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NYLF Seeks Clipping Wike's Wings In PDP, Demands North Central National Chairman

■ Says Nigeria must not be allowed to slide into one-party state

By: BASHIR BELLO DOLLARS, Abuja

Frontline group, Northern Youth Leaders Forum (NYLF) has described those attempting to make the main opposition, People's Democratic Party (PDP) collapse as undemocratic, while insisting that the national chairman of the party should be retained by the North Central Zone. NYLF expressed this at a press briefing in Lafia yesterday, with the text of the briefing, read by its President, Comrade Elliot Afiyu.

"We have observed with great dismay the efforts of these political opportunists in destroying whatever the nation has benefited through democratic governments. "This is why we have been consulting with the stakeholders in PDP starting with the North - Central Zone of the country, to ensure equitable distribution of National Offices to guarantee justice and equity which are the basic democratic ingredients necessary for checks and balances, critical and constructive opposition

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L-R: Benue State Governor, Rev. Fr. Hyacinth Alia receiving the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ), Good Governance Award Advocacy of the Masses and Human Rights from the Minister of Information and National Orientation, Mohammed Idris at the NUJ Press Freedom and Good Governance Awards 2024 in Abuja, PHOTO BY BASHIR BELLO DOLLARS

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EFCC's Actions: Anti-Corruption CSOs Raise Concerns Over Yahaya Bello's Safety

By: ADEBOYE ADO, Akure
Frontline anti-Corruption Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)

have again advised the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) to toe the path of the rule of law and not continue to give credence to the impression that its anti-corruption mandate is being politicized by some interests whose intentions are neither patriotic nor altruistic.

According to them, what is happening currently, in the ongoing controversy surrounding the commission's handling of its allegations against the immediate past Governor of Kogi State, Yahaya Bello, "connotes nothing but that."

They also noted that, with the way the EFCC had handled the matter, especially the threats from the lawyers and the Commission's boss, it was justifiable to say that Yahaya Bello's life might not be safe in the custody of the EFCC as being expressed by his supporters. "And we believe this is a legitimate fear."

The scores of activists, who gathered in Lagos on Tuesday for a well attended press conference on the state of Nigeria's fight against corruption, noted that "the principle of justice presupposes that its scales are

always balanced and it is blind to personality, creed, gender, race or status."

They specifically pointed out that what had led to the overheating of the polity was a simple factor - unwillingness of the EFCC to obey a court and follow the due processes of law.

"If the EFCC had gone ahead to defend its appeal against the Kogi State High Court's order without the premeditated drama of attempted arrest of a citizen who had a subsisting Court order against such action, we will not be here today," they said.

The Chairman, Centre for Anti-Corruption and Open Leadership, CACOL, Debo Adeniran, who led other CSOs at the press conference, said, "The question will still remain a subject of legal interrogation whether charges filed against a subsisting Court order can stand the test of legal scrutiny. If a court of competent jurisdiction has ruled that you must stay action on a particular matter pending the determination of the matter before it but that action was executed in spite of that order, one wonders how valid such charges could be in the long run."

He stated, "If your enemy falls victim of injustice today and you are happy and mute, when the same hand of injustice slaps your friend tomorrow, you will be

under no moral or legal obligation to be angry or complain because society will remind you of the saying that 'what is good for the goose is equally good for the gander'. Worse still, you may even eventually become a victim of the same hand of injustice that you once celebrated.

"In this hazardous duty of rights activism, we are under permanent obligation to speak and rise up against injustice even if the person concerned is our mortal enemy or even a total stranger. It does not matter to us your religion, your ethnicity, your status in the society, whether rich or poor, powerful or powerless, popular or obscure; our commitment to the cause of justice is a perpetual service to humanity for which no sacrifices, including insults, blackmail and deliberate misrepresentation of facts can be too heavy for us to bear. It is our cross. Some of us have carried this cross for over four decades.

"They say there is no morality in politics. We say there is no sentiment in justice and rule of law. Every citizen is equal before the law and must be seen to be treated equally."

The activists added, "In the current matter between the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, EFCC, and the immediate past Governor of

Kogi State, Alhaji Yahaya Bello, our position remains that the due processes of law be followed to the letter and unconditionally.

"As you may have noticed recently, more prominent Nigerians, including legal luminaries and politically exposed persons, are coming out to speak truth to power on this matter of arrogant disobedience to lawful court orders..."

"Let us reiterate the fact that the EFCC could still have achieved its objective of prosecuting Yahaya Bello simply by following the due processes of law and even might have achieved more but for its decision to act ultra vires. We need not go into the details of that again as it is already in the public domain in large volumes."

They advised the legal teams of the Commission to pay more attention to the technicalities of their cases before presenting them before their lordships, saying that "the EFCC loses too many cases that either should not have been taken to Court in the first instance, or badly prosecuted whilst their lawyers continue to smile to the banks."

"With the way the Commission has handled the Yahaya Bello case thus far, especially the Gestapo-style employed, threats of military invasion to arrest him, and the needless public outburst of the Commission's boss on the

matter, it is justifiable to say that Yahaya Bello's life may not be safe in the custody of the EFCC as being expressed by his supporters and we believe that this is a legitimate fear.

"To that extent, all legal procedures can continue as they are now without Yahaya Bello being put in EFCC's custody. The Court knows what to do to ensure that he presents himself in Court whenever his presence is required.

"It is our well considered position that an error has been committed which can only be remedied by the well established judicial processes of Nigeria if truly this is strictly about corruption investigation and nothing else," the human rights crusaders said.

The press conference was attended by Comrades Debo Adeniran, Olufemi Lawson, Declan Ihekiare, Gbenga Soloki, Abdullahi Usman, Funmi Jolade, Shina Loremikan, Akeem Olanrewaju, and Gbenga Ganzallo.

Also in attendance were Comrades Ochiaga Jude, Hakeem Sowole, Kolawole Egunsebi, Shina Ishola, Leke Adebajo, Peter Olayinka, Fola Akinola, Musiliu Adeajo, Mmeje Chukwudi, Samuel Olatoyin, and Rotimi Akinade, among others.

Katsina Govt Establishes First Ever Council On Health

By: SULAIMAN AHMED MISAU, Katsina

Katsina State Government has established the state's first-ever Council on Health as part of its efforts to improve healthcare access for its residents across the 34 local government areas in the state.

However, the state Governor, Dikko Umaru Radda in a statement by his Chief Press Secretary Ibrahim Kaula Mohammed announced the commencement of the construction of 102 health facilities in the state.

According to the statement, Governor Radda made the disclosure during inauguration ceremony of the Council's held at the state secretariat conference hall on Monday, May 6, 2024.

This ambitious project he said would see three new health facilities built in each of the state's 34 local governments to ensure improved access to basic healthcare services for residents across

Katsina.

Governor Radda highlighted several key investments embarked upon by his administration to strengthen the state's healthcare system.

He said these includes:- "the release of over one billion naira for the upgrade of the Faskari Comprehensive Health Center to a General Hospital and the completion of the ongoing Kafur General Hospital project;

Others include funds mobilization for the completion of Zango General Hospital."

Governor Radda also revealed that the Ministry of Health has initiated the contracting process to upgrade the Kankara and Dandume Comprehensive Health centers to General Hospitals.

He emphasized that the state council on health, which is the first of its kind, serves as a platform for collaboration between government agencies, healthcare providers, and community organizations to address public health issues in the state.

Outlining the terms of reference of the council, Governor Radda named the commissioner of health, Dr. Bashir Gambo Saulawa, as the chairman with the Director of Planning, Research, and Statistics of the Health Ministry as the secretary.

He said the committee's mandate includes reviewing the current performance of the state's health sector and identifying gaps and challenges. This is in addition to mobilizing and allocating resources and ensuring accountability and transparency in the health sector, among others.

Earlier, in a welcome address, Katsina Commissioner of Health, Dr. Bashir Gambo Saulawa, said the State Council on Health would play a crucial role in the state's journey towards ensuring the well-being and health of its residents.

The commissioner remarked that the council would create an environment where policies and standards set by the

national council on health are effectively implemented, monitored, and aligned with the blueprint of the Radda-led administration.

In their separate goodwill messages, development partners and organizations, including UNICEF, WHO, CDC affiliates, and the NGOs of the governor's wife, cited the commitment of the Radda-led administration in addressing the challenges facing the health sector and promised more collaboration in achieving the set goals.

Wife of the Governor, Hajiya Zulaihat Dikko Radda, who spoke through the Commissioner for Basic and Secondary Education, Hajiya Hadiza Abubakar Yar'adua, however, emphasized that in addressing health challenges, common problems facing public health, including poverty, fake drugs, and common diseases affecting women and children as well as the larger society, must be considered.

ACF Hails FG Denial Of Foreign Military Base In Nigeria

*Slams HURIWA over support of the military bases

By: AMOS TAUNA, Kaduna

The Arewa Consultative Forum (ACF), has expressed delight with the statement made by Alhaji Mohammed Idris, Minister of Information and National Orientation stating that the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) has no plans to allow foreign military bases in Nigeria. A statement issued by Prof. T. A. Muhammad-Baba, National Publicity Secretary of ACF yesterday, said, "The FGN must be appreciated for taking such a bold and reassuring stance. Every African must be proud of this development."

For ACF, the statement added that the development is a victory for the imminently patriotic Nigerians who signalled readiness to campaign against the rumoured plans to host US and French military bases in Nigeria following their rejection in Republics of Burkina Faso and Niger.

Still on the issue, ACF said that it is greatly disappointed with a statement, credited to a supposedly non-governmental organisation concerned with promoting human rights, going by the name the Human Rights

Writers Association (HURIWA), supporting the possible establishment of the said military bases.

ACF said it finds such support patently shocking, shortsighted and against everything Nigeria stands for, saying, "We are an independent, sovereign African country in uncompromising solidarity with all sister African, especially ECOWAS, states in the struggle against all vestiges of colonialism and neo-colonialism, that have for far too long continued to hold down Africa in conditions of underdevelopment."

It added, "Enough is known about the experiences of countries like Burkina Faso and Niger that have hosted foreign military bases for years. Such bases have to date served only the interests of the advanced countries. Wheresoever they are located, the foreign military outposts operate outside of the control and in utter disregard for the national laws of their hosts, respecting only their own convenient rules."

The statement explained that that sister African countries will, on the basis of their experience with

the foreign military units, reject their presence is enough reason to dissuade Nigeria from even contemplate hosting them, stressing that it does not make any sense that such bases as rejected by sister ECOWAS would be welcomed by any next-door neighbour.

"HURIWA ought to realise that the presence of the bases has undeniably failed to result in any demonstrable decline in the activities of terrorist and insurgent groups that have been wrecking political, economic and social conditions in the sister countries," the statement emphasized.

The statement said, "For Nigeria, it is inescapable that whatever is unhelpful and/or detrimental to the interests of African countries cannot be good for us, due to shared destinies in unbroken historical, socio-cultural, economic and political ties which predated and antedates the artificial balkanisation of our societies by European colonial control.

"Africans will forever decry the imposition of ridiculous international boundaries, which often cut across the very heart of communities, as systematised at

the infamous 1884/1885 Berlin Conference at which no African country participated. It is thus instructive that the desire to establish the military bases emanate, not from African countries, but from the foreign powers themselves. It is as if the Berlin Conference is being updated and re-enacted now, in the 21st Century."

ACF observed that HURIWA is being quixotic and perhaps delusional in thinking that military and civilian personnel in the bases would respect Nigeria's sovereignty or help them fight terrorism and insurgency, pointing out that a good question to ask is where (and why now) have the foreign forces been all the while with the body counts in the thousands, recorded disrupted livelihoods, internally displaced populations. ACF stated that it is also disappointing that HURIWA would seek to trivialise the patriotic call against foreign military bases as emanating from some Northern leaders, as if HURIWA's condemnation is itself, by equal measure, a southern Nigerian agenda!

The forum noted that clearly the terrorism and banditry problem in Nigeria has gone beyond the

prism of killer herdsmen and Boko Haram, as HURIWA would have it, saying that looking at the problem from such a simplistic and reductionist perspective is unhelpful in the fight against terrorism.

"Our security forces know this only too well. No one should be lulled into complacency, thinking that anybody but ourselves can solve the problem. Nigeria should not be tempted by Trojan Horse-promises from foreign interests that had, until now, at best remained benignly neglectful or uninterested in our insecurity woes," the forum observed.

For ACF, the prospect for locating foreign military bases is disconcerting because their many consequences would impact on the lives of the people, and will only exacerbate and not reduce the security risks and threats that people of the North face.

ACF, therefore, commended President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's governments denial of plans to host foreign military bases on Nigeria soil, while calling on the FGN to forever refuse to entertain, let alone accede, to requests to site any foreign military base in Nigeria.

2027 Polls: National Youth Alliance Names Interim Executive Committee

By: ISAAC ODEH, Kaduna

In a move aimed at harnessing the energy and potential of young people ahead of the 2027 general elections, the National Youth Alliance (NYA) has announced the appointment of an interim Executive Committee to steer its affairs for the next six months.

In a statement signed by the NYA National Chairman and Youth President, Ambassador Aliyu Bin Abbas, made available to newsmen in Kaduna on Tuesday May 7, 2024, this dynamic team of dedicated individuals will spearhead the organization's efforts to empower and mobilize young Nigerians to drive positive change.

According to the statement, members of the interim

Executive Committee are as follows: Amb. Aliyu Bin Abbas - National Chairman/Youth President, Hon. Tamunotonye Samuel Inioribo - National Secretary, Comrade Darlington Agoha - National Organising Secretary, Comrade Hamza Nasarawa - National Youth Leader and Okwor Adanna Martina - National Women Leader

Others are, Barr. Adeola Onikoyi - National Legal Adviser, Comrade Obande Gideon Obande - National Publicity Secretary, Hon. Oladipupo Ogunseye - National Director of New Media, Hon. Abdulhamid Dankyarko - National Director of Finance, Prof Muhammad Sackor - NYA Consultant and Comrade Abubakar - National Director Research & Planning

It informed that the Office of the National Chairman/Youth President will be supported by, Hon. Meshack Onyeche - Chief of Staff, Babangida Aliyu - SSA Political Matters, Okpani Jacob Onjewu Dickson - SSA Media and Publicity, Hon. Hauwa Muhammad Kwajaffa - SSA Special Duties, Comrade Abdulrahman Bala - SSA Student Matters, Joseph Orike - SSA Foreign Relations, Anthony Edet Effiong - SSA Protocol and Gloria Z. Collins - Personal Assistant.

