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Diezani Alison-Madueke Long Walk to Freedom



BOSS OF THE WEEK

NEWS



**Obi of
Onitsha, Igwe
Nnaemeka
Achebe
Revels at 85**

**British Prime
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Starmer
Resigns**



Obi of Onitsha, Igwe Nnaemeka Alfred Achebe, Revels at 85

By Eric Elezuo

The celebration to herald the 85th birthday of one Nigeria's most influential monarchs, Igwe Alfred Igwe Nnaemeka Achebe, the Obi of Onitsha, was top-notch and eye-popping, drawing together the who's who of the nation's celebrity circle.

The elaborate gathering, held at the highbrow The Delborough Hotel, in the heart of Victoria Island, Lagos, a venue where the Obi himself supervises as its board chairman, was well attended by top dignitaries, political leaders, traditional rulers, business executives, and other prominent Nigerians. As it's the tradition of the hotel, the revered traditional ruler and cynosure of the everybody's eyes for the day, was received to the venue by the Chief host, Mr. Stanley Uzochukwu, who prostrated full length on the floor in total obeisance, and a guard of honour, mounted by guests and hotel staff, shortly before the birthday boy was reverently served a cocktail. This is even as every other guest was welcomed on arrival with a colourful cultural dance performance.

With the venue brimming with high-caliber guests including former President Olusegun Obasanjo,



Lagos State Governor, Babajide Sanwo-Olu, Presidential candidate of the Nigeria Democratic

Congress (NDC), Mr Peter Obi; Senator Florence Itagiwa, Nkiru Anumudu and Group CEO of

Nestoil, Obi Jackson. Delivering his goodwill message, Chief Obasanjo recounted his long-



standing friendship with Igwe Achebe, describing him as a man of peace and a bridge-builder.

“Over the years, what you have consistently demonstrated to me is that you are a man of peace and a peacemaker. One of the things that endears you to me is that wherever I go, traditional rulers in the North, South, East and West all speak highly of you,” he said.

Also speaking, Mr. Peter Obi described the Obi of Onitsha as a father figure, noting that he had to leave another engagement to attend the celebration. He later offered a heartfelt prayers for the monarch.

In his response, the Obi of Onitsha, also fondly and traditionally referred to as Agbogidi, reflected on his long-standing relationship with Obasanjo, recalling

occasions when he hosted him during his presidency and other moments of mutual engagement following his own ascension to the throne. He

also expressed gratitude to Stanley Uzochukwu for hosting him honorably, and to all the dignitaries in attendance for sparing time to honour him.

Arguably the most influential traditional ruler in the Igboland, Igwe Nnaemeka Alfred Achebe CFR, mni was born on May 14, 1941. He is the 21st Obi of Onitsha, in Anambra State.

In a nutshell, Achebe is the Chancellor of the Ahmadu Bello University, a position he has held since 2015, and assumed after serving as Chancellor of Kogi State University. He also serves as the chairman of the board of Directors of Unilever Nigeria, and the Chairman of International Breweries (ABInBev) Nigeria. Before emerging as the Obi of Onitsha, in 2002, he had a career in the Royal Dutch Shell Group serving as Director in various companies in the group.

Igwe Achebe is well read,



passing through all levels of education. He attended Government Secondary School, Owerri, before his admission into Stanford University in 1966, where he obtained a Bachelor of Science degree in Chemistry. He later proceeded to Columbia University for a Master's degree in Business Administration.

In a bid to fortify himself more for the challenges ahead, Achebe, in 1979, attended the maiden Senior Executive Course of the National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies in Kuru, near Jos. After graduation from the university, Achebe worked briefly in the United States before he returned to Nigeria in 1972 after the Nigerian Civil War and began work with Shell Petroleum Company. He is currently a trustee, National Traditional Rulers Council and its state Chairman in Anambra State. Besides his long tenure as director of Shell Nigeria, Obi Achebe was also, during 1985-87, a director of several other Shell companies in the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Ghana, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, the Gambia, Liberia and Angola.

Achebe retired from work in 1995 after reaching the retirement age. However, despite his retirement, he remained passively active within the company which saw him posted to Shell International in

London, where he served as "ambassador at large" for Shell Nigeria. He remained in this position until his emergence as Obi of Onitsha in May 2002. Outside Shell, Obi Achebe has held positions on the governing councils of the Petroleum Training Institute, Effurun, and the Nigerian Employers' Consultative Association.

1976, he was a member of the Administrative Panel of Enquiry on the Port Harcourt Refinery. In 2004, President Obasanjo called on him to be Chairman of the Presidential Enquiry into the February 2003 Fuel Shortage in the country. In 2005, Obi Achebe was a delegate to the National Political Reform

Nigeria and overseas. He is a fellow of both the Nigerian Institute of Management and the Nigerian Institute of Public Relations. He is a Life Member of the Nigerian Economic Society and member of the Nigerian Institute of Personnel Management and Nigerian Environmental Society. He is a Vice-Patron of



In corporate life, Obi Achebe was chairman of Diamond Bank PLC and the Universal Insurance PLC and is currently the chairman of Unilever Nigeria PLC, Intafact Beverages Limited (SAB-Miller), and Omak Maritime Limited.

On two occasions, Obi Achebe has served the nation on panels of inquiry in the petroleum sector. In

Conference representing the traditional rulers of South-Eastern States. He became Chairman of the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources Management Reforms and coordinated the traditional rulers' forum at the Conference.

Obi Achebe is a member of several social, professional and non-profit organisations in

Island Club, Lagos; Vice-Patron of Lagos Country Club, and Member of the Metropolitan Club, Lagos. On bilateral and multilateral relations, Obi Achebe has also represented Nigeria's interests on social, cultural and commercial matters. He has been a member of the Nigeria-Britain Association (NBA) and a life member



of the counterpart Britain-Nigeria Association (BNA). He has served as a member of the Governing Board of the BNA, the Advisory Board of the Britain-Nigeria Business Council, and the Board of Trustees of the Africa Centre, all based in the United Kingdom. On becoming a traditional ruler, the Africa Centre, in recognition of his services, made him one of its five Patrons, with Nelson Mandela as the Grand Patron.

Obi Achebe has a strong passion for education as a fundamental factor in national development. In his firm belief that lack of funds should not prevent any child from acquiring a good education, he set up early in his reign a manpower development trust fund for his community. In 2007, he, along with His

Majesty, Oba Okunade Sijuwade II, the late Ooni of Ife, and His Majesty, Alhaji Ado Bayero, the late Emir of Kano, were guests of the Director-General of UNESCO in Paris to share thoughts on the strategic role of monarchs in promoting the development of science

and technology. In 2008 and 2010, he addressed the annual symposium of the Nigeria Higher Education Foundation in New York City to promote partnership between the US and Nigerian universities. He became Chancellor of Kogi State University in 2010.

In recognition of his varied services to the society, Obi Achebe was decorated with the National Honour of Commander of the Order of the Federal Republic in 2004. He was appointed Chairman of the Anambra State Traditional Rulers Council in 2008; made an Honorary Fellow of the Nwafor Orizu College of Education in 2008; and awarded the degrees of Doctor of Law (LL.D.) *Honoris Causa* by the Anambra State University in 2008, and Doctor of Science (DSc) *Honoris Causa* by the Kogi State University in 2010.

As the chief custodian of Onitsha tradition and culture, the Agbogidi spearheads the Ofala Festival, one of the popular Igbo festivals, every year.



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Ekiti Guber Election: INEC Declares APC's Biodun Oyebanji Winner

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has declared the All Progressives Congress (APC) candidate, Biodun Oyebanji, winner of the 2026 Ekiti State governorship election. Oyebanji secured a landslide victory, polling 319,224 votes to defeat his closest challenger, the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) candidate, Dr. Wole Oluyede, who garnered 40,543 votes. The African Democratic Congress (ADC) candidate, Dare

Bejide, came a distant third with 12,872 votes.

