened to moving amiss. So, Nigeria must embrace a collective sense of responsibility and countermeasure devoid of ethnic and other primordial sentiments if she is to make any gains in the onslaught on the blood money merchants.

One advantage that Nigeria has today is that it has as President and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces a man who came into office from the managerial background. So, President Bola Tinubu must see the current war against terrorism and banditry as a crisis of project management and strategy. Thus, Nigerians expect

Tinubu as a proven manager of men and resources to deploy his proven managerial skills which he demonstrated as governor of Lagos State into the war against terrorism and let the madness come to an end now.

Well, yours sincerely has never been an apostle of the declaration of a state of emergency because its usefulness has not been felt in Nigeria. The more reason the presidents has Tinubu also has to up his game for Nigerians will be disappointed if he goes the Muhammadu Buhari way. At a time like this, Nigerians need clarity on some burning issues and the national government needs to communicate to Nigerians but it seems as if the president's men are not looking in that direction. The notorious truth is that we can't keep talking about attacking insecurity in Nigeria without building trust and this is where sincerity of purpose on the part of the government is most useful.

So, the president has to recalibrate his plans. He also needs to change his style, if need be. Tinubu will do well by suspending other not-so-important engagements for decisive decisions that will make his regime different from his predecessors. Nigeria is burning and the president needs to reassure Nigerians that he is up to the task. In sane climes, the police and army chiefs would have long relocated to the forests to rescue the victims.

May the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world, grant us peace in Nigeria!

KOMOLAFE wrote in from Ijebu-Jesa, Osun State, Nigeria and can be reached via; (ijebujesa@yahoo.co.uk

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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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6 COLUMNS			
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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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2	Per 1000 Copies (1 Page)	28,000.00	2,100.00	30,100.00
3	Per 1000 Copies (Magazine)	50,000.00	3,750.00	53,750.00
4	Per 1000 Copies (Magazine)	80,000.00	6,000.00	86,000.00

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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

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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	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
BACK PAGE STRIP	420,889.54	31,566.72	452,456.26
CENTRE SPREAD (COLOUR)	837,500.00	62,812.50	900,312.50
CENTRE SPREAD (BLACK & WHITE)	575,000.00	43,125.00	618,125.00
DOUBLE SPREAD (COLOUR)	700,000.00	52,500.00	752,500.00
DOUBLE SPREAD (BLACK & WHITE)	550,000.00	41,250.00	591,250.00
ROPS TRIP (COLOUR)	125,000.00	9,375.00	134,375.00
ROPS TRIP (BLACK & WHITE)	85,000.00	6,375.00	91,375.00

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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	32,285.71	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

Let Sen Ningi Carry His Cross

By; AUWALAHMED IBRAHIM

The truth is bitter at all times, but there is nothing sweeter than saying the truth and standing on it.

After Senator Abdul Ningi opened what he thought was a 'can of worms' for the Senate President and the Government of Bola Ahmad Tinubu, Senator Ningi didn't adopt the appropriate manner to approach his case. It has only shown that Ningi has a grudge, to mar the integrity of the administration of the President Bola Ahmad Tinubu for his political interest.

For those supporting Ningi, they jumped the gun and are supporting unethical conduct because his action was politically motivated and it is for his own interest.

No place exists without laws, ethics, or protocols and Senator Ningi punishment is a lesson for all Nigerians to know that nobody is above the law.

Who thinks that Senator Abdul Ningi is not a sinner in this case? For those that think, Ningi is supporting campaign of ridicule on the government of Bola Ahmad Tinubu and a politics of witch hunt of a government that has many things on its head to do for the people when he, Senator Ningi quietly knows that insertion in Budget is a normal tradition.

Why did Ningi not come up with something that affects the Northern region the most? And why didn't Ningi decided on his own, all alone take to the press to give the Nigerian senators bad name and dent their image when he can contact the Senate President or the budget committee? Ningi wanted to prove innocent when he is enjoying the dividends of the national cake silently and now he wants to share his pains on the Northern region.

For the goodness sake, of Nigerians should know, Sen. Atiku Bagudu, the Minister of Budget and Economic Planning, had said that the National Assembly did not break any law with new insertions in the 2024 budget."