The statement said that this interim Executive Committee brings together a wealth of experience and expertise, and is poised to inspire, mobilize and empower young people to drive positive change in Nigeria in line with the objectives of the NYA.



NYLF Seeks Clipping Wike's Wings In PDP, Demands North Central National Chairman

*Says Nigeria must not be allowed to slide into one-party state

which is needed to propel the Government to always ensure accountability, secures and guarantees our fundamental Rights.

"We are highly amazed and disgusted that since the removal of Dr. Iyorchia Ayu as the National Chairman of the PDP getting to almost a year now, a substantive Chairman has not been appointed or elected because of the activities of some of these moles within the party who are bent on controlling the party for their selfish political interest to pleasing their pay masters," the statement said.

Although no name was mentioned by the group, it is suspected that the Minister of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Nyesom Wike may be the subject of the controversy, following his alleged backing if the present acting chairman of the PDP.

In view of the above, they demand that the office of the national chairman of the PDP should as a matter of urgency, be ceded or returned to the North - Central

Zone without further delay. According to the statement titled, "WE MUST UNITE TO SAVE PEOPLES DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PDP)" Comrade Afiyo Elliot, described the development in the opposition parties as

retrogressive.

"I count it as joy and a privilege to address you today on some national issues especially on the regrettable and retrogressive political scheming in the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and the Labour Party (LP).

"We are highly concerned because if these political gangsterism and despotism are not properly checked, curtailed and contained, Nigeria will become a One Party State, the consequences of which cannot be imagined.

"While the crisis of the Labour Party could be said to be internal and self-inflicted, that of the PDP is a deliberate and bracing efforts by the external forces through

unscrupulous elements in the party who considered their political interest and relevance above the National interest.

"This is a necessity so as to guarantee a balanced and equitable involvement and participation of all the critical Stakeholders. In the past two weeks or so, we have unfortunately witnessed unprecedented resignations of critical stakeholders from the PDP," he said.

According to NYLF, from the intelligence reports received so far, these stakeholders have successfully contacted and convinced many stakeholders to resign from the PDP.



Comrade Afiyo

"If this trend is allowed, the PDP will surely collapse in few months, the consequences of which the Nation may face in the next seven years, may not be compared to what is happening in South Korea or what happened during the apartheid rule in South Africa.

"To this end, we will reiterate our call on all well-meaning Nigerians especially the NEC Members of the PDP from the North-Central to rise to the challenge and ensure that their political entitlements are given to the mas a right not an obligation.

"The position of the National Chairman must

be given to the North -Central Zone without further delay.

"On our part, we will always ensure that all Geopolitical Zones are fairly represented. If the NEC of the PDP fails to effect the changes required or needed within two weeks, then the PDP will face the political consequences in no distant future.

"This is not a threat but a command that will guarantee the security, safety and sustenance of Democratic rule in Nigeria," they submitted. They therefore, called on the press to always stand for the truth.

Kaduna: Probing el-Rufai's Administration, Committee To Invite More To Testify

By; AMOS TAUNA, Kaduna

Henry Danjuma, Chairman of the Ad hoc Committee set up by the Kaduna State House of Assembly to investigate financial dealings that have to do with loans and contractual obligations by the Kaduna State Government under Malam Nasir el-Rufai, had said that the committee will receive more testimonies from those invited to appear before it.

He noted that some testimonies succeeded in indicting persons not originally lined up for an invitation, saying that they would be invited to appear before the committee based on the indictment.

According to him, the committee swung into action as soon as it was inaugurated, stressing that some key persons have been invited and interviewed by the committee, and got testimonies from them which may lead to other testimonies after further investigation.

Fielding questions from newsmen after its sitting that lasted into late night on Monday, the committee chairman said all testimonies will be analysed before reaching final findings and reports.

He stressed, "The Adhoc

Committee was inaugurated by the Kaduna State House of Assembly to investigate financial dealings that have to do with loans and contractual obligations by the Kaduna State Government from 29 May 2015 to May 29, 2023."

Those invited so far, included the former Commissioner, the Ministry of Public Works and Infrastructure, Thomas Gyang; former commissioner of the Ministry of Education, Ja'afaru Ibrahim Sani; former Agric commissioner, Dr. Manzo Daniel Maigari; Commissioner/administrator Zaria Metropolitan Authority, Balarabe Aliyu; the former managing director of Kaduna State Roads Agency (KADRA), Engr. Mohammed Lawal Magaji; Administrator, Kafanchan Metropolitan Authority, Phoebe Yayi Sukai; among others.

The Committee was recently inaugurated by the Kaduna State House of Assembly to investigate the financial dealings of the 8-year administration of the former governor, Nasir el-Rufai, following an outcry by the incumbent governor, Uba Sani, over the inability to pay salaries and complete contracts because of inherited huge debts.

Gunmen Abduct Four-month Old Baby In Akwa Ibom

By; PATRICK TITUS, Uyo

A four months old baby boy has been reportedly abducted by unknown gunmen in Enen-Atai Village in Itu Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State, leaving the parents in tears.

Startled by the incident, the parents have sent a Save Our Soul (SOS) to the security agencies to do all within their powers to

recover their four months old baby who was abducted at gun point in their house.

Father, Udem Eyo

said that the incident occurred at about 3:00 am on Saturday in their family house near the PCN Primary School, East Itam.

Eyo who narrated the incident when contacted said his family was startled by a loud bang on the door at about 3am on Saturday when two hefty men stormed their bedroom and demanded for their baby.

"I was sleeping when I heard the bang on the door, I jumped out of my bed but the door was pulled to the ground with force. Two strange men entered and demanded for my son, as a man I tried to stop them but they brought out guns and machetes, I shrugged.

"They seized the child from my wife who was screaming, kicked her aside and made away with the baby. When I rushed out to

raise alarm to alert my neighbors, I saw them zoom off in a car that was parked about a pole away.

"As I speak, my wife is completely traumatized. We lost our first child at about the same age and now that she was being consoled by the new baby boy, this has happened. I'm completely confused". The husband lamented.

The village head of the community, Prof. Efanga Usua who spoke on the situation, expressed fear and disappointment saying that such occurrence was strange in the area until recently when a mentally deranged woman was dispossessed of her baby by unknown bike men.

He said plan are underway to call a meeting of the East Itam Northern

Traditional Rulers to find lasting solution to such frightening occurrences.

According to him, the issue is with the police even as investigation is ongoing to unravel the mystery behind the abducted child.

The Divisional Crime Officer (DCO), Ayadehe Police Station, Itu LGA, Bokime Bassey, when contacted said the matter was reported since Saturday and police was not resting as investigation is ongoing to make sure perpetrators of the evil act are brought to book.

"Yes, we know about the issue, it was reported. We are on top of the situation. Even this morning we were in that village and we are making progress". The DCO stated.

CHANGE OF NAME

FRANCIS - I, formerly known and addressed as Miss Patience Francis, now wish to be known as MRS. PATIENCE EMMANUEL. All former documents remain valid. All relevant authorities concerned should take note.

Dangote Cement Says It's Committed To Capacity Building Of Ogun Host Communities

By; JACOB ONJEWU DICKSON

The management of Dangote Cement Plc., Ibesse Plant has assured that it would continue to complement the efforts of the Ogun State Government in the development of its host communities through capacity building for the people, especially the youth.

The company said it's committed to development for the prosperity of the people and host communities by placing a premium on the developmental needs of the communities and empowerment of their indigenes.

Speaking during a capacity development workshop for Host Community Representatives, General Manager, Human Asset Management/Admin, Mr. Aina Olugbenga said Dangote Cement remained committed to implementing value-adding empowerment programs to uplift the people and develop the host communities.

The workshop themed:

“Team Building, Inclusivity and Stewardship, a panacea to effective Community Representatives” according to him, was to equip the Community reps with the right skills to offer quality representation for their people. He stated: this capacity building workshop is aimed at developing and strengthening the skills, instincts, and abilities of the communities through their representatives adapt and thrive in a fast-changing world.

Olugbenga noted that the workshop is part of the management's strategy to improve relationships with the host communities and urged the participants to leverage the knowledge acquired from the workshop to improve service delivery to their people and the Cement plant.

According to him, Dangote Cement, Ibesse Plant is committed to building the capacity of the people and institutions in the communities by identifying skill gaps and partnering to up their skills for economic prosperity.



Dangote

This, he stated, was in anticipation that other stakeholders will continue to play their part by partnering and supporting the Company to ensure peaceful co-existence and shared prosperity for all. Said he: “Apart from reciprocating the good gesture of Dangote Cement by ensuring peace at all times and keeping an open and trusting mind towards the organization, we also desire from our community leaders and representatives who are present here, the ownership of all Social

Investment programme, be it training or infrastructure because they are meant for the betterment of our people.” Speaking on behalf of the Community Representatives, Hon. Dayo Ogunyinka thanked the Dangote Cement management for the workshop while assuring continued commitment to effective, efficient and selfless discharge of their roles and responsibilities to their various communities and the Plant.

Foreign Military Bases In Nigeria, Threat To National Security, Sovereignty - PRP

By; SANIALIYU, Zaria

The Peoples Redemption Party (PRP), has joined other Nigerian patriots who have cautioned President Bola Ahmed Tinubu and members of the National Assembly on the dangers of the ongoing attempts by the USA and some European countries to relocate their military bases in the Sahel, where they have been kicked out by host nations, to Nigeria.

A statement signed by the acting National Publicity Secretary of the party, Comrade Muhammad Ishaq, said that, “as a party resolutely committed to the sovereignty, security and well-being of our nation, we feel it is our responsibility to voice our concerns and caution the Nigerian government against entering into any pacts that may endorse such arrangements.”

He pointed out that, “the relocation of these foreign military bases to our beloved nation carries with it a myriad of potential dangers that could adversely affect the security, sovereignty, and overall well-being of our dear country.

“We, as a party founded on the principles of “Total Liberation from

Imperialism,” feel compelled to highlight these risks and strongly call on the Nigerian government to outrightly reject such proposals for our national interest and specifically for these reasons.

“Accordingly, the presence of foreign military bases on Nigerian soil may lead to a gradual erosion of our national sovereignty,” it said.

The statement further explained that, “this could result in our government being pressured to align with the foreign policy interests of the United States and France, potentially compromising our ability to make independent decisions that prioritize the best interests of Nigeria and her citizens.

“As far as security concerns the relocation of military bases could inadvertently expose Nigeria to new security threats.

“These foreign troops may not fully understand the complex and dynamic nature of the security landscape in Nigeria, which could lead to unintended consequences.

“Moreover, their presence might provoke resentment among local communities, increasing the risk of insurgency and other forms of

violence.

“On the economic impact, the Nigerian government must consider the economic impact of hosting foreign military bases.

“The costs associated with accommodating these troops, maintaining infrastructure, and addressing potential security issues, could strain our already limited resources.

“Furthermore, there is a risk of increased dependency on foreign aid and assistance, which may undermine our nation's self-reliance and economic growth.

“The relocation of American and French military bases to Nigeria could potentially strain our relations with other African countries. Such a move might be perceived as an act of aggression or a power play, leading to diplomatic tensions and regional instability.

“The presence of foreign military bases could divert Nigeria's attention from addressing its domestic security challenges to catering to the strategic interests of the base-owner countries.

“This might result in neglecting Nigeria's internal security needs and

Don't Usurp Powers Of Statutory Officials, CSO Urges Amirul Hajj Teams

By; JABIRU A. HASSAN, Kano

A faith-based Civil Society Organization (CSO), Independent Hajj Reporters (IHR) has called on the various Amirul Hajj Teams being appointed by state governors not to usurp the powers of statutory officials during the forthcoming Hajj operations.

IHR said the call became necessary owing to past experiences in which some state Amirul Hajj Teams, who are supposed to be ad-hoc committees formed to offer support to appointed officials and pilgrims often assume powers and responsibilities beyond their scope which leads to chaos and negatively affect operations during hajj exercise.

IHR stressed that there should be a clear term of reference for the Amirul Hajj Teams and such schedules should not involve operational issues to avoid conflicts.

The CSO in a statement Monday by its national coordinator, Ibrahim Mohammed said Amirul Hajj Teams are sometimes led by respected traditional rulers, or members of the Ulama with wide following and high regards and they are expected to simply support Hajj officials carry out their responsibilities diligently while also offering advice and guidance to pilgrims on what is expected of them.

“From experience, we know for a fact that once appointed, some state Amirul Hajj Teams try to Lord it over Hajj officials, especially while in Saudi Arabia, and any resistance to that effect by these officials often leads to unnecessary crisis.

“State officials are often forced to satisfy the needs of Amirul Hajj teams because they wield

influence that can lead to their removal from office. Valuable time is therefore, dedicated to managing the crisis instead of fixing the onerous task of serving pilgrims.

“While we appreciate the role of leadership and guidance of the Amirul Hajj teams, there are instances when the Amirul Hajj teams usurped the critical operational responsibilities of state Muslim pilgrims' welfare board officials, especially in the areas of airlift schedule and the allocation of accommodation to pilgrims.

“We have seen cases where some high profile and politically connected Amirul Hajj team members will be requesting for VIP services.

“While we have no problem with Amirul Hajj Teams, we urge that these teams should not go to Saudi Arabia and constitute themselves as an unnecessary obstacle to the smooth running of Hajj operations.

“They should see their appointments as a call to serve the pilgrims, who are the guests of Allah (SWT) from their states and the country at large and should, therefore, strive to offer their best to gain maximum reward.

“In the same vein, we call on the various officials from the states not to be antagonistic to the members of the Amirul Hajj Teams but see them as partners in progress for the common good of the pilgrims.

“We know that differences may arise, but we also know that both members of the Amirul Hajj Teams and officials can always settle the differences without recourse to animosity”.

“Let everyone act with the hope of getting Allah's favour and nothing else” IHR said.