The election, held across all 16 local government areas of the state, was overshadowed by reports of irregularities and widespread allegations of vote buying, drawing strong condemnation from observers.

The official results were announced on Sunday morning by the Chief Returning Officer, Professor Adenike Oladiji, who declared Oyebanji duly elected after meeting the constitutional



requirements.

In her declaration, Professor Oladiji stated: "I, Professor Adenike Oladiji, hereby certify that I am the Returning Officer for the Ekiti State Governorship Election held on June 20, 2026, and that the election was conducted in compliance

with the provisions of the law. Biodun Abayomi Oyebanji of the All Progressives Congress, having satisfied the requirements of the law and scored the highest number of valid votes cast, is hereby declared the winner and returned elected."

Cybercrime: Court Remands Sowore In Kuje Prison

The Federal High Court in Abuja, on Monday, ordered the immediate remand of human rights activist and African Action Congress (AAC) presidential candidate, Omoyele Sowore, at the Kuje Correctional Centre.

Sowore will remain in custody until Wednesday, June 24, 2026, when legal proceedings are scheduled to resume, Vanguard reports.

The detention stems from a two-count cybercrime charge filed by the Department of State Services (DSS), which accuses Sowore of cyberstalking and criminal defamation after he labeled President Bola Tinubu a "criminal" in an August 2025 social media post.

In August 2025, Sowore posts on X and Facebook, calling President Tinubu a "criminal" over statements made during a trip to Brazil.

He refuses DSS demands to delete the posts, citing free speech.

In May 2026, Justice Mohammed Umar rejects Sowore's application to drop the charges. The judge rules that the DSS established a prima facie case, legally requiring Sowore to open his defense.

Earlier in June 5, following a judicial directive for daily trial hearings, Sowore's legal team withdraws from the case.

Citing the "humiliation" his lawyers faced, Sowore opts to represent himself and files a motion accusing



the judge of bias.

Meanwhile, on June 16, 2026, after Sowore fails to appear for a scheduled defense continuation, the prosecution labels it a "delay tactic".

Justice Umar revokes his self-recognition bail and issues a bench warrant for his arrest.

Vanguard reports that on June 22, 2026 (today), Justice Umar officially dismisses Sowore's motion seeking his disqualification over alleged bias.

Following the arrest order, the court orders Sowore to be remanded at Kuje Correctional Centre.

Meanwhile, the federal government's case rests on provisions within Section 24 of the amended Cybercrimes Act, 2024.

The prosecution argues that Sowore's online rhetoric was knowingly false and intentionally deployed to incite public disorder. Sowore maintains a plea of "not guilty".

Ekiti Guber: Adeleke, Osun APC Congratulate Oyebanji

The Osun State Governor, Ademola Adeleke, has congratulated his Ekiti State counterpart, Biodun Oyebanji, on his decisive victory in the recently concluded governorship election in the state.

Adeleke, in a congratulatory message obtained in Osogbo on Sunday, noted that the renewal of Oyebanji's mandate at the poll was an affirmation of confidence in his leadership.

The Osun governor described Oyebanji's landslide victory as a mark of acceptance for the progress recorded in his first term, saying his re-election will provide him the much-needed time to continue the good works he started.

"My congratulations to Governor Biodun Oyebanji on his decisive victory in the recently concluded governorship election in Ekiti State. The victory is a mark of acceptance of his leadership and confidence in him to deliver more progress for the state.

"On behalf of the Government and the good people of Osun State, I rejoice with my brother governor and share the optimism of Ekiti people that his next term will be a continuation of the impactful services that marked his first term," Adeleke said in a statement signed by his



spokesperson, Olawale Rasheed.

Similarly, the Osun State chapter of the All Progressives Congress has said the re-election of the Ekiti State governor for another four-year term was an indication of the resolve of the people to opt for continuity of good governance.

The Osun APC, in a congratulatory message signed by its spokesperson, Kola Olabisi, also said Oyebanji's victory meant that the progressive party remains the most popular and favoured political platform in the South-West.

The APC statement read, "The re-election of Governor Oyebanji is an indication that the people of Ekiti have absolute confidence that the APC government is trusted, dependable, hardworking and preferable.

"May God continue to be the pathfinder of Governor Oyebanji in his

continued efforts to attract qualitative governance to the South-Western state, where the people have just spoken aloud with their votes in support of the progressive government.

"We, however, observe that the superlative showing of the APC in the just-concluded Ekiti State governorship election has sent jitters to the leadership, rank and file of the Accord Party in Osun State, which performed woefully in the election in Ekiti State yesterday."

Meanwhile, an APC chieftain in Osun, Olatunbosun Oyintiloye, has declared that the party's victory in the Ekiti State governorship poll will be replicated in the forthcoming Osun governorship election.

Oyintiloye, in a statement obtained in Osogbo, congratulated Oyebanji on his victory, saying the outcome of the poll was a resounding endorsement of the governor's

performance.

The former Osun House of Assembly lawmaker further said the APC's victory in Ekiti was a confirmation of the party's popularity, expressing confidence that the party will secure an even more decisive victory in the August 15 Osun governorship election.

He commended the party's National Working Committee, led by the National Chairman, Prof. Nentawe Yilwatda, and the National Secretary, Sen. Ajibola Basiru, for providing strategic leadership that has continued to strengthen the party nationwide.

The APC stalwart also acknowledged the role of former Osun governor and current Minister of Marine and Blue Economy, Adegboyega Oyetola, for sustaining the party in Osun since leaving office in 2022.

Fayemi Congratulates Oyebanji, Urges Opposition To Support His Administration

The immediate past Governor of Ekiti State, Kayode Fayemi, has congratulated Governor Biodun Oyebanji on his re-election, describing the outcome as a clear endorsement of his administration's performance by the people of the state.

In a statement issued on Sunday by Ahmad Sajoh, Head of Fayemi Media Office, the former Chairman of the Nigeria Governors' Forum said the result of Saturday's governorship election, won by Oyebanji of the All Progressives Congress across all 16 local government areas, was a resounding vote of confidence in his leadership.

"I join other well-meaning Ekiti citizens and friends of our dear state in congratulating Governor Biodun Oyebanji on his decisive re-election. This victory is a powerful statement by our people that they recognise and appreciate purposeful governance.

"I commend the people of Ekiti for coming out, once again, to exercise their civic responsibility peacefully," Fayemi said. The former governor commended the Independent National Electoral Commission and security agencies for the largely peaceful conduct



of the election.

He urged the governor not to relent in consolidating the gains recorded in his first term, particularly in infrastructure, healthcare, agriculture and human capital development.

Fayemi also extended a hand of fellowship to candidates who contested the election, including those of the Peoples Democratic Party, the African Democratic Congress and other political parties, urging them to accept the outcome in good faith.

"Elections are contests, not wars. I urge the other

candidates who contested this election to take the lessons from it in good faith and join hands with Governor Oyebanji in the task of building our state. "Ekiti is bigger than any one of us, and it is only by working together, across party lines, that we can give our people the development they deserve and which they have consistently asked for at the polls," he stated.

He further called on all Ekiti people, irrespective of political affiliation, ethnic or religious leaning, to rally round the governor and support his

administration in the new term.

"Our state has always thrived when we set aside our political differences and worked together for the common good.

"I therefore call on all Ekiti sons and daughters, at home and in the diaspora, to continue to support Governor Oyebanji and his administration as he begins this new term, so that together we can sustain the legacy of good governance that our people have come to expect of Ekiti Kete," Fayemi added.