It is a tradition and a normal ethic in which the senators lobby and beg for constituency projects to be inserted in the budget after the bill is presented. This is a tradition since 1999 in Nigeria's democracy, and it is backed by laws of the country.

The Sins of Senator Abdul Ningi
Senator Abdul Ningi was pressed to accuse the Senate President for padding because he wanted more from the budget allocation, and

instead of following protocol, he decided to use the Northern Senators Forum to amplify his grievances. Senator Ningi took the crux alone and that was why he was disowned by the Northern Senators Forum because he baked and wanted to eat his cake alone.

Senator Ningi was not in friendly tone with the Senate President and because of the political differences between them, he wanted to spoil the name of the Senate President and the government of Bola Ahmad Tinubu. This is a political debacle in an early time of one year of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu.

The Chief Whip of the Senate, Senator Ali Ndume faulted Senator Ningi before he went to the press. The Chief Whip wanted to make him understand why the budget was increased, but he didn't give him listening ears.

"The Senate Chief Whip said that when Ningi first presented the case to him, he asked him to provide evidence, which he could not provide" because what was increased was a constituency project for the senators.

"I sat next to the Senate Leader (Opeyemi Bamidele), he was very angry over what Ningi did, but honestly, me too, what he (Ningi) did was wrong because I was involved," Ndume said.

Ndume said Ningi was trying to make 2024 projects an ethnic and political issue, which, according to him, is wrong, and despite the clarifications of Senator Ndume Ningi bypassed the members of the Northern



Sen Abdu Ningi

Senators Forum and spoke on their behalf which later they berated him and supported his suspension.

After the damage was done, Ningi became conscious of his deeds and knowing fully his sins before the suspension, said, 'I don't care if I'm suspended, I was quoted out of context.'

Another sin of Senator Abdul Ningi was granting an interview to the BBC medium explaining that two budgets exist which later the Presidency faulted.

It is said that Ningi is playing politics in the Senate to promote his PDP party's ambition against the ruling party of the APC and to tarnish the government and the person of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu while it is unethical for Ningi to do such as a leader in the Senate.

While it was learnt that the suspended Senator Abdul Ningi is canvassing support to avert his suspension, Ningi should thread with caution not to cause more damage and chaos in the country with protests, if he has the nation at heart. The North is facing challenges of insecurity and Ningi's suspension shouldn't add more heat on the region.

In the process of staging protest and calls for justice, the people should look at the sins of Senator Abdul Ningi and the decision of the senators on his unethical conduct because he was cautioned but berated the option for his political interests.

Auwal Ahmed Ibrahim writes from Kaduna State and can be reached via auwalgoronyo@gmail.com

State Audit Efficiency Index 2023: Kaduna Falls From 12th To 20th

By: YUSUF ISHAKU GOJE

Kaduna State has been ranked 20th out of 36 states in the recently released State Audit Efficiency (SAE) Index Survey, 2023, by the Paradigm Leadership Support Initiative (PLSI). The State scored 28%, far behind the number one State, Ekiti, that scored 73%. It ranked 12th in the North; and 6th out of the 7 States in the North-west - behind Katsina (4th), Zamfara (10th), Kebbi (11), Kano (13) and Sokoto (15th). This is disturbing as it is a sharp fall from its 12th position, with a score of 41% in 2022, 75% in 2021 and 70% in 2020.

The index survey was conducted using primary and secondary research methods. Each State was scored based on eight priority areas: Audit Legal Framework and Operationalization - 20%; Submission of Annual Activity Report for 2022 - 9%; Type of Audit Document Published in 2022 - 18%; Implementation of House Resolutions on Audit Recommendations for 2021 - 9%; Evidence of Performance Audit for 2022 - 13%; Availability of Citizens' Accountability Report for 2022 - 5%; CS/Media Participation in the 'Audit Process' - 10%; and Effectiveness of Public Accounts Committee - 16%.

The justification in the report for Kaduna's score was that financial autonomy clause (Kaduna State Audit Law, 2021, S. 25 (4)) is not operational; administrative independence activated with the Kaduna State Audit Service Board inaugurated; appointment procedure for the State Auditor-General is transparent; tenure of Office for the Auditor-General not secured as the Kaduna State Audit Law 2021 did not provide secured tenure for the Auditor-General; and legal mandate to publish audit reports online is available.