Ladoja Withdraws Suit On Wearing Of Beaded Crown By Olubadan in Council Members



Olubadan designate Oba Owolabi Olakulehin

**Hope rises on Gov Makinde's approval of Oba Olakulehin as New Olubadan*

By; BAYO AKAMO, Ibadan

An end seems to have come to the delay in the approval of the appointment of Olubadan designate Oba Owolabi Olakulehin as the Otun Olubadan of Ibadanland, High Chief Rashidi Ladoja, yesterday, withdrew his suit against members of Olubadan-In-Council over wearing of beaded Crown

This indication emerged through one of the aides to High Chief Ladoja, Alhaji Adeola Oloko, who confirmed that the counsel to High Chief Ladoja is expected to approach the court tomorrow (Wednesday) for enrollment order.

Alhaji Oloko maintained that after the enrollment order, the defendants in the suit will be served with the case withdrawal notice. "Baba has withdrawn the case filed against the Olubadan-In-Council from the Court. This will facilitate the enthronement of Oba Owolabi Olakulehin as the 43rd Olubadan of Ibadanland", he said.

The aide added, "Ladoja has lived up to his promise to the people of Ibadanland to withdraw the case from the court". Alhaji Oloko emphasized "There is no longer any delay from

this end. What is next now is for Gov Makinde to approve the nomination of Oba Olakulehin as the next Olubadan."

New Nigerian recalled that High Chief Rashidi Ladoja in July last 2023 instituted the suit against Gov Seyi Makinde over the beaded wearing crown, after the approval of the elevation of the Ibadan High Chiefs to Obas following Olubadan's recommendation.

It was learnt that few weeks ago after the demise of late Oba Lekan Balogun and with the intervention of some stakeholders' in Ibadan, High Chief Ladoja indicated his willingness to withdraw the suit.

High Chief Ladoja was said to have gave a condition that the two parties must sign the terms of settlement as prepared, saying, "Myself and other members of Olubadan-in-Council have been sitting together and talking. We have agreed to withdraw the case from court".

"I heard that they have started signing the agreement. After all of them have signed, I will also sign my own aspect, and the next day, we will file for withdrawal of the case from court." he said.

Enugu Police Command Confirms Killing Of 2 Policemen, 3 Neighborhood Watch

**Says 3 suspects arrested so far*

By; KELVIN OKPARA, Enugu

The Enugu State Police Command has confirmed the killing of two of its personnel and three members of Neighborhood Watch Group by harboured criminals of Igga Community in Uzo Uwani Local Government Area of the state.

Spokesman of the Command, DSP Daniel Ndukwe who confirmed the sad development via a press statement he issued on Sunday evening, said the incident occurred on Friday.

He said the Enugu z Command "wishes to inform the public of the unprovoked and unwarranted attack and gruesome murder of two (2) Policemen and three (3) Neighbourhood Watch Group members by harboured criminal members of the Igga

Community in Uzo-Uwani Local Government Area, in the evening hours of Friday, May 3, 2024.

"On the same date, a combined security team of three (3) policemen and four (4) Neighbourhood Watch Group provided security for a team of visiting investors from Lagos on a tour of a proposed agricultural investment site in the area. However, the team was ambushed and attacked by a large group of the criminal elements, who opened fire on them.

"Upon the unprovoked sudden attack, members of the team scampered for safety, while an Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP), who led the team, one Neighbourhood Watch personnel, and the three (3) member team of investors were later rescued by a policemen team that immediately mobilized to the crime scene. But the eventually

murdered members of the team went missing and unaccounted for.

"However, in the course of a full-scale investigation and a search and manhunt operation launched thereafter, three (3) males suspected who masterminded the attack were arrested.

"Their revelations during interrogation led to the discovery and recovery of the slain policemen and Neighbourhood Watch Group members in the forest on May 4, 2024. Their lifeless bodies were taken to the hospital, confirmed dead by doctors, and deposited in the mortuary for preservation and autopsy.

"Meanwhile, the state Commissioner of Police, CP Kanayo Uzoegbu has described the unprovoked criminal act of the gruesome murder of the personnel as inconceivable, dastardly, and unwarranted.

"Hence, he orders further deployment of the Command's intelligence and operational resources to sustain the manhunt of the fleeing criminals, stressing that the Police will stop at nothing to fish out and bring the perpetrators of the senseless act to book.

"Furthermore, the CP has cautioned those who, in an attempt to misinform and mislead unsuspecting members of the public, are circulating unverified videos alleging the burning and looting of houses in the community by joint forces to desist forthwith.

"The Commissioner has also advised members of the Igga community, particularly the criminal elements directly involved in the unthinkable and wanton act of murdering serving police officers and others, to voluntarily surrender themselves to the Police without delay."

Foreign Military Bases In Nigeria, Threat To National Security, Sovereignty - PRP

weakening its defense capabilities.

"The influence on Foreign Policy: The military presence of the US and France in Nigeria may influence the country's foreign policy decisions, potentially altering its stance on regional and international issues to align with the interests of these countries.

"On the environmental and Social impact, the presence of foreign military bases could lead to potential environmental and social impacts as these installations often require large tracts of land for infrastructure development, which could lead to the displacement of local communities and the destruction of fragile

ecosystems," the party said.

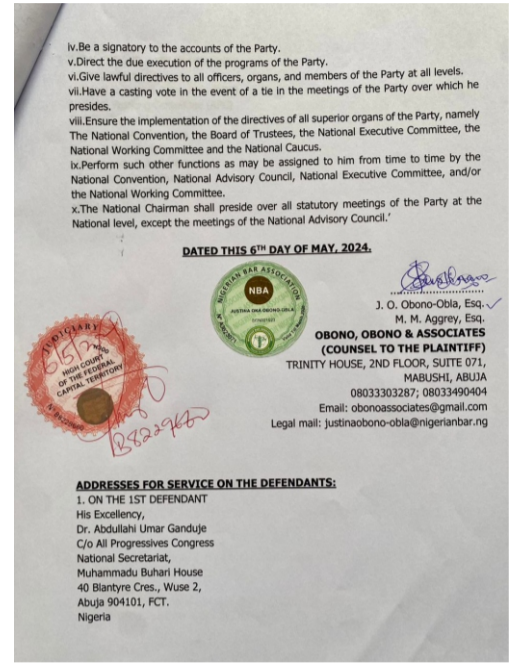
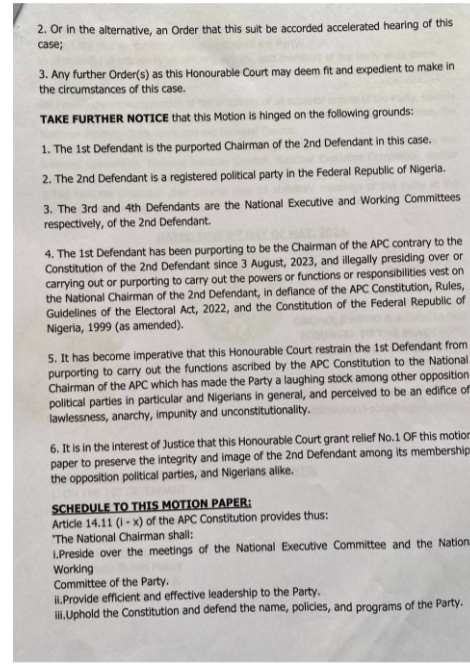
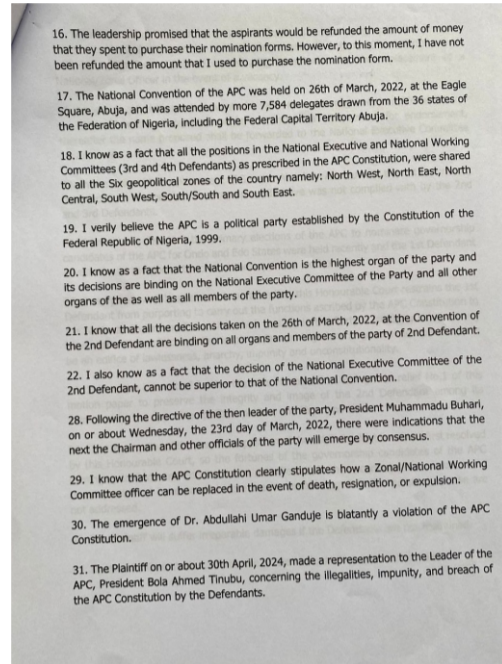
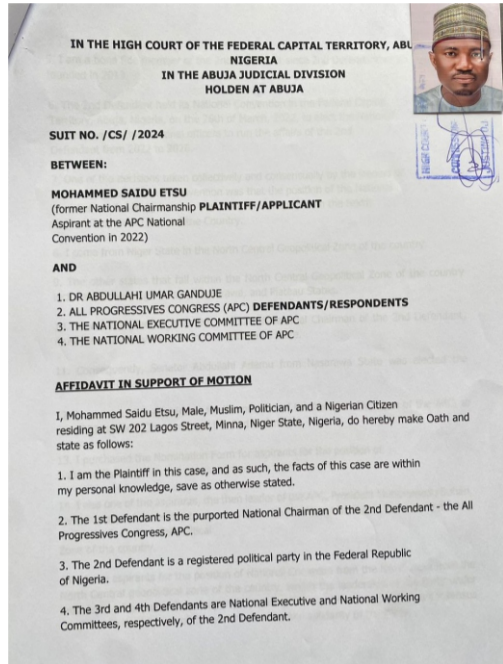
The PRP strongly advised the Nigerian government against entering into any agreements that would lead to the relocation of American and French military bases from the Sahel to Nigeria.

"We believe that such a decision would pose significant risks to our

national sovereignty, security, environment, and economy.

"Instead, we call for a comprehensive and inclusive approach to addressing the challenges faced in the Sahel region, one that prioritizes diplomacy, regional cooperation, and sustainable development," it said.

APC Chieftain Asks Court To Stop Ganduje From Parading Self As Party National Chairman



By; **JACOB ONJEWU DICKSON**

The former National Chairmanship Aspirant of the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) Mohammad Saidu Etsu has sought interlocutory injunction to stop Dr. Abdullahi Umar Ganduje from parading himself as party National Chairman. Besides, Etsu has faulted the power of the National Executive Council (NEC) of the APC that certified the appointment of former Governor of Kano state as the party National Chairman which he considered as ultra vires to the provision of the party's constitution. In a motion on notice brought before the Federal high court, FCT division, the plaintiff

through his counsel J. O. Obono-Obla Esq, urged the court to restrict Dr. Ganduje from attending or presiding over the National Executive Committee (NEC) and National Working Committee (NWC) of the party. In the interlocutory injunction, Etsu wanted the court to further restrain the former Kano state Governor from "carrying out the functions, powers, and responsibilities and those ancillary thereto, prescribed by Article 13 of the APC constitution, 2013 as (amended) pertaining to the office of the national chairman of the party, pending the hearing and determination of the substantive case". The matter under case suit no. CS/CV/2258/2024 also is

challenging four defendants including Dr. Abdullahi Umar Ganduje, All Progressives Congress (APC), National Executive Committee (NEC) and National Working Committee (NWC). According to the notice, Dr. Ganduje has been purporting to be the National Chairman of the APC contrary to the Constitution of the party since August, 2023 and illegally presiding over or carrying out powers vest on the National Chairman, in defiance of the APC constitution, rules, guidelines of electoral Act, 2022. Etsu insisted that the prevailing action of Dr. Ganduje has elicited the party into a laughing stock among other opposition political parties in particular, thereby turning APC to an edifice of

lawlessness. Etsu is calling for immediate return to the zoning system of the position of the party chairman insisted that Dr. Ganduje who is clearly coming from the North western zone is wrongly occupying the position reserved of candidate from the North Central zone. The party Chieftain argued that NEC of the party had no modicum or scintilla of power to so appoint Dr. Ganduje as National Chairman when the party guiding principles clearly stipulated the procedure of nominating a replacement in any case of vacant into the position of the national chairman. The plaintiff worried that APC NEC has violated the party constitution which provide a

replacement of National Chairman, who is has not completed his tenure before exit, from the same zone that produced the exited National chairman. Etsu argued that Senator Adamu's resignation should ordinarily pave ways for a now National Chairman from the North West who would be entrusted to complete the mandate of the former. It would be recalled that two factions of the APC Exco from Ganduje ward in Dawakin Tofa had in a separate decisions suspended Dr. Abdullahi Umar Ganduje from being a member of the APC for his alleged involvement in corruption charges, anti-party activities and none payment of party dues at his hometown.

Benue Gov Donates Vehicles To Judicial Officers

By; **ARCHIBONG ESUENE, Makurdi**

In order to enhance conducive working atmosphere, Governor of Benue State, Rev Fr Hyacinth Iormem Alia has donated six Sport Utility Vehicles (SUV) to the Benue State Judiciary. Presenting the vehicles in Makurdi, Benue State capital, Governor Alia said the vehicles are part of the resolve of his administration to ensure the welfare and effective service delivery of the Judiciary in the State. Governor Alia commended the Judiciary for their services, urging them to do more to ensure that law and order are strictly maintained in the state.

The State Attorney General and Commissioner for Justice and Public Order, Barr. Fidelis Bensen Mnyim who made the presentation on behalf of the governor appreciated the Governor the gesture and enjoined them to make ensure that the vehicles are use for the general Interest of the judiciary system. Speaking further, the Commissioner said 4 of the cars are for the Benue State High Court Judges while 2 of the cars are for the Judges of the Customary Court of Appeal Benue State. He appreciated the Governor for promoting the rule of law particularly by granting autonomy to the judiciary in the state to

perform optimally. Recall that during the just concluded National Judicial Review Summit which was put together by the Attorney General and Minister of Justice Prince Lateef Fagbemi SAN had commended the Benue State governor for granting autonomy to the Benue State judiciary, urging other state governors to emulate Governor Alia. The Summit applauded Governor Alia and said for Governor Alia of Benue to have complied with section 121 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended) by the fifth alteration Act, he has integrity and is ready to run a transparent



PDP Will Win Nov Guber Polls, Reclaim Ondo State From APC - Govs Makinde, Adeleke

**PDP leaders storm Ibadan to unite Ondo gladiators*

By; BAYOAKAMO, Ibadan

Oyo State Governor, Engr Seyi Makinde has declared that the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) will reclaim Ondo State from the All Progressives Congress (APC) come this November governorship guber election. Speaking at a meeting of PDP leaders from the South-West geopolitical zone in Ibadan on Monday to kick-start the process of reconciling PDP stakeholders in Ondo state, Gov Makinde said PDP family are now speaking with one voice.