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer Resigns

British Prime Minister and Labour Party leader Keir Starmer on Monday announced his resignation, bringing an abrupt end to a premiership that began with Labour's landslide general election victory in July 2024.

Starmer made the announcement in a statement outside 10 Downing Street, where he reflected on his time in office and defended his record in government.

"Every decision I have made has been about putting the country I love first," Starmer said as he confirmed he would step down as both prime minister and leader of the governing Labour Party.

The resignation marks a dramatic political development in the United Kingdom, coming barely two years after Starmer led Labour back to power

following more than a decade in opposition.

His departure is expected to trigger a swift leadership transition within the party at a time of heightened political uncertainty.

Addressing supporters gathered outside Downing Street, Starmer described entering No. 10 in 2024 as "the proudest moment" of his life, saying he entered politics with the goal of improving the lives of millions of people.

The outgoing prime minister also highlighted what he considered some of his key achievements, including rebuilding the Labour Party after years of internal divisions and restoring public confidence in the party's economic and national security credentials.

Starmer said he inherited a Labour Party that was "politically, financially



and morally bankrupt" and faced repeated predictions that it was finished as a political force.

He argued that his leadership helped transform the party, including efforts to tackle anti-Semitism and reposition Labour as a credible alternative government.

His resignation has immediately intensified speculation over his successor. Attention has turned to Andy Burnham, who recently won the Makerfield by-election and is due to be sworn in as a Member of Parliament.

Political observers and Labour insiders believe Burnham could emerge as the overwhelming favourite to take over the party leadership. Some party members are already discussing the possibility of a "coronation" process in which Burnham becomes the sole candidate, avoiding a prolonged leadership contest.

If that scenario unfolds, Labour could have a new leader and prime minister in place by September, around the time of the party's annual conference.

Nigeria's FX Reserve Hits \$51.03, Highest Since January 2009

Nigeria's foreign exchange (FX) reserves rose to \$51.03 billion on Thursday, the highest level since January 20, 2009, according to data obtained from the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN).

The figure also represents the highest since the beginning of the year and under Olayemi Cardoso, governor of CBN's administration.

On January 20, 2009, the FX reserves was \$51.07 billion.

The data showed that the foreign reserves increased steadily by 3.76 percent or \$1.85 billion, from \$49.18 billion reported on April 1, the start of the second quarter (Q2), to \$51.03 billion on June 18.

Prior to this, Nigeria's external reserves crossed the \$50 billion threshold on March 10, when it stood at \$50.01 billion, and continued to rise in subsequent months, reaching \$50.11 billion on June 5 before climbing above \$51 billion



The increase followed a review in payment method of the international money transfer operators (IMTOs) in March.

CBN directed all IMTOs to open naira settlement accounts and route all remittance transactions through them, resulting

in recipients of diaspora remittances receiving payments in the local currency from May.

The directive ended decades of dollar payments to Nigerians when relatives abroad send money home.

Xenophobia: Stranded Nigerians in South Africa Cry Out, Says We Are Hungry, Homeless

Hundreds of Nigerians awaiting evacuation from South Africa have raised alarm over worsening hardship, as delays in the Federal Government's repatriation process leave many stranded without food, shelter, or financial support.

Several affected Nigerians, including women, children and elderly persons, are reportedly battling severe conditions after exhausting their savings while waiting for evacuation flights back to Nigeria.

The stranded citizens had travelled from different provinces in South Africa for registration and screening after responding to the government's evacuation programme. However, many now say they have been left abandoned as uncertainty continues over the next batch of flights.

President of the Nigerian Citizens Association South Africa (NICASA), Rev. Frank Onyekwelu, raised the concern on Friday, calling on the Federal Government to urgently intervene and speed up the evacuation process.

According to him, many Nigerians who complied with official directives are now sleeping in harsh conditions with no clear timeline for their return home.



“Several have exhausted their limited resources after travelling long distances in good faith, believing arrangements had been adequately concluded for their departure.”

Onyekwelu said the prolonged delay has pushed many families into desperate conditions.

“Many of these citizens travelled from distant provinces across South Africa after being instructed to report for registration and screening. Today, numerous families, including women and children, are stranded without shelter, food, transportation or the financial means to sustain themselves.”

He also expressed concern over reports of poor communication and alleged mistreatment during the registration

process.

“Of grave concern are reports from affected citizens alleging humiliation, insensitive treatment and poor communication from certain officials during the registration and screening exercise.”

He stressed that Nigerians who followed government instructions deserve protection and humane treatment, not additional suffering.

“Our citizens are not merely statistics. They are fathers, mothers, children, students, workers and entrepreneurs who have found themselves in desperate circumstances. Their cries for help must not go unanswered.”

The NICASA president further appealed to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other relevant agencies to immediately

deploy emergency support for stranded Nigerians pending their departure.

He also called for urgent arrangements to conclude the evacuation process.

“We also urge relevant government agencies to urgently facilitate the remaining four evacuation flights so that all registered citizens can be safely returned home without further delay.”

Onyekwelu also said the Nigerian community in South Africa has not felt adequately supported by the country's diplomatic mission, especially at a time when many citizens are facing growing uncertainty and fear.

Meanwhile, anxiety has continued to rise among undocumented migrants in South Africa over the June 30 deadline issued by anti-immigration groups.

A Nigerian resident, who

spoke anonymously, described the situation as tense and frightening, revealing that many Nigerians have gone into hiding while waiting for evacuation.

“Things are not easy here, my brother. There is a lot of fear about that deadline, though some groups are trying to prevent South Africans from joining the protest. Right now, I am hiding in a friend’s house, and he generously gave us shelter.”

The source added that the humanitarian situation is becoming more severe as many migrants remain stranded at consulates or in temporary shelters.

“Many of our people are stranded at the consulate awaiting evacuation to Nigeria, while others are temporarily staying with friends and acquaintances across different towns. It is not easy. There are many other nationalities too, with their luggage in consulates, sleeping in the open in the freezing weather. It is a sorry sight.”

He said many Nigerians became homeless after losing jobs that previously came with accommodation.

“Many of us became homeless at the same time, particularly those who worked in factories, stores and farms where accommodation was provided. We were thrown out after the South African president announced that employers

who hire undocumented immigrants would be arrested. But we hope to leave before the June 30 deadline.”

Another Nigerian, Nze Akumezienwata, also urged fellow citizens to remain cautious and prioritize their safety amid rising tensions.

In a Facebook post, he wrote, “Please, I urge all Nigerians in South Africa, especially those sleeping on the streets, to leave the country. To those who still have businesses here, let us be careful about our movements. Try to prepare and leave this country for them.”

The latest development comes amid renewed xenophobic tensions in parts of South Africa, where anti-immigrant protests have triggered fears among foreign

nationals.

Foreign-owned businesses and migrant communities have increasingly come under pressure, with undocumented migrants being blamed for rising unemployment, crime and pressure on public services.

The Nigerian community has suffered repeated attacks over the years. The Nigerian Union South Africa previously documented at least 118 deaths linked to xenophobic violence, including recent incidents involving Nigerians.

Despite the growing concerns, the Federal Government has assured citizens that evacuation efforts remain ongoing. Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Bianca Odumegwu-Ojukwu, disclosed that the

first batch of 258 Nigerians arrived in Lagos on June 11 after being evacuated from South Africa.

She said nearly 1,000 Nigerians had registered for evacuation, leaving more than 742 still awaiting transportation back home.

Odumegwu-Ojukwu explained that President Bola Tinubu approved the evacuation exercise following reports of harassment, intimidation and attacks against Nigerians and other African migrants living in South Africa.

For many stranded Nigerians, however, the immediate concern remains survival as they wait for government assistance and a safe return home.



Kano By-Election A Test For APC Ahead Of 2027 - Gov Yusuf

Governor Abba Yusuf of Kano State has described the outcome of the Dawakin Kudu/Warawa Federal Constituency by-election as a test for the All Progressives Congress ahead of the 2027 general elections.