Others are: annual activity report for 2022 not published online; incomplete audit report for 2022 published online; implementation of audit recommendations for 2021 ongoing; no evidence of performance audit for 2022; Citizens' Accountability Report for 2022 not available; Public Accounts Committee (PAC) review of 2022 audit report not started; and CS/Media actors less involved in the Audit process.

The recommendations for Kaduna State are: the Executive, House of Assembly and the Office of the Auditor-General should remedy inadequacies in the legal framework and implement the audit law effectively; Supreme Audit Institution, Office of Accountant-General and other actors should ensure audit reports and citizens' accountability reports are published online and timeously; Office of the Auditor-General and Public Accounts Committee should improve on the involvement of civic and media actors in the audit process; PAC should discharge its Constitutional responsibilities on reports of the Auditor-General diligently; and there is a need to ensure performance audits are carried out to assess implementation of government's programs, projects and policies.

However, one is taken back as to why the



Gov Uba Sani

report noted that there was less involvement of CS/Media actors in the Audit process in 2023, compared to 2022 where it reported that CS/Media Actors were involved. This is because I can confidently state that there were not less than three citizens' engagements we co-organized with the Office of the Auditor General on the 2022 audit report and process. I can also categorically state that the Office of the Auditor General is one of the most citizens-friendly and accessible public office in the State. Similarly, there were two milestones on promoting citizens' involvement in the Audit process captured in the OGP State Action Plan (SAP II, 2021-2023) commitment on Open Budget.

Thankfully, there are also two milestones on participatory auditing in the current OGP State Action Plan (SAP II, 2024-2025) commitment on Open Budget. Also, progress has been made in delivering the milestones as the Office of the Auditor General of the State has

appointed a Citizens' Engagement Desk Officer. In addition, a list of Community Development Charter (CDC) Champions has been submitted to the Auditor General to be involved during the performance audit process. The civil society is also currently working with the Office of the Auditor General to develop a participatory audit framework to deliver one of the OGP milestone..

It is imperative that all institutions with responsibilities in implementing the above recommendations commit to taking it forward. Similarly, it is important to emphasize the need for the State government to comply with the State Audit law to ensure that budgetary allocations to the Office of the Auditor General are first line charges. As it is disturbing to note some key activities that should be carried out timely by the Office of the Auditor General are unnecessarily delayed, due to inadequate and untimely cash-backed releases. The PAC should also be given the necessary support by the

State Assembly to carry-out its mandate of timely review of the Audit reports and oversight over the implementation of the recommendations.

The administration of Governor Uba Sani and leadership of the 10th State House of Assembly, led by Hon. Yusuf Liman, have an opportunity to ensure the State strengthens its audit process by implementing the above recommendations; and improves on its ranking in the next State Audit Efficiency Index Survey. This will be easy to achieve if they play their part. As the current Auditor General of the State is already playing his part. He has moved the State from just carrying out financial audit to also having compliance and now performance audits. It is now time for Kaduna State to set the standard for other States to follow.

Goje is an active citizen, civil society actor and OGP enthusiast

Jonathan Ihonde: Red Salute To An Ubiquitous Leader

By Owei Lakemfa

JONATHAN Ihonde. I never came across a leader so dominant, but invisible. So influential, but unknown. Silent waters, running deep, he was like a wall gecko in the Nigerian house, observing everything, but remaining virtually unnoticed.

Traversing the country's political terrain since the 1960s, a major labour leader for over five decades, accepted leader of the Left forces and one of the most creative minds who ran a drama series from 1962. Yet, if a vox pop were to be held, most Nigerians would ask: Jonathan who?

Ihonde had written an anti-Apartheid play: "Our blindness". So, when he was detained for organising the workers strike, Apartheid South Africa mocked Nigeria as being a worse country for detaining Ihonde whose crime was fighting for social justice.

Many Nigerians know Raymond Dokpesi as the founder of African Independent Television (AIT) and Ray Power, but only a handful would know that he started out as an actor under the tutelage of Ihonde, or that famous actors, like Sam Loco Efe, passed through his hands.

In trying to trace Ihonde through the flow of life, I first located him in an incident in 1961. He was suspended without pay as an accounts clerk on the fourth floor of the Western Nigeria Development Corporation (WNDC) when a communist book, Lenin in Britain, was found on his desk by the Chief External Accounting Auditor, a Whiteman.