He stressed that the PDP governorship candidate, Mr. Agboola Ajayi and other parties would team up to ensure that the party has a strong showing at the polls, adding that, all PDP leaders and stakeholders from across the six South-West states are behind the Ondo PDP candidate.

"Our candidate H.E Agboola Ajayi is here and the first step forward for us is to reconcile all the tendencies in Ondo State. This is because once we have a unified PDP in Ondo State, we have a path to the Alagbaka Government House", he said.

Engr Makinde added, "To God be the glory, we have spoken as one family. Our candidate has also been able to key into that process. So, for us, people should expect a very strong showing from the PDP in Ondo

State in November by the grace of God."

"With our leaders from across the South-West standing behind our candidates in the state, I think it is a strong signal to the present occupier of the Ondo Government House. The PDP is coming and it will happen."

Osun state governor, Senator Ademola Adeleke while speaking said the South-West PDP came together to deliberate on the affairs of the party regarding the forthcoming election in Ondo State, adding, "As you can see, everyone is happy as it is a family affair."

"We came over to Oyo State to meet with our brother, His Excellency, Governor Seyi Makinde, to deliberate on the PDP affairs as touching Ondo State. Of course, we congratulate our brother, Agboola, who won the primary, which went very well. Everybody now knows that PDP is a democratic party because we followed due process", he said.

Gov Adeleke added, "We also want to begin the reconciliation process, because we know some people are upset and we believe our leaders will go back home to bring everybody together. Even Governor Makinde and I would be invited to Akure to see how we can move forward in the state ahead of the election in November".

"Of course, we congratulate our



Former PDP National Deputy Chairman (South), Chief Bode George; Ondo State, PDP Governorship Candidate, Mr Agboola Ajayi; Oyo State Governor, Seyi Makinde; Former Governor of Ondo State, Dr Olusegun Mimiko; Osun State Governor, Ademola Adeleke; PDP National Deputy Chairman (South); Hon Taofeek Arapaja; Barr Eytayo Jegede and others, during the Ondo State critical stakeholders meeting, in Ibadan

brother, Agboola, who won the primary, which went very well. Everybody now knows that PDP is a democratic party because we followed due process. We also want to begin the reconciliation process, because we know some people are upset and we believe our leaders will go back home to bring everybody together.

"Even Governor Makinde and I would be invited to Akure to see how we can move forward in the state ahead of the election in November."

The PDP governorship candidate, Mr Agboola Ajayi, described the PDP as a formidable party in Ondo State, and that all PDP members are

one family and that they will deliver the state to the PDP fold in the November election.

"The leaders have spoken. They are leading and we will follow. I thank them for their massive support, especially the two South West governors; Governors Seyi Makinde and Adeleke.

Insecurity: Police Confirms Killing Of Traditional Ruler In Ebonyi

By; MKPUMA ENYINNA, Abakaliki

Ebonyi State Police Command has confirmed the killing of a traditional ruler in Ebonyi Community over the weekend by unidentified gunmen.

Confirming the incident, the Police Public Relations Officer, Joshua Ukandu stated that the traditional ruler was killed around 10:00pm on Friday May 3, 2024.

He further noted that investigation into the killing has commenced to unravel those behind the attack.

"Our men got distress call and they responded immediately they got the information, but unfortunately, when they got there, the deed has been done. We

are already devising method to track down the perpetrators. And investigation has commenced. There is no property damaged during the attack.

"The incident happened around 10:00pm last week Friday, 3rd May, 2024.

It was gathered that the suspected gunmen at the weekend invaded Umuihe autonomous community, Akaeze in Ivo Local Government Area of Ebonyi State, killing the traditional ruler of the community, His Royal Highness, Umazi Ibo Ubani. It was learnt that there was exchange of heavy gunfire during the attack that claimed the Monarch's life.

The Coordinator of Akaeze Development Centre, Hon.

Chinasa Okorie, condemned the killing of the monarch, stressing that it will be very difficult to get a traditional ruler of his kind in the area looking at his good antecedents. "Around 10pm last Friday, I received a call that there was shooting in the house of our traditional ruler, that after the shooting, it was discovered that our traditional ruler has been killed and that is the traditional ruler of Umuihe Autonomous Community, Akaeze, HRH Eze Umazi Ibo Ubani.

"This is a great loss to the community and Akaeze at large



because he is a man of integrity, a man that would be difficult to replace because he is intelligent, bold and fearless.

"The man does not know corruption because, at all times, his integrity is always seen. I am

very sad about his killing. It is a great loss to Akaeze Development Centre, where I am the leader, Ivo Local Government Area, and Ebonyi State.

Senator Ekong Sampson Phd, Chairman Senate Committee on Solid Minerals, alongside committee members while addressing the public at a 3-day stakeholders and Members of the General Public Investigative Hearing on the need to comprehensively review the input and output Values of Nigerian Mining Industry in the Light of its Central Role to Economic Dervercification, Foriegn Exchange Earnings and Social Inclusion held at National Assembly in Abuja. **Photo: Bashir Bello Dollars**



Water Scarcity: Gov Uba Sani Will Rescue Kaduna Corporation - Commissioner

By; AMOS EBUTE MATHEW, Kaduna

In an effort to tackle water scarcity in Kaduna State, Governor Uba Sani has put machinery in motion to ensure the revival of Kaduna State Water Corporation to provide potable drinking water for the people of the state.

The State Commissioner of Public Works and Infrastructures Architect Ibrahim Hamza Soba made it known during a press conference held in Kaduna.

According to him, not satisfied with the state of water supply facilities in Kaduna the governor in November and December 2023 decided to commit the sum of over N600 million to provide succor to the people in areas of water supply as he embarks on restructuring the water corporation.

Arc. Soba lamented that upon assumption of office in 2023, the administration met a lot of challenges, saying the government is on the top of the game to ensure issues of water scarcity are addressed.

The commissioner also expressed dismay that a lot of investments have gone into the water facility noting that about 200 million dollars has been committed to the sector but the present administration came on board and yet the issue of water supply has not been tackled.

"We realized as at the time we came, the capacity utilization of our facilities was less than eight percent. So it was a very poor performance with all the investment in the sector. Our

revenue collection, our billing system, our connection system, the plant, and the whole three to four components of the sector were not working.

"When you go to the plant, that is where we get the water production component, very poor performance, when you get down to the transmission and reservoir, it is also below expectations, very poor performance, and getting down to revenue collection, water lost and everything was just on a high level of percentage.

"So the government had to sit down and see how we can remodel the whole structure and you know, this is not an easy job, it is a challenging situation because a lot of models have been tried before and it never worked. So we had to go back to the drawing board, we had to identify our mistakes in the past to see where we had gone wrong and see why things were this way."

ARC. Soba disclosed that the state is doing well and he is assuring the public that with the structure and plans we are trying to come up with after an intensive study, we will come back in the next two weeks to say what we have been able to do.

"We have other interventions coming up from the federal Ministry of Water Resources, we are trying to develop an Urban Investment Master plan, and last week, we did the final draft review we also have a low-hanging fruit which is the budget line under the WASH program which is also a World Bank



project which we are going to get some funding for.

"The Kaduna State Government is also willing to make some commitment to see that the whole water system, especially the urban water supply system, all challenges come to an end.

"I think that the new management of Kaduna State Water Corporation is doing well.

"I think that the new

management of Kaduna State Water Corporation (KADSWAC) is doing well.

"They are trying to undo some damages that were done by the urban renewable which took place some three or four years back where a lot of pipes were vandalized and that is why some areas that used to have water, no longer have access to the supply of water.

"So going forward, we are

hopeful that some of these things will be revived and we are going to see some level of progress.

"Already, some areas have started to see some progress after the intervention by the government at the end of 2023.

"I can assure the public that we have almost finished all the strategies and only implementation is left now." He said

MUSWEN To Hold Maiden Health Lecture May 19 In Ibadan

By; BAYOAKAMO, Ibadan

The Muslim Ummah of South West Nigeria (MUSWEN) will on Sunday, hold its maiden public health lecture at the Professor Musa Abdul Civic Centre, University of Ibadan, Central Mosque.

According to a statement signed by Chairman MUSWEN Health Committee, Dr AGO Labinjo, the lecture, the first in the series, is expected to be an annual event for sensitisation of the

public on common health problems and use it as an avenue for advocacy and publicity of MUSWEN and its program.

Dr Labinjo stressed in the statement that the event with the theme: "National Insecurity and its Psychosocial effects on the citizens: The Islam and Health Perspectives" will hold under the Chairmanship of MUSWEN President, Alhaji Rasaki Oladejo.

The statement added that Professor Abdulrazaq Abdulmajeed Alaro, the Guest

Speaker will talk on the Islamic perspective while Dr Jibril Abdulmalik, Consultant Psychiatrist, University College Hospital (UCH) will speak on the medical perspective.

Emphasizing that dignitaries from the Muslim Community in all the six states of the Southwest are expected at the event, the statement added that there will be Free Medical Checkup for members of the public starting from 8am at the same venue.



Gov Yusuf Signs Premarital Health Screening Into Law In Kan

***Mandates testing for HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis, genotype before marriage**

By: JACOB ONJEWU DICKSON

The Governor of Kano State, Alhaji Abba Kabir Yusuf, officially assented to the Kano State Premarital Health Screening Law, which mandates premarital health screening for all prospective couples.

As per the new law, no wedding will be permitted in Kano without the presentation of a health screening certificate for genotype, hepatitis B and C, HIV/AIDS, and other related illnesses.

In a statement issued by the governor's spokesperson, Sunusi Bature Dawakin Tofa, the law was deemed necessary to

reduce the likelihood of children being born with underlying health issues such as sickle cell anemia, HIV/AIDS, and hepatitis.

This initiative aligns with the Kano state governor's commitment to enhancing and providing a conducive environment for the healthcare sector, aiming to make Kano free from or significantly reduce health challenges.

The law necessitates mandatory testing for HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis, genotype, and other relevant examinations before marriage.

It also prohibits any discrimination or

stigmatization against individuals living with HIV/AIDS, sickle cell anemia, hepatitis, and related conditions.

During the signing ceremony, Governor Abba

Kabir Yusuf emphasized that the purpose of implementing the law is to uphold the sanctity of marriages in Kano State and ensure the birth of healthy offspring, free from any preventable illnesses.

Upon approval by the state house of assembly and endorsement by the Kano state governor, the law was signed on the 6th of May 2024 and will come into effect on May 13, 2024.

It is mandated by the law that any

individual intending to marry must undergo testing for HIV, Hepatitis B and C, genotype, and any other relevant tests before marriage.

Furthermore, the law prohibits the formalization of any marriage contract for individuals planning to marry without presenting a test certificate from a government-approved health facility.

Moreover, the law specifies that any individual found in violation of its provisions commits an offense and, upon conviction, may face a fine of up to five hundred thousand Naira, for a minimum of five years, or both.



Gov. Abba Kabir Yusuf, while signing the premarital health screening law in the presence of Speaker of Kano State House of Assembly Right Hon. Jinrin Ismail Falgole and other top Government officials



Hajia Safaa Adam's Trailblazing Career Pioneers Equality, Unity In Nigerian Politics

By: AUSTINE AGBO EMMANUEL, Kaduna

The illustrious career of Hajia Safaa M. U. Adam has emerged as a beacon of hope and progress in Nigeria's political arena. With her multifaceted roles as the Director Admin TSG, Secretary of the Tinubu Planning and Strategy Committee, and Secretary of the Independent Campaign Council (ICC), Safaa has redefined the contours of public service, championing equality and unity at every turn.

Amidst mounting challenges facing

marginalized communities, Safaa has emerged as a steadfast advocate, spearheading efforts to address pressing issues such as income inequality, racial justice, and gender disparity.

Her landmark legislative achievement, the "Equal Opportunity Act," stands as a testament to her unwavering commitment to leveling the playing field for all Nigerians, irrespective of background or circumstance.

In addition to her legislative prowess, Safaa's humanitarian endeavors have garnered widespread acclaim, further

solidifying her reputation as a force for positive change.

Continuously pushing boundaries and challenging the status quo, she has remained dedicated to uplifting the most vulnerable members of society, and amplifying their voices on the national stage.

However, Safaa's impact transcends mere policy initiatives; it lies in her remarkable ability to forge consensus and unite divergent voices in pursuit of shared objectives.

Her unparalleled skill for building

coalitions and fostering collaboration has earned her respect and admiration from colleagues across the political spectrum.

Her unwavering dedication to public service, coupled with her ability to drive meaningful change through collaboration and compassion, ensures that her influence will endure for generations to come.

Hajia Safaa M.U Adam's trailblazing career represents a triumph of principled leadership, and serves as a testament to the transformative power of unity and solidarity in the pursuit of a more equitable society.



Kwara Gov Presents 16 Ambulances Purchased By LGAs For PHCs

**Says govt committed to improved healthcare delivery*



By **BILIQIS ONAOLAPO OLAJUMOKE, Ilorin**

Kwara State Governor, **Abdulrahman AbdulRazaq** has presented 16 Toyota ambulances for the use of primary healthcare facilities across the state, effectively strengthening the health emergency response system at the grassroots.

The ambulances were purchased by the local government authorities, each to be stationed in the various primary healthcare centres.

Presenting the ambulances on behalf of the local council on Monday evening, the governor said that it is part of the efforts to fortify the healthcare system in the rural communities.

"This is the initiative of the local government areas. It is their money. It is basically to support

the health services, especially the primary healthcare centres," he said at a brief ceremony that was attended by the Chief of Staff Alhaji Abdulkadir Mahe; Commissioner for Health Dr. Aminat Ahmed el-Imam; Counsellor and Adviser to the Governor Alhaji Saadu Salau; Chairman for Association of Local Government of Nigeria, (ALGON) Kwara State branch, Hon Jide Ashonibare; and TIC Chairman for Baruten Local Government Hon. Abdurashed Lafia; among others.

"For now, this is placing one ambulance per local government to move patients from basic healthcare centres to secondary or tertiary health facilities in a way to fortify the healthcare system. Of course, there are a few others with ambulances that our administration had donated

to them in the past."

Ashonibare, for his part, described the intervention as laudable and one that will improve the healthcare services across the sixteen local government areas.