Yusuf, in a statement issued by his spokesperson, Sunusi Dawakin-Tofa, said the turnout and peaceful conduct of the election showed that people remained behind the APC and its programmes.

He said the election was

conducted in a free, fair and credible manner that reflected the choice of the electorate.

Yusuf commended the Independent National Electoral Commission for the conduct of the exercise and applauded security agencies for ensuring a peaceful atmosphere.

He congratulated the APC candidate on the victory and urged him to remain committed to effective representation.

The governor said the result showed that the APC remained a dominant force in Kano State and



was well positioned for future elections.

He criticised the New Democratic Congress for not fielding a candidate, saying the party lacked a grassroots structure.

Yusuf said the by-election exposed the weakness of opposition elements in the state and reaffirmed his administration's

commitment to delivering people-oriented projects across Kano.

He also congratulated President Bola Tinubu and APC National Chairman, Prof. Nentawe Yilwatda, on the party's success in recent by-elections nationwide.

APC Wins Nasarawa Senatorial By-Election With 45,362 Votes

The candidate of the All Progressives Congress for the Nasarawa North Senatorial by-election, Danladi Envulu-anza, has been declared winner of the poll after securing 45,362 votes.

The by-election was held on Saturday, June 20, 2026, in the senatorial district following a vacancy created by the demise of Senator Godiya Akwashiki, who died after a prolonged illness.

The Returning Officer, Prof. Aminu Ali, announced the final results at the collation centre at the College of Education, Akwanga, on Sunday after votes were collated from Akwanga, Nasarawa

Eggon, and Wamba Local Government Areas.

Declaring the results, Prof. Ali said, "Danladi Envulu-anza of the APC scored 45,362 votes, Labaran Maku of the Labour Party scored 12,931 votes, and Emmanuel David Ombugadu of the PDP got 11,570 votes.

"The ADC candidate, Alaku Mohammed Steve scored 1,496 votes and John Paul of the NNPP got 102 votes."

He added, "That Danladi Halilu Envulu-anza of the APC, having satisfied the requirement of the law, is hereby declared the winner and is returned elected."

Meanwhile, agents of the Labour Party at



the Nasarawa North Senatorial District collation centre staged a walkout in protest over the results and the collation process.

Ben Ango, who led the LP team, walked out of the College of Education, Akwanga collation centre alongside other party members shortly after collation for the three LGAs in the district was completed.

The protest came immediately after officials

finished collating results from Akwanga, Nasarawa Eggon, and Wamba LGAs that make up the Nasarawa North Senatorial District.

INEC officials were said to be computing the figures ahead of the final declaration during the protest.

Ango did not speak to reporters before leaving the venue, but LP officials at the centre expressed dissatisfaction with the collation process.

Primary Election: Donald Duke Dragged To Court By PRP Presidential Aspirant

A presidential aspirant of the People's Redemption Party, Yakubu Kingsley, has challenged the emergence of former Cross River State governor, Donald Duke, as the party's presidential candidate for the 2027 general elections. In the suit marked FHC/ABJ/CS/1234/2026, Kingsley, through his lawyer, D.A. Sulyman, instituted the suit against the PRP, Duke and the Independent National Electoral Commission as first, second and third defendants respectively. The aggrieved aspirant is asking the court to nullify Duke's emergence as the party's flagbearer, alleging that the former governor was not a registered member of the party at the time required by law and party regulations. In the originating summons filed on June 10, Kingsley asked the court to determine whether Duke was validly returned as the PRP presidential candidate in the May 25 primary election, the result of which was declared on May 26, despite allegedly not being a registered member of the party as of May 4 when the PRP membership register was submitted to INEC. He also questioned the validity of votes recorded during the primary election in some states, alleging incidents of over-



voting. The plaintiff asked the court to determine "whether overvoting in states such as Bauchi, where the registered members of the 1st defendant in its membership database is 593 and the total votes cast was 760; in Gombe State, where the registered members were 348 and the votes cast were 1,431; and in Kwara State, where the registered members were 55 and the votes cast were 82, would not call for the nullification of the said primary election." Kingsley is seeking a declaration that Duke was ineligible to participate in the presidential primary because he was allegedly not a registered member of the party at the relevant time. He also prayed the court to declare that Duke ought not to have been cleared for the primary election, alleging that he failed to comply with the party's

screening guidelines by not physically appearing at the party's national secretariat for screening. The aspirant further asked the court to set aside the results of the primary election in Bauchi, Gombe and Kwara states on grounds of alleged over-voting. In addition, he urged the court to declare him the valid presidential candidate of the party, arguing that he fulfilled all requirements stipulated by the party and remained a duly registered member. Kingsley also sought an order directing INEC not to recognise Duke as the PRP presidential candidate and to remove his name from the commission's database. He further prayed for an order compelling the electoral body to recognise him as the party's presidential flagbearer. In an affidavit he personally deposed to

in support of the suit, Kingsley said he is a registered member of the PRP with membership card number 2A8D8B20B2 and hails from Auchi III Ward in Etsako West Local Government Area of Edo State. He told the court that he purchased the party's expression of interest and nomination forms for the presidential election and paid a total of N20m to the party. According to him, he met all nomination requirements and secured endorsements from the required number of party members. "That I physically attended the presidential screening exercise conducted by the party between 15th and 19th May, 2026, at the national secretariat of the 1st defendant in Abuja as stipulated in the aspirants' checklist for screening," he stated. Kingsley said he was

duly screened and cleared to contest the May 25 presidential primary. According to him, "To my utmost surprise, the name of the 2nd defendant (Duke) appeared as an aspirant despite the fact that he did not physically participate in the screening exercise together with other aspirants at the national secretariat of the 1st defendant." He alleged that Duke's participation contravened INEC regulations requiring political parties to submit the names of registered members at least 21 days before the conduct of primary elections.

The plaintiff challenged INEC to produce the membership register submitted by the party as of May 4 to establish if Duke was a registered member at the time. Kingsley further alleged that several objections were raised by party members regarding Duke's eligibility before the primary election. He also accused the party of conducting a primary election marred by irregularities and manipulation. According to him, votes recorded in some states exceeded the number of registered members contained in the party's

database. He said, "That I verily believe that the purported result declared in favour of the 2nd defendant does not represent the lawful votes cast by eligible members of the party. "That, when unlawful and inflated votes are excluded, I emerge as the aspirant who secured the highest lawful votes in the presidential primary election." The Federal High Court in Abuja has fixed June 22 for the hearing of the suit. The judge, Justice Mohammed Umar, scheduled the matter for hearing after hearing notices were issued and

served on the parties. The PRP had on May 23 screened and cleared three aspirants to contest its presidential primary election. Those cleared included Duke, economist Dr Nnaoke Ufere and Kingsley, who was the African Action Congress presidential candidate in the 2023 election. The party subsequently conducted its presidential primary on May 25 and declared Duke the winner on May 26. The court is expected to commence hearing in the matter on Monday.