The following year, Ihonde, at 23, created a satirical drama series, "Hotel De Jordan". This came to define him. He said of the series which became one of the most popular and longest-running television drama series in the country: "The theme of 'Hotel De Jordan' is class antagonism; the perpetual struggle between the rich and the poor, especially in a bourgeois society ... Many characters are created in the programme; revolutionary characters and reactionary characters."

Patrick Obayagbon, a logophile who loves high-sounding words and language, must have been a student of Professor Milo Moro, one of Ihonde's fictional characters.

Hotel De Jordan was staged across theatres in Ibadan and Benin, and the studios of NTA "highlighting the ills and foibles of the society, and with a view to solving them". It was one of the precursors of Nollywood.

In 1963, he joined left elements in the country to establish the Society for Progress (SOFOPRO). It was led by high school teacher, Olu Adebayo, who, one day, disappeared and was never seen again. Ihonde said this group directly or indirectly, influenced the Socialist Movement in the country.

In 1968, Ihonde was thrown into the Oko Prison by Colonel Samuel Ogbemudia, the Military Governor of then Mid-West, later renamed Bendel State. They were friends, but Ihonde who was the leader of the over 17,000 workers of the Urhonigbe Rubber Estate, Ughelli Glass Factory and Ewohimi Oil Palm Plantation, opposed the privatisation of viable and profitable public companies.

Reminiscing on this, he said: "Foreigners came from abroad to buy from these companies in hard currency. With these benefits, somebody just rose up and said he was going to sell these companies to private individuals. I then told my friend that was not possible. I resisted it."

Ihonde had written an anti-Apartheid play: "Our blindness". So, when he was detained for organising the workers strike, Apartheid South Africa mocked Nigeria as being a worse country for detaining Ihonde whose crime was fighting for social justice.

After a long stay in prison, he was released but was further punished by being demoted from Grade Level 12 to Grade Level 4: "They – the military regime – insisted that they were going to make me an example for fighting against the government."

He became the ideological arrowhead of the NLC. When then Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher visited Nigeria in 1978, Ihonde came to Lagos from Benin to lead the massive demonstrations against her for supporting the Apartheid regime in South Africa. I recall that loads of armed security men were deployed at Ojuelegba to block the buses of the protesters and stop them from getting to the airport. Rather than put up resistance, Ihonde ordered the demonstrators to disembark and walk the two-three hours distance to the airport. Having lost control, the security services caught up with Ihonde on Ikorodu Road and begged him to order the demonstrators back into the buses. He simply ignored them and led the protesters to the airport. There, the Union Jack was burnt as Thatcher's bewildered convoy was forced to sneak its way through the angry crowds.

When 20 years later, the Babangida regime's privatisation policy became like full blown AIDS, the post-Chiroma Trade Union Movement embraced it. Perhaps, if the labour leaders had fought privatisation like Ihonde did, the country would have been in a far healthier state.

When the four trade union centres: the



United Labour Congress (ULC); the Nigeria Trade Union Congress (NTUC); the Nigeria Workers Council (NWC); and the Labour Unity Front (LUF), merged in December 1975 to establish the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC), Ihonde emerged one of its leaders.

However, the military regime under General Murtala Mohammed dissolved that NLC. After a new NLC was born in 1978, Ihonde became the Chairman of its Bendel State Council, comprising Edo and Delta states.

In 1984, despite the stout opposition of his mother union, the Radio, Television, Theatre and Arts Workers Union (RATTAWU), Ihonde was elected a Vice President of the NLC.

On January 22 and 23, 2024, when a group of us organised the Lenin Centenary Conference in Abuja, Ihonde sent a paper and participated virtually. On March 8, 2024, I got a message that he was hospitalised. I spoke with him. He was recovering fast and we agreed to speak on his discharge. He was billed for discharge on Wednesday, March 13. However, the night before, he developed complications and at 9.50 am, Comrade Jonathan Ihonde marched on to assume other commands.

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the protesters to the airport. There, the Union Jack was burnt as Thatcher's bewildered convoy was forced to sneak its way through the angry crowds.