"Just like the Executive Governor of the state has said, in most of our health clinics in all the local governments there aren't vehicles that can be used in case of wanting to carry patients during an emergency to where proper medical treatment can be given to them. But with this now, the challenge is over, and it can get better. It is a laudable programme that will help all the LGs, especially our people in the remote areas", Ashonibare said.

"A situation whereby it will be difficult carrying patients from one place to another will no longer be there. We appreciate

the Governor for his leadership and good example."

Commissioner for Health, Dr Amina Ahmed el-Imam, said the development aligns with the objective of the administration to bring quality healthcare services to the doorsteps of all Kwarans, irrespective of their financial status.

"The objective of the state government is to achieve universal health coverage for people of the state, regardless of their position on the socio-economic ladder. The presence of one functional standard ambulance in every local government of Kwara state is no mean feat, while more will definitely be done to strengthen healthcare delivery", she said.

"We can rest assured now that the people in the hardest reached areas which are typically the

least fortunate among us now have almost the same access as people living in the capital city as long as we know that there are ambulances that can transfer them immediately if there are medical emergencies.

"Why this is particularly dear to my heart is because His Excellency the Governor of Kwara State has undertaken and is still undertaking a massive statewide renovation of facilities. We are working assiduously to improve the quantity and quality of manpower in our facilities, and this (by the local governments) is just again to complement the existing structure that he had put in place and the ongoing activities that we have in the health sector."



Yoruba Youth Ask Tinubu To Sack Chief Of Naval Staff Over Allegations

**Pass vote of no confidence on Ogalla*

By; JACOB ONJEWU
DICKSON

The Yoruba Youth Council (YYC), has called on President Bola Ahmed Tinubu to sack the Chief of Naval Staff, CNS, Emmanuel Ogalla for allegations of supporting oil thieves levelled against him.

Besides, it passed a vote of no confidence on Ogalla, and called on the President to order a thorough investigation of the CNS, in view of what it described as recurring allegations of large-scale corruption and support for oil theft syndicates against him.

In a statement on Sunday by its National President, Comrade Eric Oluwole, the coalition, which is an umbrella body of

Yoruba youths nationwide, accused the CNS of sabotaging the President's efforts against oil theft in view of allegations levelled against him.

The coalition spoke against the backdrop of allegations by another group of Nigerians of large-scale corruption and involvement in procurement fraud and contract splitting, in violation of the Procurement Act against the CNS.

That group in January had levelled the allegations against the CNS in a petition to the Federal Government Tinubu led administration, who had vowed the administration's zero tolerance for corruption.

The YYC said that it was disturbed that allegations were still flying around that the CNS

is sabotaging Mr President's efforts in fighting oil theft.

For instance, it said there are allegations that a ship recently arrested by private security for oil theft was released to its owners after series of agitation by stakeholders; and that tank vessels were being allowed to evacuate or dilute exhibit in the name of taking samples, which ideally are taken in small bottles for laboratory tests.

The YYC said it gathered that the President had ordered the re-arrest of the said ship and sanctioned full investigation.

It named the vessels involved in the alleged recent oil theft incident tagged MT PRESITGOUS AT BONNY ANCHORAGE.

Oluwole said: "It is in view of

these disturbing allegations, and a strongly-worded petition to His Excellency, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu in January that we the YYC call on the President to sack the CNS and order a full-scale probe into his activities while in office.

"We are fully in support of the ongoing efforts of the President and his administration to fight head-on oil theft, and stop its long-term bleeding of the Nigerian economy.

"Therefore we call on the President to remove any stumbling block on his path to successfully fight this monster called oil theft which he inherited, and sanitise the entire oil sector."

A group of concerned Nigerians comprising of lawyers, human

rights activists and anti-corruption crusaders, had in January petitioned Federal Government expressing concerns over some allegations against the CNS.

According to their petition: "At a time when the country is grappling with significant revenue losses due to crude oil theft, it is distressing to discover that the Chief of Naval Staff, whose primary responsibility it is to safeguard Nigeria's waterways against oil theft and other forms of criminality, is allegedly colluding with the perpetrators of these heinous crimes against the Nigerian state."

Embrace Peace, Harmonious Co-existence For Success Of MORE Agenda, Osuoza Charges Deltans

By; JACOB ONJEWU
DICKSON

Delta State Commissioner for Information, Dr. Ifeanyi Osuoza, has emphasized the need for Deltans, especially youth, to embrace peace and harmonious coexistence which would provide the enabling environment for Governor Sheriff Oborevwori's

administration to implement and deliver more dividends of democracy under the MORE Agenda, to the people.

The Commissioner's admonition was contained in a brief statement which reads: "Since May 29, 2023, when he assumed office as the Executive Governor of Delta State, His Excellency, Rt. Hon. (Elder) Sheriff Oborevwori has made it very

clear that Peace is Priceless and his administration would ensure that sustainable peace reigned across the Three Senatorial zones in Delta State.

"To achieve this very crucial governance mandate, Governor Sheriff Oborevwori made sure it was enshrined in the MORE Agenda under the Enhanced Peace and Security mandate".

According to the Information

Commissioner, "Peace and security creates the right atmosphere for social and economic life, it enhances Job Creation efforts and strategies for youths, improves living conditions for our people, ensures Social stability and security of lives and properties, and most importantly, encourages the administration to embark on massive and life

impacting social and infrastructural development and the delivery of more democracy dividends for the people.

"Let us support our dear Governor Sheriff Oborevwori by embracing peace and harmonious coexistence as he continues to deliver MORE goodies for Deltans", the statement concluded.

Presidency Officials With 'Satanic' Succession Plans Behind el-Rufai, Yahaya Bello's Ordeal - APC Chief

dumping" people who worked for the victory of the President in 2023, while those who were against the President and even insulted him, were being given priorities "over authentic supporters and genuine Batists." Onokpasa, who was also a member of the APC Presidential Legal Team and Chairman, Tinubu Media Support Group, said, "Of recent concern to me is the case of my younger brother, His Excellency, the former Governor of Kogi State, Yahaya Bello. In this party, we have had our brother, the former governor of Kaduna State, Nasir El Rufai basically chased out of our party despite what he did for us to make us win. Now, it is Yahaya Bello. A few weeks or months ago, it was our National Chairman, Abdullahi Umar Ganduje that was basically almost being chased from our party."

Blowing hot against those behind the ugly trend, who he claimed were arrogating powers to themselves at the detriment of

Tinubu's wellbeing, and warning them to desist, Onokpasa stated, "Listen, we cannot tolerate such nonsense in a party. Let everybody in this party come to his senses. We know how we won election. We won election because of the grace of God, because the grace of God is upon our President, Asiwaju. We won election with the lowest margin. This our government has the lowest margin since 1999. We won with less than 40 per cent of the votes. In every other election, someone had won with 50 per cent of the votes.

"Everybody that contributed to our victory is important to me, because me, I am a fanatical Batist. This is the way I see Bola Tinubu's administration. Bola Tinubu is a child of grace. The way I see it, God wants Bola Tinubu to be our President and we need him to be our President for eight years. What we should all square up to right now is a question of, there is no need to beat about the bush; there are people in our party who don't

believe in our President. For whatever reason they feel, I don't know where they went to, that's their headache."

He cautioned those wishing Tinubu dead, stressing that the president would make it beyond 2027.

"Even after that eight years, he (Tinubu) will become an elder statesman for many years after that and none of you ... all of you doing this rubbish, if you don't repent, Asiwaju will attend all of your funerals. I am the one that is saying it," he said.

Onokpasa recounted how a young man died in Edo State after wishing the President dead, saying, "I will like to share a story with you. There was this young man in Delta State where I come from. He had the guts to come to me and he said, uncle, this man, Bola Tinubu that you are supporting is going to die before the election and I told him, are you the God that created him? Do you know what happened? May his soul rest in peace, he died before Bola

Tinubu won election."

"There are people in this party who don't believe in Asiwaju, they never believe that Asiwaju can make it to 2027. Do you know what? All these people, if they don't repent, Asiwaju will attend all of their funerals. They are mad! They don't have mandate, it is Asiwaju we voted for, it is Asiwaju that has mandate, it is Asiwaju that is the President. And we need Asiwaju to run complete eight years to finally make this country the pride of the black race," APC chieftain stated.

On the Bello-EFCC controversy, he said it was for the court to decide, stating, "Nobody is supporting corruption. However, we fight corruption according to law and you will not have a personal indifference with somebody and then you use the instrumentality of office to torment that person. We will not tolerate that in this party. We must not."

He also lambasted a particular appointee that he portrayed to be

high-handed, alleging that the appointee funded an opposition member against the APC candidate, Usman Ododo, during the Kogi State governorship election.

The popular Tinubu loyalist said, "I mean, can you imagine the nonsense. You sponsored somebody who left our party, he used to be a member of our party committee, you claim to be a member of our party, you now sponsor him against our own candidate, Usman Ododo, you give him money, he lost, we defeated him. Sorry! Then, you say his lawyer, my learned friend, Jibril Okutepa, he is the one that you now brief to torment Yahaya Bello?"

"I am very proud of Yahaya Bello, Yahaya Bello helped Asiwaju to win election. Anybody who helped Asiwaju to win election is my brother. He is my father's son that my mother gave birth to. I don't owe you any apology, who are you? Nonsense! You will turn all of us to cowards?"

Mercy Corps Trains Media Practitioners On Conflict-Sensitive Reporting In Digital Era

By; IMRANA ABDULLAHI, Kaduna

The media landscape has evolved significantly from offline to online platforms, remarked Danjuma Dawop, Chief of Party at Peace Action for Rapid and Transformative Nigerian Early Warning Response (PARTNER). Dawop made this assertion during a one-day training on Conflict-Sensitive Reporting workshop for media practitioners held in Kaduna on Monday, May 6.

Traditionally, journalists sourced information by directly engaging with participants, subjects, or individuals. However, Dawop highlighted the paradigm shift caused by digital media, stating that it has deeply impacted the profession. He emphasized that the unregulated digital media space allows anyone to disseminate news items, leading to widespread belief and action based on often unverified information.

"In the past, people trusted journalists and esteemed the media as a source of reliable, verifiable news. But now, with social media, everyone can claim to be a journalist. The lack of regulation in social media makes it challenging for genuine journalists striving to share

accurate information," he remarked.

Addressing the workshop's theme, "Digital Peace-building Approach," Dawop emphasized the necessity of a robust risk assessment framework. Such a framework, he argued, empowers local actors, social media platforms, and international partners to anticipate and prevent potential harm resulting from the interaction between digital platforms and offline conflict dynamics.

"We believe it's crucial for media practitioners to understand the impact of social media on journalism and peace-building. Journalists serve as agents of peace, and through social media, they can disseminate information fostering unity among communities," Dawop stressed.

He further highlighted the role of journalists in mitigating the adverse effects of social media, portraying them as the ultimate source of information for the common populace.

"Media outlets have the platform to educate and provide clarity, particularly on peace and conflict issues. They can analyze conflicts, present various perspectives, highlight needs and interests, and inform people about the underlying issues," he



added.

Dawop outlined key elements of the risk framework, including sources of risk facilitating social media weaponization, intergroup conflicts, governance failures, and socioeconomic frustrations.

Expressing concern about the abundance of unverified news circulating, Dawop noted the challenge faced by journalists when individuals seek verification of trending social media information, of which they may not be aware.

Steve Agbo, Coordinator of the PARTNER project at the

Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution (IPCR), Abuja, emphasized that the workshop targeted peace journalists in Kaduna state. He underscored the project's objective of fostering sustainable peace in Nigeria, particularly in the nine intervention states, supported by USAID to enhance the Early Warning Early Response (EWER) system in the North-Central and North-West regions. Agbo stressed the vital role of journalists in disseminating accurate information about the PARTNER project across

targeted regions and ensuring the incorporation of "Do No Harm" and conflict-sensitive reporting practices.

The consortium of PARTNER includes the West African Network for Peace-building (WANEP), Kaduna State Peace Commission (KSPC), Plateau Peace Building Agency (PPBA), Mambayya House (Aminu Kano Centre for Democratic Studies), and The Kukah Centre. The intervention areas span nine states: Benue, Kaduna, Katsina, Kano, Kogi, Niger, Nasarawa, Plateau, and Zamfara.

Again, Bandits Kill Two, Abduct 18 In Southern Kaduna

By; AMOSTAUNA, Kaduna

In another fresh attack in Southern Kaduna, two people have been said to have been killed and 18 kidnapped by terrorists, in Ungwan Dantata in the Gefe community of Kallah Ward, Kajuru Local Government Area of Kaduna State.

A source who confirmed the incident yesterday to New Nigerian, explained that the terrorists stormed the village on foot in the early hours of Monday at around 1am in large numbers. He gave the names of victims killed as; Ezra Badama and Nagode Ibro, saying that those abducted are Nehemiah Sukuni, Rebecca Nehemiah, Sadam Gane, Alice Sadam, Jashu'a Sukuni, Rhoda Isaac, Isaac Dako, Patience Godwin,

A'ishatu Ezra, Damaris Nathan, Justina Afis, Gabriela Nathan, Daniela Nehemiah, Jackson Sadam, Amame Ezra, Benedict Monday, Enoch Yohanna and Igwe Saleh.

According to him, "since November last year, terrorists have been constantly disturbing the people of the Gefe community and they cannot recount the monies spent as regards the payment of ransom." He observed that the community is in dire need of Government support in order to their major occupation which is farming, pointing out that with the rainy season fast approaching, most of them cannot access their farmlands for fear of being kidnapped.

"They've sold all that they harvested and some even sold

their lands just to raise money for the ransom of their loved ones, they have no food and money to buy fertilizer. They need government intervention like; food and fertilizer to help cushion the effect of hunger in our community," he observed.

He appealed to government to assist deploy security operatives in the area to help restore the confidence of the community, saying that some victims had earlier told them that they trek with terrorists passing different Villages and crossing major roads to their destination.

When contacted, the spokesman of Kaduna state police Command, Mansir Hassan could not respond to calls put to his phone.

COAS Musa



Zulum Flags Off 113km Construction Of Ring Road In Maiduguri City

By: SADIQ ABUBAKAR, Maiduguri

Borno State Governor, Babagana Umara Zulum on Monday, flagged off the construction of Maiduguri's 113-kilometre ring road project linking the east, west, and southern parts of the city.

The project is part of Governor Zulum's urban renewal drive, which aims to solve city congestion problems, address housing deficits, job creation and spur economic growth.