Insecurity: Governor Eno Engages 2,277 Youths On Security And Peaceful Co-Existence

Akwa Ibom State Governor, Umo Eno, has engaged 2,277 village youth presidents in his administration's security management architecture as part of efforts aimed at strengthening security and enhancing peaceful coexistence across the state. Speaking at a strategic town hall engagement with the village youth presidents held at the Uyo Township Stadium, Uyo, on Sunday, the governor reaffirmed his administration's commitment to providing a safe and secure environment for citizens. "While we have done our utmost to ensure that Akwa Ibom State citizens

feel safe and live in a peaceful environment, it has become necessary to take additional measures at the local level to widen, deepen and retool the state's security architecture. "This idea, therefore, requires that we integrate our village youth presidents, who are strong, dynamic and resident in their various villages, into our security mechanism", Eno said. He said the approach would afford the village youth leadership the opportunity to provide security agencies with the necessary intelligence and collaboration for more effective security operations in the state. He said, "Henceforth, the



village youth presidents will now form part of our security architecture. We will provide you with adequate training after your proper profiling, starting from tomorrow, on a local government basis." He, however, warned that integrating them into the security architecture did not in any way elevate them above the village leadership structure. "By integrating you into the security architecture,

we are not elevating you above the village leadership structure; you remain part of the structure," he added. The governor, who pledged to equip the youths to work with the state Police Command and other security agencies, as well as local government chairmen, directed council chairmen to immediately appoint supervisors in charge of security in their respective local government areas.

Minimum Wage Review: NLC & TUC To Engage FG

The Nigeria Labour Congress and the Trade Union Congress said they will restart negotiations with the Federal Government over a new national minimum wage, warning that workers can no longer cope with rising living costs as inflation continues to erode real incomes.

The unions are pushing for what they described as a “genuine living wage” to replace the current framework, which they said no longer reflects Nigeria’s economic realities, particularly sharp increases in food, transport, housing, and healthcare costs.

The position was contained in a joint address delivered at the 114th International Labour Conference in Geneva on Monday, where the unions also rejected any proposal to tax the minimum wage or impose additional fiscal burdens on low-income earners.

Nigeria’s current minimum wage of N70,000 was signed into law on 18 July 2024, in an agreement between organised labour and the federal government. President Bola Tinubu formally announced the wage on 19 July 2024, and it took effect on 29 July 2024.

The agreement originally set a three-year review cycle, shifting from the previous five-year



arrangement. However, in January 2025, the Federal Government adjusted the framework, announcing that the minimum wage would now be reviewed every two years, effectively setting 2026 as the next review point.

In light of this, labour leaders said they intend to formally open discussions with the federal government ahead of the July 2026 wage renegotiation deadline, in a bid to prevent the delays that have often hindered previous minimum wage reviews.

“The current Act expires early next year, and we have announced that renegotiation will commence by July 2026 to avoid the painful delays of the past. As soon as we leave here, we shall write again to the government demanding the commencement of the process for renegotiating the national minimum wage,” the unions said.

The labour leaders said workers are already

under severe pressure from inflation, currency depreciation, and rising costs across essential services, arguing that official economic indicators do not reflect the daily realities of most households.

They warned that taxing the minimum wage would worsen poverty and deepen economic hardship at a time when many citizens are struggling to meet basic needs.

“We demand nothing less than a genuine living wage that reflects today’s harsh economic realities. We also demand immediate relief measures by governments at all levels until a new minimum wage is signed into law. We reject outright any attempt to tax the minimum wage or impose further burdens on the poor,” the unions said in their communiqué. The unions stressed that the upcoming negotiations must go beyond nominal wage adjustments and instead focus on protecting real incomes, which they

said have been steadily eroded by inflation.

They also urged federal and state governments to introduce short-term relief measures pending the conclusion of negotiations, warning that delays could heighten industrial tensions across the country.

Beyond wage concerns, the labour movement used the Geneva platform to highlight broader economic and social challenges, including insecurity, unemployment, and rising poverty levels. They said insecurity in several parts of the country has made commuting increasingly dangerous for workers, with killings, abductions, and displacement affecting productivity and livelihoods.

According to the unions, nearly 2,000 people were killed in the first quarter of the year, while millions have been displaced, with entire communities and economic activities disrupted by violence.

IMF Recommendation: FG Dismisses Readopting Fuel, Telecom Taxes

The Federal Government on Wednesday dismissed reports suggesting it had adopted or was considering the introduction of new taxes on telecommunications services and petroleum products following recommendations contained in the latest IMF Article IV Consultation Report on Nigeria.

The government said the reports misrepresented the contents of the IMF report and did not reflect its policy direction, insisting that no new taxes were being planned for either the telecoms or petroleum sectors.

In a statement signed by the Head of the Information and Public Relations Unit of the Federal Ministry of Finance, Efe Ovuakporie, the government stressed that recommendations contained in the IMF report were not binding on Nigeria and should not be interpreted as official government policy.

“The Government has dismissed reports suggesting that it has adopted or is considering new taxes on telecommunications services and petroleum products following the publication of the International Monetary Fund Article IV Consultation Report on Nigeria,” the statement said.



The clarification comes days after the IMF, in its Article IV report on Nigeria, recommended a range of revenue-enhancing measures as part of efforts to strengthen government revenue and improve fiscal sustainability.

Meanwhile, the IMF recommended introducing taxes on fuel products and telecommunications services in Nigeria as part of broader measures to increase government revenue and create fiscal space for development spending and social interventions.

However, the Federal Government maintained that decisions on taxation could only be made through constitutional and legislative processes and would be guided by national priorities and prevailing economic realities.

According to the ministry, “The IMF Article IV Consultation Report contains the Fund’s assessment of

Nigeria’s economy as well as recommendations for consideration by the authorities. Those recommendations do not amount to government policy and are not binding on Nigeria.”

It added, “Decisions on tax matters are taken through established constitutional and legislative processes and are guided by national priorities and prevailing economic realities.”

The government also clarified that the Value Added Tax waiver on petroleum products remained in force and had not been withdrawn.

According to the statement, although existing legislation provides for a fuel surcharge, such a measure can only become effective through a ministerial order and publication in the Official Gazette.

“It also noted that although existing legislation provides for a fuel surcharge, such a measure can only take effect through a

ministerial order and publication in the Official Gazette. No such process is under consideration,” the ministry stated.

The government argued that retaining the waiver and suspending related charges had helped shield households and businesses from the impact of global energy market volatility while supporting relative stability in domestic fuel prices.

“The continued suspension of these charges has helped cushion the effect of global energy price fluctuations on households and businesses while keeping domestic fuel prices relatively stable,” it added.

On the telecommunications sector, the government said the excise duty that was introduced before 2023 had already been abolished under the country’s newly enacted tax laws and was therefore no longer applicable.

Trump-Backed Candidate Wins Colombia Presidential Election

A flamboyant US-backed lawyer who has never held public office narrowly won Colombia's presidential runoff Sunday, swinging the country hard to the right on a promise to wage war against drug-running guerrilla groups. With just a handful of polling centres left to report, Abelardo de la Espriella had 49.65 per cent of the vote — an unassailable lead over left-wing Senator Ivan Cepeda, who trailed on 48.70 per cent. The 47-year-old's victory will likely improve

strained relations with Washington and extend a wave of rightist candidates who have swept to power across Latin America.

"Today Colombia won its most important game," the president-elect said in a series of social media posts, adding he had spoken to US President Donald Trump, who offered congratulations and support.

"We are grateful to God for this miracle that has taken place," De la Espriella said.

As his victory became clear, supporters poured onto the streets of



Colombian cities, wearing the canary-yellow national football jersey he had adopted as a campaign uniform.

They waved flags, blew horns and expressed hope that "The Tiger," as they call him, would bring security after a campaign marred by guerrilla bomb attacks and the murder of a leading conservative

presidential hopeful.

"I'm very happy," said 30-year-old supporter Daniela Oliveros in Barranquilla. "I believe a lot in the country, I believe a lot in freedom."

"Abelardo, at this moment, is giving us above all a sense of security, employment, and dignity," she said.

Resignation: Badenoch Describes Starmer 'A terrible PM'

Leader of the UK Conservative Party, Kemi Badenoch, has described Keir Starmer as "a terrible Prime Minister," following his resignation as Labour leader and Prime Minister. Starmer announced his resignation on Monday after less than two years in office, saying he would step down as Labour leader while remaining prime minister until a successor is elected.