The 1988 NLC conference was endangered by the Babangida regime that had hired fifth columnists to cause mayhem and forcibly break up the Congress. The NLC wisely turned to Ihonde in Benin, to host the conference. He did so successfully, although an angry Babangida later issued a decree to ban the Congress.

It is a measure of Ihonde's political stature that when Chief Moshood Kashimawo Abiola sought the support of Edo State people to actualise his presidential mandate, it was to Ihonde he was directed. Indeed, there was hardly any progressive tendency that emerged in Edo State in the last four decades, without Ihonde's imprint. There was ecstasy in 2008 when former NLC President, Adams Oshiomhole, was elected Edo State Governor. In the euphoria, Ihonde studied Oshiomhole's moves and told comrades that they were free to join the administration, but he would not because Oshiomhole merely signalled left but is taking a right turn.

On January 22 and 23, 2024, when a group of us organised the Lenin Centenary Conference in Abuja, Ihonde sent a paper and participated virtually. On March 8, 2024, I got a message that he was hospitalised. I spoke with him. He was recovering fast and we agreed to speak on his discharge. He was billed for discharge on Wednesday, March 13. However, the night before, he developed complications and at 9.50 am, Comrade Jonathan Ihonde marched on to assume other commands.

As the guns boomed at 7 am on March 14, in Oke-Ora to announce his interment, it was a red salute from us his political children.

African Games: Elizabeth Anyanacho Wins Gold Medal for Nigeria In Taekwondo



By: JACOB ONJEWU
DICKSON

Qualified Olympic Taekwondo Elizabeth Anyanacho yesterday in Accra, won a gold medal for Nigeria defeating Africa's No 1 ranked Egyptian, Mohammed Aya in three rounds of fight on the mat. 2019 African Games bronze medalist started the day defeating W. Zaboure of Burundi in the quarter-final to at least get into the medal range.

In the semi-final, Elizabeth Anyanacho took the courage of showcasing Nigeria's Taekwondo to defeat Salih Sofia of Morocco in another three rounds on the mat.

Coming into the final, Elizabeth who this year, has qualified for the Olympics Paris 2024 to be staged in France, took her time and studied her opponent, Mohammed Aya in the bout lost the first round, but came back strongly to win the second and third rounds to claim the gold medal.

With this gold medal, Team Nigeria Taekwondo has won one gold and one bronze medals with more expected.

Olubadan Lekan Balogun's Passage Very Painful, Great Loss - Buratai *Visits late monarch's family in Ibadan

By: BAYOAKAMO, Ibadan
The Aare Akinrogun of Ibadanland and former Chief of Army Staff and former Ambassador to Benin Republic, Lt. Gen. Tukur Yusuf Buratai (rtd) on Monday, said that the demise of the late Olubadan of Ibadanland Oba Lekan Balogun is very painful and a great loss. Speaking during his condolence visit to the Alarere residence of the late Oba Balogun, the former Chief of Army Staff declared that with the passage of the late monarch, "we have lost a friendly, jovial, compassionate and loving monarch. " The exit of Oba Balogun is a loss of great monarch. His passage, though very painful, but we are grateful to the Almighty Allah, he made his mark and left great legacy," he said. Receiving the former Chief of Army Staff on behalf of the late Olubadan family, Senator Kola Balogun stated that family of the

late monarch are grateful to the Almighty Allah for for the quality service Oba Balogun gave Ibadanland during his two-year reign.

" We are feeling great sense of loss because we never thought it was going to be so short. We however take solace in the popular aphorism that it is not how long, but, how well", he said Senator Balogun added, "We are grateful to the Almighty Allah for for the quality service our departed hero gave Ibadanland during his two-year reign. The general comments trailing his passage since Thursday last week have been so consoling and soothing balm on the pains caused by his death.

" He scored many firsts and his efforts at ensuring that peace reigned during his time and the taming of the monsters engaging in land grabbing would go down in history as part of his enduring legacies".

Appreciating Lt Gen Buratai for

the visit, Senator Balogun disclosed that he was not surprised with the visit by the retired General, in view of the cordial relationship between the visitor and the family, which though started with the coronation about two years ago, has blossomed like decades of interactions.