Zulum noted that the project would be executed in phases, starting with Maiduguri-Kano Rd. to Maid-Monguno Rd. via Maid-Gubio Rd., covering

16.5km.

"Maiduguri, the capital of Borno State, is experiencing serious challenges as a result of the influx of internally displaced persons, which is putting huge pressure on the resources that we have inside Maiduguri to cater to the needs of the population, especially shelter and housing, among others. We are taking deliberate steps to decongest the city," Zulum said.

He added, "Borno State Government decided to start the first phase of the project, which is about 16.5km. In sha Allah, we shall not hesitate to expand this scope of work to cover the entire 113km

on the ring road."

The Governor also charge the Ministry of Works and Housing to ensure quality work that can stand the test of time. He said, "I want you to be very careful and ensure that this road, after completion, stands the test of time. Don't look at the cost, and do not compromise standards. I want this road to stand fresh for the next 30 years."

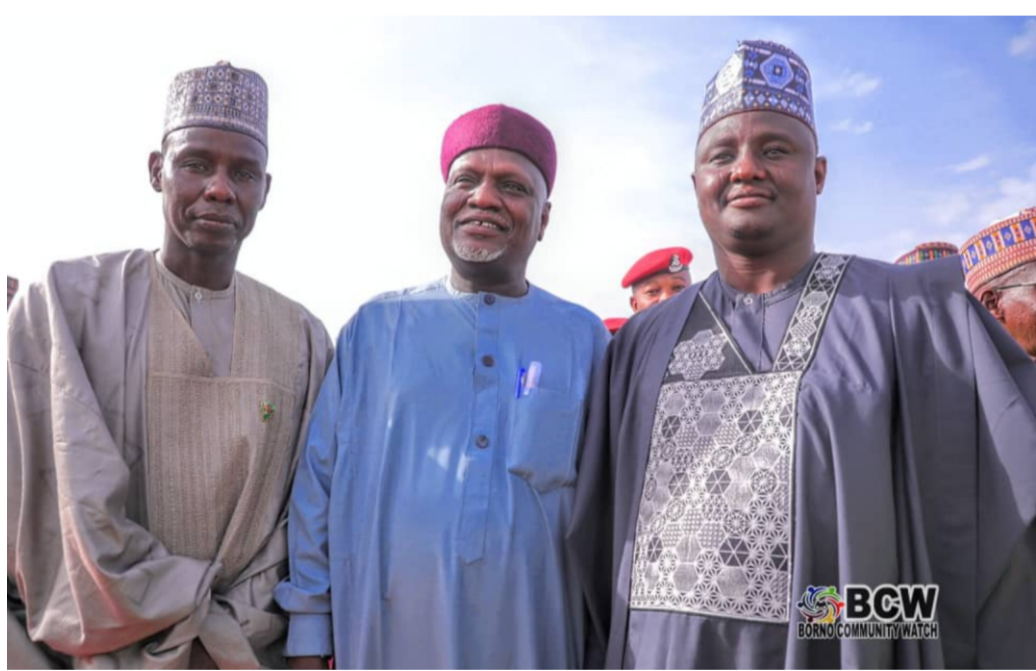
The Commissioner of Work and Housing, Engr Mustapha Gubio, has assured the Governor of the timely completion of the project while observing all the engineering specifications strictly.

Briefing the Governor, the Executive Secretary of Borno State Road

Maintenance Agency, Engr Sadu Auno, said the road is a dual carriageway with 7.3 width thickness complying with federal government standards considering all engineering specifications.

Also speaking, the Executive Secretary of the Borno State Geographic Information Service (BOGIS), Engr Adam Bababe, said a compensation of over N1.6b was paid to 732 persons whose farmlands were affected due to the project.

He also noted that a residential, commercial, industrial, recreational, and institutional layout will be established along the ring road in a land mass of about 2,000 hectares.



Ikpeazu Vs. Otti: Falsus In Uno, Falsus In Omnibus

By Law Mefor

Nigerian politics is far too divisive and toxic. In addition to the toxicity, there is a pervasive self-fulfilling prophecy that holds that all public servants are corrupt. As a result, both elected and appointed public officials in the past and present are unfairly subjected to relentless media trials based on this assumption, usually on trumped charges.

This sets the scene for understanding the current media trial that Dr. Okezie Ikpeazu, the former governor of Abia State, is facing. Among other defamatory claims, his successor, Dr. Alex Otti, asserted that his predecessor had paid N10 billion for an Abia state airport that did not exist. Otti claimed to be quoting from a forensic audit report that he had ordered, though it hasn't been released to the public or printed in a government gazette.

Otti appears to be acting like a magician, pulling what he pleases from the audit report—if it truly exists—and presenting it to the angry public, who act as juries and judges in media trials. The report is already accomplishing its goal of running Okezie Ikpeazu down.

However, it appears a boomerang is in the making. Otti's credibility could be damaged, as will that of his young government, which many believe is off to a smooth start if the information he released against Ikpeazu and released to the public to facilitate a media trial turns out to be false. Nobody will ever believe Otti again, and that will be pathetic.

"Falsus in uno, falsus in omnibus" is a Latin aphorism that translates to "false in one thing, false in everything." At common law, it is the legal principle that a witness who falsely testifies about one matter is not credible to testify about any matter. A witness who makes a false statement regarding one issue is not credible to testify about any other matter, according to common law.

The Stuart Treason Trials in the late seventeenth century are where the common law doctrines of "falsus in uno and falsus in omnibus" first appeared. The notion served as a required presumption that a witness was untrustworthy if they had previously lied in court.

English courts started advising juries way back in the nineteenth century that they could assume a witness who gave a false statement was not trustworthy.

A required presumption of unreliability for witnesses or sources that have previously provided misleading testimony must also be upheld by discerning minds. A person must enter equity with clean hands.

Applied to the accusations made by the current governor of Abia State against his predecessor, whom he accused of embezzling N107 billion from the state during his tenure, including the assertion that Okpeazu spent a whopping N10 billion for an Abia state airport that never existed. Otti said his claim was the outcome of a report by one of the three best worldwide audit firms, as he defined them, which he said he commissioned to carry out a forensic audit as soon as he took office. Ikpeazu's aides and some informed Abians have dismissed Otti's claim of Ikpeazu paying N10 billion for a nonexistent airport as a malicious fabrication, saying that no additional money was ever paid beyond the N10 million paid for the preliminary spade works, such as site identification, clearing, and the like. They posit that the project was halted because it was widely believed that an airport was not a priority for Abians at the time.

The forensic audit report has reportedly not yet been made public, despite attempts to obtain a copy of it. Subsequent inquiries have shown that the aforementioned audit report has not yet been formally presented to and approved by the Abia State Executive Council. Otti hasn't even allowed his executive council to see it and is still keeping it close to his chest.

Furthermore, what is in the public domain points to the fact that the payment for a nonexistent Abia Airport used to stigmatise and mock the former governor, Ikpeazu, does not exist, just as the Abia State Airport does not exist either. So one might wonder why there is a rush to selectively release to the public portions of the audit report that is not yet been adopted.

The question is: Is Governor Otti simply trying to play politics with the public's perception for optics' sake, providing something for the media trial of his predecessor, and igniting a media frenzy? If Governor Otti did fabricate the N10 billion tales, he may have unintentionally destroyed any credibility that may have been in the forensic audit report since it is laced with lies that may have been injected to mask the truth.

It is right to state that Section 308 of the Constitution prevents Otti from being sued while he is in office for defamation. According to Section 308 of the Constitution, "no civil or criminal proceedings may be instituted against the President, Vice-President, Governor, or Deputy Governor, and they may not be arrested or imprisoned, nor may any process of any court requiring or compelling their appearance be issued against them." So, Otti is safe.

However, Ikpeazu still has some recourse (after the harm he sustained is confirmed by Otti's inability to substantiate his claim). Once the falsehood is confirmed, the audit report will be rendered meaningless, and the public will perceive it as more of a witch hunt than anything else.

When Nyesom Wike became the governor of Rivers State, a similar situation occurred there as well. He launched a comparable audit inquiry into the tenure of Chibuike Amaechi, his predecessor. Because the audit was a witch hunt, it never saw the light of day. It was a precedent Otti should have been familiar with.

In particular, Otti should officially receive the report without further delay, have the Abia State Executive Council adopt it, and leave it available for public review as well as impartial, independent interrogation and investigation. If it is true that Otti did not fabricate at least some parts of the report to get media conviction against his predecessor, making the audit

report available to the media shouldn't be an issue at all. The fact that this procedure was the one that ought to have been followed also underlined the fact that Otti was essentially putting the cart before the horse when he released portions of the forensic audit report piecemeal, which many have trashed as untrue.

Ikpeazu's experience demonstrates that the media trial of public officials in Nigeria has deep ramifications and implications for the battle against corruption. Even if the victims can prove their innocence, they are not granted real relief because the accusers never go back to debriefing the Nigerian public about the lies they peddled or offering an apology to the good Nigerians who have been maligned and falsely shown to other people as criminals.

In Ikpeazu's case, Governor Otti must come clean by providing the media with proof of the funds made for the fictitious Abia State Airport, along with the name of the receiving firm or firms. If Ikpeazu never paid such money and there is no such evidence, Otti owes Ikpeazu a public apology.

The media should keep a close eye on this case, as it is a seriously developing story. Either Ikpeazu paid N10 billion for the airport or he did not, or Otti made up the tale or he did not.

As required by both the ethics of journalism and the law, the media should continue to hold public officials innocent until their guilt is proven by the courts and should assist in advocating for justice for those who have not been found guilty as charged. In addition, the media must continue to follow the two golden laws of journalism: hear the other side of the story and, when in doubt, leave out, while also conducting more in-depth investigations.

To determine if this is a case of falsus in uno or falsus in omnibus—"false in one thing, false in everything," as many now suspect—Nigerians are waiting for the declassification of the Otti's forensic audit report. He who alleges must prove.

Okezie Ikpeazu should take turns laughing last and should have his integrity back if indeed the phantom airport payment is a fabrication and politics.

**Dr. Law Mefor, an Abuja-based forensic and social psychologist, is a fellow of The Abuja School of Social and Political Thought; drlawmefor@gmail.com; Twitter:*

"The forensic audit report has reportedly not yet been made public, despite attempts to obtain a copy of it. Subsequent inquiries have shown that the aforementioned audit report has not yet been formally presented to and approved by the Abia State Executive Council."

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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
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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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PA GE 6 O R 7	325,000.00	24,375.00	349,375.00
FR ONT PA GE M AST HEA D EA R PIECE	215,000.00	16,875.00	231,875.00
FR ONT PA GE S OLUS	312,500.00	23,437.50	335,937.50
FR ONT PA GE S TRIP	375,000.00	28,125.00	403,125.00
BA CK PA GE EA R PIEC E	200,000.00	15,000.00	215,000.00
BA CK PA GE S TRIP	250,000.00	18,750.00	268,750.00
CENT RES PR EA D (C OLO UR)	837,500.00	62,812.50	900,312.50
DO UBLES PR EA D (C OLO UR)	700,000.00	52,500.00	752,500.00
CENT RES PR EA D (BLA CK & W HIT E)	575,000.00	43,125.00	618,125.00
DO UBLES PR EA D (BLA CK & W HIT E)	590,000.00	44,250.00	634,250.00
FR ONT PA GE (10" X 6)	3,250,000.00	243,750.00	3,493,750.00
ROPS TRIP (C OLO UR)	125,000.00	9,375.00	134,375.00
ROPS TRIP (BLA CK & W HIT E)	85,000.00	6,375.00	91,375.00

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

SPACE	COLOUR			BLACK AND WHITE		
	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

Niger Delta Region; NDDC And Sustainable Development

By: JEROME-MARIO UTOMI

Reports have it that at Harvard Business School, United States of America (USA), the code of belief about entrepreneurship is quite simply this: It can be taught, and it can be learned. Entrepreneurship is, to use HBS's quasi-official definition, "the pursuit of opportunity without regard to resources currently controlled." It is not so much a set of skills as it is a process, a belief, and a commitment. It is a mode of thinking and acting - a way of observing the world, of figuring out how to change it (hopefully for the better), and, perhaps most important, of becoming the person who is capable of implementing the change'.

Likewise, there is a veiled agreement among critical stakeholders that one of the outstanding boards in the present day Nigeria that is visibly capped with skills, belief, commitment, mode of thinking and in vigorous pursuit of opportunities to sustainably remove obstacles on the part of its targeted beneficiaries without regard to resources currently controlled, is the Barrister Chiedu Ebie led governing board and management of the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC), a Federal Government agency created in the year 2000 by enabling Act, to offer a lasting solution to the socio-economic difficulties of the Niger Delta Region and to facilitate the rapid and sustainable development of the Niger Delta into a region that is economically prosperous, socially stable, ecologically regenerative and politically peaceful.

Adding context to the discourse, ever since crude oil was discovered in the region more than 50 years ago, the people of the region could not have imagined that they would bear the brunt of the country's main source of revenue. The people must have expected that the exploitation of the rich natural resources they have in their environment would have brought them development and prosperity. But alas, it has been a very painful experience for the people of the region.

Essentially, it is not as if past administrations in the country did not, at different times and places make efforts to address the region's challenges. But noble as those efforts were, considering the level of underdevelopment in the region, such effort appeared too insignificant and short of what is required to cater for the region's development and more particularly, remains a far cry from what was needed to exorcise the ghost of youth unemployment in the region. This ugly narrative persisted in the face of concerns raised by the global community who were chiefly not convinced that what now rested administrations were doing was the best way to solve the problem of the region.

Understandably, there is some truth in those concerns as expressed just as there is presently, a silver lining in the horizon. What we have today is an exact opposite! Niger Deltans of goodwill are equally of

the views that what the region is experiencing this time around may no longer be the second half of a recurring circle, rather the beginning of something new and different.

Aside from the fact that the new governing board and management have to their credit, a well-established healthy relationship with critical stakeholders within the region and beyond, also worth underlining and of course, a lesson other agencies and Commissions must imbibe, is the frantic efforts to put the Niger Delta region in order via youth empowerment, human capital development and democratized infrastructural provisions.

A delectable account further indicates that the policy thrust and programmes coming from the new governing board and management of the agency amply qualify as development-based. This particular point partially explains why this piece is interested in the ongoing developmental strides in the region.