Reacting in a post on X, Badenoch blamed Starmer's administration for what she described as a series of policy failures, insisting Britain was "not ungovernable." She accused the Labour

government of increasing National Insurance contributions, introducing what she called the "Family Farm Tax," abandoning meaningful welfare reforms, underfunding defence, failing to expand domestic oil and gas production, and appointing Peter Mandelson before allegedly misleading the public about the circumstances.

"Hiking national insurance. The Family Farm Tax. Giving up on real welfare reform. Not funding our defence. Not drilling our own oil and gas. Appointing Peter Mandelson... then lying about what had happened.



"Britain is not ungovernable. Keir Starmer is a terrible Prime Minister," she wrote

The Conservative leader argued that the problem extended beyond Starmer, accusing Labour lawmakers of prioritising higher taxes to fund increased welfare spending.

"But the problem isn't just Starmer. Labour MPs only want higher taxes to hand out more benefits, as the Welfare Secretary

has pointed out. These are Labour's choices and their values, regardless of who is running the party," Badenoch added.

She called for a return to Conservative leadership, saying, "We need to get Britain working again. We need the Conservatives."

Moreover, Starmer announced his resignation after months of mounting political pressure, policy reversals and growing public dissatisfaction.

We Are Ready For Talks Or War With Government – Turji

A video allegedly featuring notorious bandit leader Bello Turji is currently circulating on social media, with the wanted kingpin claiming responsibility for recent attacks on security operatives in parts of Sokoto and Zamfara states, while declaring that his group is open to negotiations with the government but remains prepared for armed confrontation.

In the video, recorded in Hausa and dated June 20, 2026, the masked speaker, believed to be Turji, appeared alongside armed men dressed in military-style camouflage and claimed that his fighters had carried out attacks against those he accused of killing members of their communities and confiscating their livestock.

He said, “Some people who are chasing away our livestock are killing our innocent brothers and sisters, people who have done nothing wrong, in places such as Shinkafi in Zamfara State, Sabon Birni in Sokoto State and other surrounding areas.” Claiming that his group had retaliated against those involved, he added, “Allah granted us victory over these people who are carrying out these operations and driving away our livestock. “We killed them. May



Allah help us to succeed in defeating them and in recovering our animals from their hands.”

The bandit leader also used the video to address the issue of possible peace talks with authorities, indicating a willingness to negotiate if the government chooses dialogue over military action.

According to him, “If the government is ready for negotiation, we are also ready for negotiation. But if they want to continue with force, we are prepared. Our fighters are ready for whatever comes.”

He further suggested that his group would not back down from armed resistance, saying, “We are ready for peace, but if they choose war, we are also ready. We will defend ourselves.”

The video surfaced days after a deadly attack along the Isa–Bargaja axis in Isa Local Government Area of Sokoto State, where suspected terrorists loyal to Turji reportedly laid an ambush on security

personnel responding to a distress call.

Local and security sources alleged that an Improvised Explosive Device detonated during the operation, killing at least four soldiers, although military authorities have yet to officially confirm the casualty figure.

The incident reportedly occurred near Bargaja village, a community that has witnessed increased terrorist activity in recent months.

Following the explosion, gunmen were said to have engaged security forces, while a security vehicle was reportedly set ablaze during the attack.

Security sources had earlier expressed concern that intelligence reports warning of armed groups’ movements within the Isa–Bargaja corridor were not acted upon promptly, potentially exposing security personnel to the ambush.

Turji’s latest claims are also coming amid reports of increased activities by armed groups operating in border communities

between Sokoto and Zamfara states, where intelligence sources recently reported gatherings and weapons training exercises involving fighters believed to be loyal to the notorious bandit leader.

While Turji’s statements have attracted widespread attention online, security authorities have yet to officially respond to the contents of the video.

The authenticity of all the claims made in the recording, including the alleged casualty figures and operational details, could not be independently verified.

Turji remains one of Nigeria’s most wanted bandit leaders and has repeatedly been linked by security agencies to kidnappings, killings, cattle rustling and attacks across the North-West. His latest remarks are expected to further intensify concerns over the persistent security challenges facing communities in the region.

Egungun Festival: Olubadan Warns Masqueraders Against Violence

As this year's Egungun Festival begins in Ibadan, the Oyo State capital, on Monday, the Olubadan of Ibadanland, Oba Rashidi Ladoja, has warned masqueraders and their followers to eschew violence during and after the celebration, stressing that any act of violence is punishable under the law. Ladoja, in a statement issued on Sunday by his chief spokesman, Adeola Oloko, described the festival as an age-old annual ritual that celebrates the history, customs and traditions of the Ibadan people.

He said, "The festival is dedicated to celebrating our lore, customs and traditions. It is a moment to showcase the evolution of our society, social cohesion, family unity and solidarity through the offering of sacrifices.

"It is a time to reflect on our history as a people, where we are coming from and where we are today. It is worth celebrating with drumbeats, dance and merriment.

"So, I want to warn masqueraders and their followers to eschew violence during and after the festival, as violent



conduct of any kind is punishable under the law." The monarch stressed that the festival should not be used as an avenue to settle old scores, engage in supremacy contests or carry out retaliatory attacks between masquerades and their opponents. The Olubadan also assured residents that all necessary arrangements

had been put in place by the palace to ensure a hitch-free celebration. He urged the public to cooperate with law enforcement agencies in maintaining peace and order, adding that "masquerades should not go beyond the routes and time allotted to them by security agencies."

Kings Reign But Don't Rule - Oba Kasali of Igbogbo

The Adeboluwa of Igbogbo Kingdom in Lagos State, Oba Semiudeen Kasali, has declared that kings in Nigeria only "reign but no longer rule," because real power has shifted to elected officials and constitutional institutions. Speaking in an interview with journalists in his palace recently to mark his 10th anniversary on the throne, the monarch lamented that traditional rulers had been reduced to "soft targets" without enforceable authority, despite their historic role as final arbiters in community disputes. "The power resides, in fact, in any local government; the chairman of the local

government is the chief executive, is the governor of that local government. There's no power in the palace anymore," he said. Oba Kasali, a lawyer and former state counsel in the Lagos State Ministry of Justice, noted, "Some people are not bound to obey what we say in the palace because they want to exercise their constitutional right to approach court; you cannot stop them." The monarch backed ongoing moves to give traditional rulers a defined place in the Nigerian Constitution, but warned that such reforms must go beyond symbolism. He added, "The general body of traditional



institutions in Nigeria, the resolve among all of us is that the government should give us a constitutional role. "Be that as it may, my position is that even if you are giving us a role, what kind of roles are we going to be given?" Oba Kasali argued that palaces already handle mediation, security coordination and grassroots mobilisation, but their decisions lacked legal force.

"To make the palace relevant... they should make it a condition precedent that the palaces must be approached. Certain actions, certain decisions must be made in the palace," he stressed. According to the monarch, where matters have been properly heard and decided in the palace, parties should not be allowed to "go behind to approach the judiciary" as a way of undermining traditional authority.



Diezani Alison-Madueke Long Walk to Freedom

By Eric Elezuo

The emergence of General Muhammadu Buhari as President of Nigeria in 2015 brought with it barefaced persecution of most public office holders in the just ousted President Goodluck Jonathan administration. Among the biggest recipients of both persecution and prosecution from the Buhari administration was the immediate past Minister of Petroleum Resources, one of the most powerful women in the world at her time, Mrs. Diezani Alison-Madueke. The former Petroleum Minister considered herself a lone scapegoat of the Goodluck Jonathan administration, as she was singled out for persecution because of her closeness to former President Jonathan. For 11 long years, Alison-Madueke became a candidate of media klieglight for all the wrong reasons, tried and found guilty many times in the media space by the security operatives, especially the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC).