Also, the Oniroko of Iroko, Oba Ismaila Abioye Opeyemi who led the association of the Royal Highnesses of Ibadanland to condole the family of the late monarch described late Oba Balogun as a man with no restriction to his accessibility.

Oba Opeyemi stressed that his

death caught everybody unaware as his news of illness was not heard and it made it more painful.

" We took consolation in the fact that our departed father made history and his impact on all of us would remain indelible in our lives because the crowns we all parade now were his legacies

which nobody could alter in history", he said.

The Oniroko added, " We shall forever remain grateful to him just as we implore all the people left behind not to mourn but to rejoice in the impactful and fulfilled life lived by the departed great monarch".



Lt Gen Buratai during the visit on Monday

13th African Games: Another Jollof Rice Battle At Cape Coast As Falconet Aim To Defend Title Against Ambitious Black Princess

By; JOSEPH ODOEKWU, Accra

It would be another opportunity for Nigeria to rekindle her jollof derby clash with Ghana as the Black Princess who yesterday beat Senegal 3-1 in the semifinal of the ongoing African Games will meet with the Falconets who had earlier reached the final after a 2-0 defeat of Uganda.

The match which will be played on Thursday March 21, 2024 at the Cape Coast Stadium, 2024 will afford the defending champions Falconets an opportunity to defend their title against an ambitious Ghana side who are looking forward to get their first ever gold at this level.

Both sides have never met at this stage of the competition before, but one thing which the Black

Princess will enjoy when they meet Falconet is the massive home support which they will get to enable them face a Nigerian side that are looking forward to clinch their back-to-back gold medal before the Ghanaian huge fans.

Nigeria is currently second on the table with 27 gold medals, and closely trailed by South Africa who are third on the table.

An additional gold from football will be a major boost for Nigeria while Ghana who is sixth on the table with 9 gold medals understands why a gold in football is needed not just to increase their gap against Mauritius who have 7 gold medals, but to rekindle their hope in resurrecting football which seemed to have collapsed at all levels in recent times.

As both sides prepare to meet in the finals of the women football event, the Falconet who are defending champions and favourite to win the title will have to establish their superiority over the Black Princess in a clash that will be best remembered as the Jollof Derby Battle of Cape Coast.



Exhibit Leadership Qualities In Dealings, Nimrod Tasks Nigerians

By; JACOB ONJEWU DICKSON

The President of Nigeria Volleyball Federation (NVBF), Engineer Musa Nimrod in his remarks, wants prominent Nigerians to always exhibit quality leadership in their dealings with others. Musa Nimrod made the call in after he and other personalities were conferred with Doctoral Fellow at the Leadership Conference of the Institute of Leadership Assessment and Development (ILAD).

The Volleyball administrator who was represented by Professor Simon Katung, commended the institute for recognising their contributions towards the growth and development of the country, and called on the fellows to be of best behaviour now that they have become role models in the society. The Director General of ILAD, Dr Baba Adamu said the institute is not just a collection of like-minded professionals, but a family that thrives on collaboration, mentorship and the pursuit of excellence.

The leadership conferment are usually issued to distinguished Nigerians who have displayed exceptional leadership qualities within and outside the country. Chief Judge of Kaduna State, Justice Tukur Mu'azu Aliyu, Dr Umar Musa Abubakar and Dr Jerry Adams, Executive Chairman, Internal Revenue Service, Kaduna State were also among the distinguished Nigerians conferred with the Honourary Doctorate Awards by ILAD. Others are, Registrar/CEO,

Community Health Practitioners Registration Board of Nigeria, Dr. Idris Bashir, Chairman Kaduna State Local Government Service Board, Professor Aminu LADAN Sharehu, Commandant Nigerian Defence Academy (NDA) Major General John O. Ochai, Director Urban Planning and Development Authority (KASUPDA), Dr. Ismail, Umar Dikko, Counsellor to Executive Governor of Kaduna State on Land Matters, Dr. Bulus Audu and others.



Nimrod

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Kaduna Mass School Kidnapping: A Direct Attack On Our Educational Growth - Senator Katung

By: AMOS TAUNA, Kaduna

The Senator representing Southern Kaduna Senatorial District, Mr Sunday Marshall Katung, has expressed concerns over the recent continued incidents of mass abduction of school children in Nigeria.