Prominent among these projects, programme and initiative include, namely; Building Partnerships, Lighting Up the Niger Delta region, Sustainable Livelihood, Improved Youth Capacity and Skills Base, Efficient and cost effective projects, Project Hope for Renewed Hope, Carbon Emission Reduction, Stakeholder Engagement, Effective and Professional Workforce, Improved Peace and Security among others.

From what development professionals are saying, a programme is said to be development based, when such a programme entails an all-encompassing improvement, a process that builds on itself and involves both individuals and social change. It requires growth and structural change, with some measures of distributive equity, modernization in social and cultural attitudes, a degree of political transformation and stability, an improvement in health and education so that population growth stabilizes, and an increase in urban living and employment.

Viewed broadly, it is public knowledge that throughout the early decades, the world paid little attention to what constitutes sustainable development. Such conversation, however, gained global prominence via the United Nations introduction, adoption and pursuit of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which lasted between the year 2000 and 2015. It was among other intentions aimed at eradicating extreme poverty and hunger as well as achieving universal primary education, promoting gender equality, reducing child mortality, improving maternal health, among others.

Without going into specific concepts or approaches contained in the performance index of the programme, it is factually supported that the majority of the countries including Nigeria performed below average. And, it was this reality and other related concerns that conjoined to bring about 2030 sustainable agenda-



United Nations initiative and successor programme to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)- with a collection of 17 global goals formulated among other aims to promote and cater for people, peace, planet, and poverty. And has at its centre; partnership and collaboration, ecosystem thinking, co-creation and alignment of various intervention efforts by the public and private sectors and civil societies.

Very remarkable is that all the NDDC's projects/programmes were crafted in line with the above initiatives.

If in doubt, checkout the agency's scheme known as Holistic Opportunities, Projects and Engagement, (HOPE); It is primed to provide a platform to empower youths of the region on sustainable basis, designed to create a comprehensive resources database of the youth population of the Niger Delta region to enable NDDC see clearly what the youths want in their strive for sustainability in conformity with international best practices and development.

The project HOPE' initiative is positioned for creating youth employment opportunities, especially in agriculture through support to small-holder farmers in order to ensure operational growth while shifting from traditional to mechanized farming methods. "Because of the arable wetlands, rainfalls and other favourable ecological factors to plant various crops and vegetables at least four times within a farming season, the agency is proactively moving away from the oil economy to the agricultural sector which can accommodate our youths in large numbers is the agricultural sector."

For me, NDDC's solutions to youth

unemployment and development of climate for sustainable future and innovation will assist promote the critical thrust of governance and maximize the benefits citizens derive from governance.

For example, talking about the youth unemployment in Nigeria, a report recently puts it this way: "We are in dire state of strait because unemployment has diverse implications. Security wise, large unemployed youth population is a threat to the security of the few that are employed. Any transformation agenda that does not have job creation at the centre of its programme will take us nowhere".

As we know, youths challenge cuts across, regions, religion, and tribe, and has in the past led to the proliferation of ethnic militia as well as youth restiveness across the country.

What the above information tells us as a nation is that the ongoing creative and transformative leadership at NDDC calls for collective support as well as should be used as both a model and template by all strata of government in the country, for correcting public leadership challenges via adoption of approaches that impose more leadership discipline than conventional, and less extractive but more innovative in operation. It is in doing this that we can achieve sustainable development as a nation.

Jerome-Mario Utomi is the Programme Coordinator (Media and Public Policy), Social And Economic Justice Advocacy (SEJA), a Lagos based Non-Governmental Organization (NGO). He could be reached via Jeromeutomi@yahoo.com or 08032725374.

Under Tinubu, Corruption Is Fighting Back With Gusto

Jibrin Ibrahim

YESTERDAY, civil society organisations under the leadership of Auwal Musa Rafsanjani of the Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre (CISLAC) held a press conference in Abuja to express their alarm at the bold, supported and fearless manner politically exposed individuals are fighting against all attempts by anti-corruption agencies seeking to investigate and prosecute them. It was Nuhu Ribadu, the former Chairman of the EFCC who told Nigerians so many years ago that if you fight corruption, it fights back.

The key issue is the procurement of political appointments by treasury looters serving under the current administration as ministers, legislators, or occupying leadership positions of the ruling party. They have exposed anti-corruption work to serious setback and deliberate sabotage that cripple the efficiency of the anti-corruption agencies. It is distressing to see people facing corruption allegations being appointed by the President to handle various positions of authority. Today, many serving law makers and ministers have corruption allegations against them. This is producing a culture of impunity, where politicians engage in corrupt practices without fear of consequences. This has eroded public trust in the government and undermined the legitimacy of the democratic process.

Today, fighting back has reached the critical phase where state institutions are being subverted and domesticated by the corrupt. Today, across the country, millions of Nigerian citizens have invested their hopes in our democracy. There is a groundswell of expectations that as our fledgling democratic system of government takes shape; it will address the deprivations faced by long-suffering citizens. Citizens are now waking up to the fact that their aspirations are continuously dashed by the ruling class. It's widely accepted that transparency and accountability are crucial elements that enable democracies to flourish. In Nigeria, however, our so-called "democracy" has persistently functioned under a veil of secrecy and lawlessness. The management of the country's resources has consistently disregarded the fundamental principles of democracy.

Over the past few weeks, we have observed with great concern, the malicious attacks and deliberate efforts to blackmail anti-corruption agencies through sponsorship influencers, incentivised opinion publications in some national dailies, online and electronic platforms, all targeted at discouraging anti-corruption efforts and shielding the kleptocrats from thorough investigation. The pattern is clear, there is an unfolding plot of surreptitious moves to backpedal on the progress made by anti-corruption agencies that we outline below: Judicial corruption constitutes a major challenge to anti-corruption work in Nigeria. The looters have repeatedly used their influence to manipulate the judicial process and system, to block and/or delay the arrest or prosecution of suspects. This blatant disregard for the rule of law has eroded public trust and reinforced the perception that Nigeria's democracy is

nothing more than a facade.

Clearly, the judiciary is not living up to its responsibility of ensuring that the rule of law and provisions of the constitution are upheld.

There have been several allegations of judicial officers receiving bribes from politicians and politically exposed persons in-order to circumvent the law. This has watered down the respect, trust and confidence of citizens in the judiciary and negatively impacted the fight against corruption. Nigerians have witnessed too many situations where courts have granted injunctions which deterred anti-corruption agencies from inviting and prosecuting corrupt government officials and politically exposed persons.

Nigerians have witnessed with alarm numerous cases featuring a high number of foreign enablers from Switzerland, Monaco, Panama, British Virgin Islands and the United Kingdom (UK) facilitating corruption. Enablers from the UK are particularly strongly linked to Nigerian cases. Of course, Nigeria also has a large coterie of internal enablers who facilitate and protect the corruption process and its key actors.

The key issue is the procurement of political appointments by treasury looters serving under the current administration as ministers, legislators, or occupying leadership positions of the ruling party. They have exposed anti-corruption work to serious setback and deliberate sabotage that cripple the efficiency of the anti-corruption agencies. It is distressing to see people facing corruption allegations being appointed by the President to handle various positions of authority. Today, many serving law makers and ministers have corruption allegations against them. This is producing a culture of impunity, where politicians engage in corrupt practices without fear of consequences. This has eroded public trust in the government and undermined the legitimacy of the democratic process.

The budgetary allocations to the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC), Code of Conduct Bureau (CCB) and Nigeria Police, among others are inadequate. Poor resource allocation is a calculated attempt to gradually push these agencies towards extinction. By limiting their resources, the government is effectively crippling their ability to function effectively and independently.

We are also concerned by the recent withdrawal of police from the Kano State Public Complaints and Anti-Corruption Commission. This withdrawal of about 40 police officers who were responsible for security and investigative tasks has not only hampered the work of the anti-corruption agency in Kano State, but also endangered the police's obligation to operate with impartiality and independence. It appears that this move is not unconnected to the attempt to frustrate the ongoing investigations into corruption allegations levelled against the National Chairman of the ruling All-Progressives Congress (APC) and former governor of Kano State, Abdullahi Umar Ganduje.

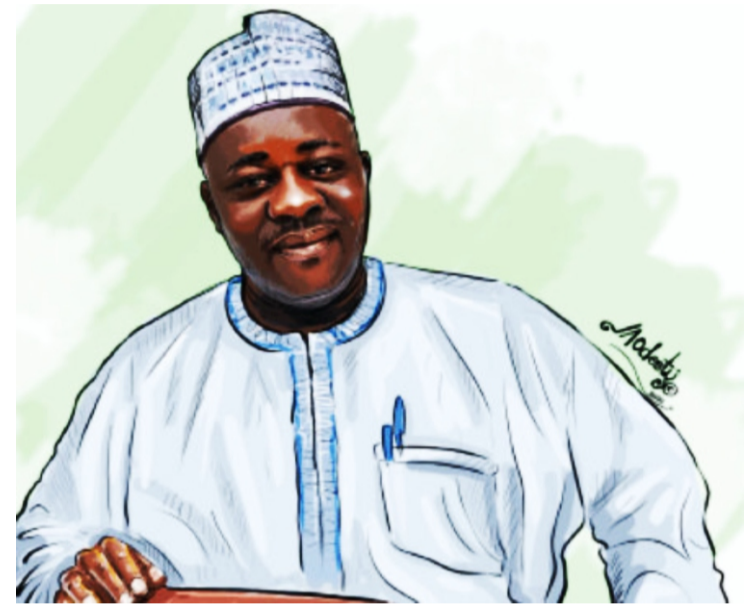
One of the most dangerous developments in the country is the massive recruitment of young persons into different forms of criminality. These include traditional sectors such as political thuggery and cultism but also new sectors such as cybercrimes, human and drug trafficking. More youth are daily becoming engaged in criminal activities including ritual killings, cyber-crimes, kidnapping, prostitution, robbery and banditry. In the process, the youth, whose collective future has been continuously mortgaged by our morally bankrupt and corrupt politicians have to take a clear stand today. A good future for them would require that they take a clear stance in the struggle against corruption and all forms of criminality.

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To sustain the struggle against corruption, growing concerns over the declining levels of autonomy and integrity of the judiciary must be addressed. The National Judicial Council (NJC) must diligently monitor its members and promptly remove any corrupt judicial officer found to be compromising the judicial system. By doing so, it will significantly contribute to the restoration of sanity and the promotion of accountability within the nation.

Civil society organisations, such as non-governmental organisations, advocacy groups, and watchdog organizations also play a crucial role in the fight against corruption. They can conduct research, monitor government activities, and raise awareness about corruption issues. By working with other stakeholders, including religious leaders, community leaders, and opinion leaders, they can help build coalitions and mobilise collective action to combat corruption at all levels of government and society.

To truly establish a flourishing democracy, transparency and accountability must be strictly adhered to in governance. This requires holding politicians accountable for their actions and inactions, strengthening institutions to combat corruption, and ensuring that the allocation of resources is done in a fair and equitable manner. Only



Jibrin Ibrahim

through these measures can Nigeria overcome its socio-economic challenges and build a democracy that truly serves the interests of the citizens.

The ruling All Progressive Congress (APC) and other political parties must take decisive action in purging its ranks by denouncing and breaking support with their members who are currently being investigated by anti-corruption agencies. This can be operationalised by suspending all members tainted by corruption allegations and ensuring they are held accountable before the law.

Adequate resource allocation to the anti-corruption agencies has become imperative to uphold their independence and enhance efficiency in the anti-corruption process. It is essential to prioritise adequate funding and support for anti-corruption agencies to prevent corruption and promote accountability. Through this, the present administration will demonstrate its commitment to fighting corruption.

Opinion leaders, including journalists, academics, and social media influencers, have the power to shape public discourse and raise awareness about the negative impacts of corruption. By using their platforms to expose corrupt practices, hold public officials accountable, and advocate for anti-corruption measures, they can help mobilise public opinion and pressure governments to take action against corruption.

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Let all Nigerians stand to be counted in the struggle for a corruption-free Nigeria! Ibrahim is a professor of Political Science and development consultant/expert, and Senior Fellow of the Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD). He is also the Chair of the Editorial Board of Abuja-based online newspaper, PREMIUM TIMES.

May Day Calls And Clashes In A Year Of Genocide

By Owei Lakemfa

THE STREETS of the world exploded on Wednesday as workers and students, marchers and protesters, sent May Day calls and, in several cities, clashes erupted over local needs and international concerns.

In Nigeria, for instance, where Cuban Ambassador Miriam Morales Palmero on behalf of the international community addressed the May Day rally in Abuja, the Nigerian unions declared: "The economic embargo placed on the nation by the US is an unacceptable punishment for the citizens of Cuba as it seeks to restrict their ability to access the basic necessities of life. The US as the bastion of democratic expressions ought to show leadership in this direction so that the people of Cuba can breathe."

The streets of France, Greece, United States, Chile, Cuba and several cities around the globe, quaked over the Gaza War.

In Nigeria where abysmally low wages, fuel scarcity, a drowning currency and a run-away inflation ruled the waves, the primary international concern for the world-wide protests, was expressly stated. The Trade Union Congress of Nigeria (TUC) and the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) made a joint declaration about the on-going genocide in the Palestine: "The UN mechanisms have unfortunately become undertakers and not life savers or peace-making."

Echoing the universal calls on Workers Day, the twin labour centres stated unequivocally: "War does not benefit workers and the masses. It is mainly workers and the people that die in wars! These wars are therefore not for the protection of the people of the world and neither in our interests. It is purely driven by those who profit from wars – the bourgeoisies either in the West or in the East. We call for global peace and cessation of hostilities so that the killing of men and women and the massive suffering will end."

This message of Nigerian trade unions was re-echoed in German cities with a youth in Berlin carrying the message: "The rich want war – the youth want a future." Christening the 2024 May Day as "Revolutionary", German workers displayed solidarity symbols with Palestinians and protested against Israeli violation of Palestinians' right to life.

In Greece, thousands of workers marched through Athens bearing twin demands: pay rises that would bring wages to average European standards, and against the war in Palestine. They massed on the Greek parliament waving Palestinian flags, singing solidarity songs and letting balloons fly.