For 11 long years since 2015, Diezani remained on the radar of the EFCC with claims of financial misappropriations which were never proven till the June 2026 United Kingdom court judgment, which exonerated her of all corruption charges and wrongdoings, and subsequently discharged and acquitted her.

After a trial at London's Southwark Crown Court, Alison-Madueke was acquitted by a jury of all six charges she faced after more than 46 hours of deliberation.

The not guilty verdicts are a major blow to British authorities, which began their investigation into corruption allegations against Alison-Madueke more than a decade ago. Though the Nigerian authorities maintain that her acquittal with the British does not entail automatic freedom from the Nigerian legal system, the hitherto embattled former Minister has taken a breath of relief after an 11 years traumatic experience, acknowledging divine intervention.

"I'm just thankful to God, it's been arduous, almost 11 years. It's been traumatic not just for me but for my family, friends, my 93-year-old mother in Port Harcourt and for my son.

"It has been a hard journey, but I tell you this, God will always do as He will. God will be God

and God is not a man that He should lie; when He promises you something, He will see it through.

"For almost 11 years I have been here. I did my job to the best of my ability," she said in appreciation.

Her long long walk to freedom took 11 harrowing years in which she faced rejection, condemnation, seizure of personal property and technical denial of entry into her fatherland. But hope, like an enduring talisman beckoned when she got her much expected reprieve through the UK court.

Among the many takeaways of Diezani's acquittal is the position of The Boss Newspaper via its Publisher, Chief Dele Momodu's interview with the former Minister in November, 2015. An interview that raised dust

across the world, with many doubting its veracity, and others condemning the Publisher.

According to legal documents signed by Chief Mike Ozekhome, and obtained by The Boss, the legal team of the former Minister believe that the actions of the EFCC and AGF among others in her persecution are solely based on rubbishing the hard earned integrity of their client, hence the need to call a spade a spade, and put the situation into perspective.

The legal team insisted that the acts of her persecutors were geared towards destroying her hard-earned reputation and all that she has laboured for over the years. The acts, they continued, were 'clearly accentuated by malice aforethought and bad faith, without any

justification whatsoever'. Diezani had therefore, sued the EFCC in a bid to fight back.

In 2019, four years after the end of her administration, and her eventual departure to the United Kingdom, where she was seeking asylum and facing another round of litigation, reactions trailed the judgment of the High Court sitting in Lagos which ordered the total and permanent forfeiture of jewelry allegedly valued at \$40 million, and belonging to a former Minister of Petroleum.

In his ruling, Justice Nicholas Oweibo held that Diezani, through her lawyer, Awa Kalu (SAN), failed to show cause why the items should not be permanently forfeited to the Federal Government.

But expressing utter



disbelief in the justice system that gave judgment to the EFCC, a close family source of the Alison-Maduekes who did not wish to be named, told The Boss that it was unheard of that a case that was not in any way established or proved could be awarded the way it was done to the applicant, asking “where has it been established that she stole public funds to buy jewelry?”

The source noted that the Maduekes are not the run-off-the-mill family, and had been in many lucrative jobs before she became a minister, and as a result can afford to buy her jewelry and any other item. He noted that there is no minister who does not have other jobs they do to complement their income, wondering why Diezani’s case turned different.

“Lest we forget, this is a woman that is almost 60 years, who has been working as a high calibre professional at senior positions in the private sector for many years becoming minister. Are we saying that she could not have owned jewelry before becoming minister,” the source wondered.

Further expressing displeasure at the ‘miscarriage of justice’, the source alleged that “they broke into her home without a search warrant, and with no one present”, stressing that the former minister was not even



served through her lawyer, and ‘nobody knows how the value of the seized items jumped from the initial two million to 40 million’.

The source queried as follows: “how do we know that the jewelry in question are all hers, especially as she had not been able to verify that what is being bandied even belong to her.”

Faulting the anti-graft agency’s allegation that the items in question were beyond Diezani’s legitimate earnings, the source lamented that “no matter how anyone looks at this, it is a clear case of miscarriage of justice’.

In 2023, eight years into her media trial and general condemnation, Diezani Alison-Madueke, while acknowledging that every human being makes mistakes, emphatically

stated that one error that can never be ascribed to her is stealing. She echoed The Boss publication of 2015, where she insisted that she didn’t steal Nigeria’s money.

Accusing the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) of taking advantage of her silence, the ex-minister said she was prepared to face trial as long as due process is taken into consideration.

The commission has leveled many corruption allegations against her, but Alison-Madueke waved them aside, challenging the agency to provide “incontroversible” evidence.

“I have up till now chosen to maintain my silence and not to respond to inaccurate press reporting. However, given the level of deliberate inaccuracies,

I am now forced to respond because it is clear that the EFCC is taking advantage of my silence to try me by media and to convict me in the eyes of the public,” she said in a statement.

She described the anti-graft war of the current administration as a witch hunt, saying most of its targets have not been given a right to fair hearing.

A Federal High Court in Lagos had also ordered that a certain \$153 million, which she allegedly lodged in three banks, be temporarily forfeited to the federal government, but the ex-minister denied ownership of such amount of money, saying: “I wish to state that I cannot forfeit what was never mine.”

Alison-Madueke also denied ownership of a N5.7bn mansion located on Margaret Thatcher Close, Asokoro, Abuja,

which the EFCC seized in June.

In a report by Al Jazeera, the commission noted that the items in the house included jewellery, furniture and a bulletproof gymnasium worth about \$2m.

But accusing the EFCC of misleading the public, the former minister took a swipe at Ibrahim Magu, acting chairman of the agency, for “personally taking taking” an Al Jazeera reporter to the house, which she claimed belong to Kola Aluko, a billionaire businessman, who is one of her allies.

HER STATEMENT IN FULL:

I have up till now chosen to maintain my silence and not to respond to inaccurate press reporting. However, given the level of deliberate inaccuracies, I am now forced to respond because it is clear that the EFCC is taking advantage of my silence to try me by media and to convict me in the eyes of the public.

\$ 1 5 3 . 3 M I L L I O N ALLEGATION

I am deeply disturbed and bewildered by recent media reports claiming that by virtue of an order of the federal high court, I have forfeited to the federal government, the sum of \$153.3m which I purportedly stole from the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation, NNPC.

First and foremost, whilst the reasons for my being out of the country are

public knowledge, the principle of fair hearing demands that I should have been notified of formal charges if truly there was a prima facie evidence or indictment against my person linking me with the said issue, so as to ensure that I had adequate legal representation.

This was never done. I

writing this rebuttal, the EFCC have still not furnished me or my Lawyers, with a copy of the order. I am also informed by my lawyers that the legislation under which the EFCC obtained this order is for situations where the funds are believed to be the proceeds of crime and the

used this particular legal procedure because they did not know who owned the monies, then how can they now be falsely attributing the ownership to me.

Let me re-state categorically as I have always maintained, for the record, I have NOT and WILL NEVER



wish to state that I cannot forfeit what was never mine. I do not know the basis on which the EFCC have chosen to say that I am the owner of these funds as no evidence was provided to me before the order was obtained and they have not in fact served me with the order or, any evidence since they obtained it.

As of the time of my

owner is not known. I do not therefore, understand how the EFCC can in the same breath say that the monies in question are mine.

Advertisement

If they had evidence that the monies were mine then they would not / should not, have used the procedure which applies only to funds of unknown ownership. If indeed they

Steal Money from OR DEFRAUD the Federal Government of Nigeria. I am willing to respond to any charges brought against me that follow duly laid down procedures.