He lamented that the situation is assuming a normative pattern that is sad, reminding Nigerians of previous kidnappings that the country has faced, saying that it is worrisome, condemnable and a direct attack on the country's educational institutions.

In a statement he personally issued yesterday, Katung said, "It portends an existential threat to our educational growth. Schools are supposed to be safe havens for learning for both students and educators and not a

place of fear."

According to him, the abduction of 287 school children and some teachers from LEA primary school, Kuriga in Chikun local government area of Kaduna State on 7th March, 2024, and the reported abduction of 87 people from Kajuru station in Kajuru Local Government Area of Kaduna State on Sunday, 17th March, 2024, including other isolated incidents scattered across the states leave a disgusting taste in the mouth.

He condemned the renewed spike in mass abductions and extended his sincere sympathy to Governor Uba Sani at these trying moments, while assuring the Governor that whatever form of collaboration needed to tackle the menace from his colleagues and himself in the Senate would

be extended to him.

"I also extend my sympathy to the families of the victims and the victims themselves. Together, we will overcome this emerging evil," he observed.

According to him, "This deviant and abhorrent act has no place in a decent and civilized environment like ours, and as an existential threat to the development of education, it needs to be dealt with strategically, quickly, and emphatically.

"This can be achieved when we devise a better response to these predictable incidents. And if we don't, we will continue to deal with the aftermath of these kidnapping, banditry, and criminality unraveling in various forms in our communities."



Sen. Sunday Marshall Katung

U-Farm Africa Tractor For Grains Initiative Hiring Scheme Launched In Zaria

By: SANIALIYU, Zaria

U-Farm Africa Tractors for Grains Initiative Hiring Scheme has stormed Sabon Gari Local Government Area of Kaduna State in Zaria with simple mechanized inputs for smallholder farmers.

The farmers appreciated the efforts of U-Farm Africa Tractor For Grains Initiative for coming to their doorstep with modern mechanized inputs to boost their farming activities.

According to the farmers, as far as modern mechanized farming is concerned now that the world is changing through globalization, the U-Farm Africa Tractor For Grains Initiative has come to them at the right time.

One of the banes of smallholder farmers agricultural productivity has not been due to poor generation of innovation, but with effective dissemination of proven agricultural technologies to the largely stakeholder



farmers which U-Farm Africa did to them.

Accordingly, Nigeria has all it takes to refocus its agriculture to overcome the current challenges of changing global climate to enhance its food security.

While calling on governments at all levels to partner with the U-Farm Africa Tractor for Grains Initiative so that small-scale farmers will benefit, the U-Farm said that it has a formidable network that will benefit the

small holder farmers in Nigeria.

In his message at the launching of the programme, the Emir of Zazzau, Malam Ahmed Nuhu Bamalli said that the U-Farm Africa Tractors for Grains Initiative Hiring Scheme is a motivator to the smaller farmers to improve their productivity.

Emir Bamalli who was represented by the Bijimin Arewa Zazzau Alhaji Sa'idu Aliyu, said the development will assist the peasant farmers to

improve their productivity at the end of the farming season.

He advised the beneficiaries of the scheme to be sincere and pay what they are expected to when due. He commended the efforts put in place for the laudable initiative by U-Farm Africa, towards improving and encouraging smaller farmers to do more than what they they produce.

The emir assured them of the traditional institutions in Zazzau Emirate's support towards achieving their goals on agricultural development among the smaller farmers in Nigeria.

In his remarks, the Lead Manager U-Farm Africa Tractor For Grains Initiative Scheme, Mr. Olalekan Ilori said their main target is smaller farmers, because they are very important to the company.

He said the tractors are for hiring

services, not for sale because it's for grains initiative support to the smaller farmers.

According to him, if smaller farmers embrace this technology, the issues of production losses will be history and the benefit will be more than what they are getting traditionally.

On the mode of payment he said a farmer will be required to deposit 20% of the money charged, while the balance is to be settled with grains after the harvest.

He said, "in the case of a farmer who wants to hire but doesn't have the money, that farmer will enjoy the services."

Some of the farmers from Sabon Gari and Giwa local government areas expressed happiness that a new agric mechanization is at their doorsteps.

They commended the U-Farm Africa for making them part of the beneficiaries of the U-Farm Africa Tractor For Grains initiative.