In the United Kingdom, workers marched on the Trade Department in London and blockaded arms factories in Lancashire, Wales and Scotland, demanding that arms

export licences to Israel should be revoked. There were pickets at Barclays and BNY Mellon banks in Manchester for investing in Ebit System. The company produces 85 per cent of the land and air munitions used by the Israeli military. Members of the Palestine Action group which initiated the picketing said: "We will not tolerate genocide profiteers on our streets."

Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, a former leader of the labour centre, CUT, announced tax cuts for the poor. He told Brazilians: "In our country, there will be no

tax breaks to favour the richest, but to those who work and live off their wages."

In Cuba, the people practically emptied into the streets of Havana, at the foot of the giant statue of Jose Marti, the prophet of the South American independence movement. The Cuban Institute of Friendship with the Peoples (ICAP), stated at the rally: "We demand an end to genocide in Gaza, and Cuba's removal from the false list of countries that sponsor terrorism."

These twin demands resonated in some countries. In Nigeria, for instance, where Cuban Ambassador Miriam Morales Palmero on behalf of the international community addressed the May Day rally in Abuja, the Nigerian unions declared: "The economic embargo placed on the nation by the US is an unacceptable punishment for the citizens of Cuba as it seeks to restrict their ability to access the basic necessities of life. The US as the bastion of democratic expressions ought to show leadership in this direction so that the people of Cuba can breathe."

Clashes broke out in some French cities. In Paris, the clashes led to a number of injuries. The victims included a dozen policemen. The workers led by the labour confederation, CGT, protested for better cost of living, reform of unemployment benefits and, against the genocide in Palestine.

President Cyril Ramaphosa, the country's President and former scribe of the Mine Workers Union, told the rally: "You as workers, need to join this fight to fight for those who are oppressed around the world. And today as South Africa, we have stood up for the rights of those in other parts of the world (who) are currently being subjected to torture, to violence and genocide." He added: "And that is why as a country and yes, as an alliance, we have stood firm in our support for the people of Palestine. And that is why we say 'we want Palestine to be free!'"



Early morning May Day, pro-Israeli protesters launched attacks on the pro-Palestinian encampment on the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) campus in an effort to overrun it. On the eve of May Day, protesters set up barricades in Santiago, Chile and three persons were wounded by gunfire. On this, progressive President Gabriel Boric regretted: "We are normalising violence, we cannot allow criminal gangs to take over the streets of our country." His words appeared to have sunk in as there were no untoward incidents during the May Day activities organised by the Central Unitaria de Trabajadores (CUT).

In Istanbul, where thousands took on security forces with 210 persons detained, the protests were over inflation, demands for higher wages, labour rights and for a free Palestine.

The pro-worker Bolivian President, Luis Arce, who joined the workers march, announced a 5.8 per cent wage increase in the country.

Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, a former leader of the labour centre, CUT, announced tax cuts for the poor. He told Brazilians: "In our country, there will be no tax breaks to favour the richest, but to those who work and live off their wages."

In Lebanon, the workers marched against the economic crises which had also involved banks insolvency, and against the genocide in the Palestine. The crowds poured into the streets of Sri Lanka, a country that declared bankruptcy two years ago. The protests mainly focused on rising prices, especially of electricity and higher taxes.

Some of the largest pro-Palestinians rallies on May Day took place in South Africa. Supporters of the ruling African National Congress (ANC) organised solidarity marches in the streets before heading to the Athlone Stadium where they joined the May Day rally hosted by party ally and, the largest labour centre, the Congress of South African Trade

Unions (COSATU).

Alongside Palestine, was the support for the people of the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic, better known as Western Sahara. Large portions of the country are occupied by Morocco in an attempt to recolonise the former Spanish colony. The Nigerian trade unions declared: "Humanity remains in bondage as long as the United Nations continues to allow the aberration by Morocco to continue."

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COSATU President, Zingiswa Losi, declared: "We are here standing in support of our government, of our movement, in support of the Palestinian cause. Our freedom, comrades, is not complete until the people of Palestine are free and they are liberated."

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The strident 2024 May Day calls will continue, so long as portions of the human race face extinction.

UBO Declares Idowu Rasheed April Boxer Of Month

By ; AYO OJEDOKUN, Lagos

Universal Boxing Organisation (UBO) has conferred 'Boxer of The Month' award for April 2024 on Nigerian boxing sensation, Rasheed Idowu, following his remarkable victory in a highly controversial bout in Accra, Ghana. In an official letter addressed to the Nigeria Boxing Board of Control (NBB of C) General Secretary Remi Aboderin, UBO Vice President David Maizner, lauded Idowu's exceptional performance against his Ghanaian opponent Bastie Samir whom he knocked out in the second round of their

African Light heavyweight bout held on Saturday April 13, 2024 at Kawakude Park, Nima, Accra, Ghana.

According to the statement by the boxing body made available to NNsports, "Rasheed put up a wonderful performance, defeating his more experienced opponent Bastie Samir by spectacular second round knockout.

"Unfortunately controversy followed, but justice was eventually done and we are proud to call Rasheed our champion. I can furthermore inform you that our team decided this week to declare Idowu Rasheed as the UBO 'Boxer of the Month' for April 2024."

concluded the statement.

Meanwhile, the General Secretary of NBB of C who also doubles as the President of West African Boxing Union (WABU), Remi Aboderin has declared the award as a good one for Nigerian professional boxing noting that his board will continue to do all in its powers to ensure that the country's boxers get to the peak of their career. He however, advised Rasheed Idowu to see the award as a challenge to do more in boxing just as he expressed hope that the boxer from Francis Aiyegbeni Boxing Club Ibadan has what it takes to be a worthy champion.



Aminu Jaji Not Sponsoring Protest Demanding Arrest Of Matawalle- Group

By; AMOS TAUNA, Kaduna

A group under the auspices "Voice of Zamfara", has played down the allegations that Aminu Sani Jaji, a member of House of Representatives, representing Birnin Magaji/Kaura Namoda Federal Constituency of sponsoring a protest at EFCC in Abuja, calling on the commission to arrest and investigate the Minister of State, Defence, Bello Matawalle on allegations of misappropriation of N70 billion during his tenure. A statement issued by Abubakar Matawalle, Secretary General of the group, observed that those behind the accusations are desperate to reintroduce political thuggery and instability in the state, despite what the state has been experiencing, security wise.

He said, "It is established that anyone who knows the former governor of Zamfara State and

the present Minister of Defence (state), would not be surprised if he sees such accusations coming from people supporting him; attempting to introduce political instability, baselessly accusing those he tagged political threats and anyone who's not with him, politically and otherwise. He did this when he was the governor against many of his friends who were not with him politically and socially and they are still alive to account and confirm this.

"With the above-mentioned character of Bello Matawalle, one doesn't bother to take him serious anymore, not even his principal who appointed him Minister of State Defence out of compassion, but in order not to allow our innocent indigenes of our dear state and the generality of the people to be deceived by these false allegations and shedding of crocodile tears, there's need to put the record straight and remind the

Honourable Minister that what he did during his tenure as our governor, is there fresh in our minds. The allegations contained in the press release against the person of Hon. Aminu Sani Jaji are directly applicable to Bello Matawalle himself while the remaining ones very laughable and flabbergasted."

He lamented that Aminu Sani Jaji was accused of not supporting President Ahmed Bola Tinubu, saying that the House of Representatives member has been a strong supporter of President Tinubu since he declared his intention to vying the presidency.

He added, "Aminu Sani Jaji was the Director of Contact and mobilisation committee (PCC) of Bola Tinubu in the North-West where he engaged a lot of his personal money, travelled all over the country canvassing support for Ahmed Bola Tinubu."

The Secretary General called on the people of Zamfara state to disregard any accusation against the lawmaker, alleging that the accusation is coming from those "expired politicians who robbed their treasury empty and left their children unable to even write their WAEC and NECO".

He explained that Aminu Sani Jaji isn't behind Matawalle's travails, stressing that the people should not be carried away from what those people requested for, but everyone be accountable to his actions during his administration.

According to him, "We believe all these false allegations are just political vendetta to checkmate the political popularity Aminu Sani Jaji is now enjoying in Zamfara state and this is posing threat to their political journey and ambitions. That's why they resolved to political war against the person of Aminu Sani Jaji. But this would not change the narration, because we, in

Zamfara state are now politically wise and determined to choose between patriotic persons with capacity that can translate vision into reality and political liabilities who are all out to enrich themselves through the government coffers."

He believed that it is a calculative plan to tarnish the image of Aminu Sani Jaji because of his snappy rising popularity in the state that has thrown them into political oblivion that poses great danger and threats to their political umpire and temple as well trying to set the state into political instability.

"Zamfara State now needs peace and stability and we distanced ourselves from political thuggery. We need leaders not rulers. Leaders with the fear of God and leaders who can strive to translate vision into reality. The era of political slavery has expired," he emphasized.

Rivers Hoopers Remains Undefeated At BAL Sahara Conference

**Coach Odaudu Attributes Success To Rivers Government*



By; MOHAMMED ABDULLAHI, Dakar

Nigeria's Rivers Hoopers continues to fly higher in the ongoing Basketball Africa League (BAL) Season 4 Sahara Conference in Dakar, Senegal after thrashing US Monastir 84 -

63 on match day 3. The match was a sharp contrast to the inaugural BAL season game between both teams where the Tunisian team triumphed with 29 points. From the tip-off, River Hoopers despite winning back to back games while US Monastir lost back to back games, the Nigerian side showed more hunger reflecting in a nine points lead at the end of the first quarter. In quarter two, the Nigerian team widen the lead to 20 points with little fight back from the Tunisian side up till the end of the game. Kelvin Amayo, Rivers Hoopers guard commandeered the game with 27 points scored, 9

assists and 5 turnovers. Meanwhile, Rivers Hoopers coach, Ogoh Odaudu has attributed the success of the team so far to the 100 per cent support of the Rivers State Government. "Our success is absolutely a result of the full support of the Rivers State Government. We are one of the few teams who enjoy good funding and lack few things, so of course, our way thanking Rivers State Government is to record success on the field of play," Odaudu explained. In the other game played on match day three, home team, AS Douanes lost in a keenly contested match to flying debutants, APR of Rwanda by 61 - 66 points.



New NIGERIAN

"The Greatest Weapon is Truth"

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I Didn't Snub Minister Of Power, Chief Adelabu In Lagos event - Hon Peller

By; BAYO AKAMO, Ibadan

The Ayedero of Yorubaland, Hon Shina Peller yesterday, debunked snubbing, the Minister of Power, Chief Adebayo Adelabu at a recent event in Lagos.

Hon Peller in a statement he shared on his social media platforms and with the press described the allegation of snubbing the Minister as unfounded, The former lawmaker shared a video evidence of himself and the Minister of Power embracing and greeting each other warmly at the said event, saying "In Islam, greeting others is considered an act of charity."

"This is to address a recent video circulating, purporting to show a perceived snub of the Honourable Minister for Power, Chief Bayo Adelabu, by myself", he

said.

Hon Peller added, "First and foremost, it is important to clarify that the allegations of snubbing are unfounded. The Honourable Minister and I have a respectful relationship, and I did indeed greet him at the event in question. The dissemination of this video appears to be driven by motives that do not align with the truth. Chief Adelabu himself knows that the allegation is unfounded because I greeted him".

"Moreover, I wish to emphasize the significance of greetings in my faith as a Muslim. Greeting others is considered an act of charity in Islam, and I make it a priority to extend greetings to individuals at every opportunity. This act of goodwill reflects my values and principles in interactions with others. It



Hon Shina Peller with Chief Adebayo Adelabu at the event

is never in my character to snub people regardless of the situation or my relationship with the person".

The Ayedero of Yorubaland stressed, "I hold no animosity towards the Honourable Minister. Our relationship transcends political

affiliations, and I sincerely wish him success in his current role and any future endeavors he may undertake".

"In closing, I reaffirm that there is no lingering discord between the Honourable Minister and myself. I promptly congratulated him on his

appointment to the esteemed position of Minister of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, demonstrating our cordial association. Chief Adelabu is my brother and vice versa. People shouldn't bring up enmity where there is none.

"I trust that this

clarification addresses any misconceptions surrounding the alleged incident.

Your understanding and support in upholding truth and harmony in public discourse are greatly appreciated."

Presidency Officials With 'Satanic' Succession Plans Behind el-Rufai, Yahaya Bello's Ordeal - APC Chief

By; ADEBOYE ADO, Akure

A chieftain of the All Progressives Congress (APC), Jesutega Onokpasa, has alleged that certain appointees of President Bola Tinubu are plotting to succeed him before the end of his tenure and are seriously wishing

that the President will not make it to 2027 for their selfish reasons. Onokpasa, a lawyer and former member of the APC Presidential Campaign Council for Asiwaju Bola Tinubu, who lamented the alleged hypocrisy, pull him down mentality and anti-party activities going on in the

governing party, laid curses on those he accused of wishing Tinubu dead, saying, "If they don't repent, Asiwaju will attend their funeral."

He said this in a video, where he was seen addressing party members and drawing their attention to the belief that the ongoing drama around the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission's allegations against former Governor of Kogi State, Yahaya Bello; and the continued attack on former Governor of Kaduna State, Nasir El-Rufai, were plans mapped out by these individuals to allegedly perfect their plans.

Expressing concern over ill treatments, selective prosecution and hounding meted out on some prominent chieftains of the party

since the emergence of Tinubu's presidency, Onokpasa alleged that the particular appointees he was referring to in Tinubu's government were behind the ordeals of former Governors Yahaya Bello, Nasir El-Rufai and Abdullahi Ganduje in order to perfect their "satanic" succession plans, while allegedly wishing that the President would no longer be around by 2027.

Referring to a particular appointee of Tinubu whose name was not mentioned, the chieftain said, "You drive Rufai away, you start hounding Ganduje, although there are other things involved, you start attacking Yahaya Bello, what did you do? You don't have mandate my friend, you are just an

appointee... you think we don't know what is going on?

"Listen, Asiwaju is a child of God. Asiwaju will rule this country for eight complete years. There is nothing anybody can do about that. He will rule this first four years, he will so perform, Nigerians, again, will vote for him and next time around, we will win a majority of the total votes cast. So, all these your satanic plans, plotting that our President will not make it to 2027, you are wasting your time. Get that through your head."

The party chieftain, who Nigerians know to be a die-hard supporter of President Tinubu, also angrily bemoaned what he called the attitude of "using and

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