However, in their typical manner and style, the EFCC have gone to the media to attempt to prosecute their case as trial by TV and other media, rather than go

through the onerous but tried and tested means of the Judicial Court process. In the face of the obvious falsification of facts and misinformation, it is only right and proper that the EFCC should publish the details of the \$153.3M lodgements, the bank account numbers and the account beneficiaries, showing proof of my link to them. Having also alleged that the said \$153.3M was 'wired' from NNPC, the EFCC should also publish details of the NNPC accounts from where the said \$153.3 million was taken from, with proof that I authorized such a transaction/transactions acting either in my private capacity or, as The Honourable Minister of Petroleum. Let me state for the record that as Minister of Petroleum, the operation and management of NNPC finances were outside my purview as outlined in both the Petroleum Act and the NNPC Act. The only involvement I had in NNPC Finances was in terms of statutory matters, where the Petroleum Act prescribed that as Minister, there were certain duties or actions which I had to perform or take in relation to NNPC.

MALABU

With regards to the various news reports published in both the online and print media, insidiously inferring that I was indicted by Italian prosecutors for, as they put



it, 'sharing in the Loot' of the \$1.3bn OPL 245 oil block deal that involved Malabu and the Joint Venture Multinational partners, ENI(AGIP) and Royal Dutch Shell. Let me once again State for the record, that this is another figment of the author's imagination, which given the persistent bid to ensure my destruction and stick all of the Sins of the Corruption plagued Oil and Gas Sector of over the last 30years upon my head, probably emanated from the EFCC itself! Let me clarify the position re the history of OPL 245, otherwise known as Malabu. You will find a full chronology in the attached report that I made to the House of Representatives in late 2011 (Annex 2A/Annex-

2B). In 2010, shortly after I was appointed as Minister of Petroleum Resources, the issue of OPL 245 was brought to my attention. I looked into the case and immediately became aware of the inherent and long standing sensitivities around this issue. It became clear from the onset that this case was not within the direct purview of the Minister of Petroleum Resources but in the main was centered around issues of Law. By this time there was already an ICSID(International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes) investigation and claims against the FGN running into billions of dollars. Therefore, we took directives from the Chief Legal Officer of the Nation; the Attorney

General and Minister of Justice. In all of these matters due process was followed to the letter at all times. I wish to categorically state that I have never held any discussions on this matter, with any individuals or entities outside of official channels. As Minister of Petroleum Resources, I did not participate in any activity relating to financial payments on the Malabu matter, other than those statutorily mandated to the Minister of Petroleum Resources by the Petroleum Act. My role in this matter was a purely statutory one as required by Law in the Petroleum Act 3.

THE ALJAZEERA REPORT – \$18MILLION MANSION

On the 13th of June 2016,

the EFCC once again took their well-trodden path to the media. This time claiming that they had 'discovered' a mansion in Asokoro, Abuja, worth \$18million (approx. N9billion) which they purported to belong to me. The EFCC went to the extent of bringing in Aljazeera, an International TV Station, to air a damaging documentary against me in this regard, showing a particular residential building in Asokoro, Abuja, which they told Aljazeera belonged to me.

The EFCC Chairman Ibrahim Magu, personally took the Aljazeera reporter to the building, alleging that it belonged to me. It has since become apparent that the house belongs to a company owned by Mr Kola Aluko. If this is not a witch hunt or a personal vendetta against me, how is it that one of our Country's premier investigative agencies were unable to avail themselves of facts that are freely available in the public domain. Since the EFCC claims that the alleged \$18million Asokoro property belongs to me, then they should kindly produce the 'Authentic' Certificate of Occupancy and Land Registry information and any other relevant information, as proof of my ownership of the property.

FAMILY HOME –
YENEGOA, BAYELSA



STATE

On the 9th November 2016, the EFCC visited our Family home in Yenegoa (Bayelsa State) as pre-agreed and they were escorted around the premises. I was therefore completely shocked to once again see my name sensationally splashed across the Front Pages of Newspapers and widely circulated on the internet, with blaring Headlines such as "EFCC UNCOVERS DIEZANI'S MULTI-BILLION NAIRA ESTATE"

There was absolutely nothing 'Hidden' or 'Concealed' about the home. I HAD DECLARED IT OPENLY as required by Law, in my Asset declaration forms (Annex-4B). Yet the EFCC have

announced that they 'Just Discovered' my 'Hidden Estate'! And labelled it a 'Multi-Billion Naira Estate'! Even though they had been given the Bill of Quantities, showing actual amount spent. It is accepted Tradition across the length and breadth of Nigeria, for people to own country/village homes.

Given the size of the land and the location of the compound, the buildings thereon cannot by any stretch of the imagination be a "Multi-Billion Naira" palatial estate, as the news mongers would want to portray. The EFCC were taken on a tour of the compound which consisted of A Main house, and two outhouses – An Obi (meeting bungalow) and a staff quarters (BQ)

building – above which we built 3 guest rooms and a parlour. The only other 2 structures are the gate and generator houses. Construction began in late 2011 and was handled in phases. During the visit the EFCC was given the bill of quantities, which up until the time construction stopped in early 2015, due to my illness, was at approximately N394million which was declared in the code of conduct documentation, attached (the costs were partially funded by a loan – see code of conduct – Annex 4B, the work is still uncompleted and the contractor is still being owed).

Building costs escalated as a result of delays in construction and external

factors such as the extreme flooding of late 2012, that covered most of our areas in the Niger Delta. Due to the topography of the land and the heavily waterlogged and marshy terrain, construction is infinitely more expensive than in other parts of the Country, as by its nature it requires the building of extensive piling/raft foundations before any structural work can commence. The flooding of 2012 compounded the problem and further increased the cost of construction.

\$700 Million Cash Found In My House

Stories were circulated by unscrupulous agents of calumny that the EFCC found a mind boggling \$700million in cash in my home in Abuja. Would the videos of this \$700 million cash discovery not have made good viewing? Or should those who recovered this money not tell the public where exactly the money has been kept? Perhaps the Central bank should corroborate that it is in custody of these monies allegedly found in my house? But then, it is now patently apparent that Nigerians are no longer easily led to believe fables and sensational untruths.

THE MISSING \$20 BILLION

In late 2013, NNPC was accused by the then CBN governor, of misappropriating first \$49.8billion, then it

changed to \$12billion and finally it was said to be \$20billion. And in the twinkling of an eye that accusation was turned around and directed at me, personally. I was accused of stealing/misappropriating the unfathomable amount of \$20 billion. In a CNN TV Interview in March 2015, the former CBN Governor stated that “there was this gap of \$20 billion after reconciliation between what NNPC exported and what it repatriated to the federation account and I raised a number of issues that I think have not yet been discussed and addressed sufficiently.

One of them is billions of dollars being paid in kerosene subsidy without appropriation by the

National Assembly and against a presidential order and we don't know who authorised these payments yet. Nobody has owned up to say I authorised these payments, I made a mistake, it will stop...”. He, went on to say that.... “...It could be \$20 billion at the end of the day, after reconciliation they could account for 10 or 12...”. So, as he pointed out, there was indeed a reconciliation that at first stage had begun to close the purported gap. He also referred to the non-appropriation of kerosene subsidy by the National Assembly. This was an issue for which I had tried to engender a resolution and for which I was still seeking a lasting solution to, at the time the CBN

Governor raised these issues (Annex-2A). He had stated severally that a large portion of the \$20billion was constituted of illegal approvals for Subsidy payments that I had given and that the late President Yar'adua had directed that the said subsidy payments should be stopped and that I did not comply with President Yar'adua's directive. I have said it before but let me say it again. President Yar'adua's directives were made in a presidential memo dated June 10, 2009, to the late Petroleum Minister, Rilwanu Lukman, not to me. I was not the Minister of Petroleum Resources at that time. My tenure as Petroleum Minister began in April, 2010.



Those directives were not complied with by Rilwanu Lukman, not Diezani Alison-Madueke. I made several attempts when we came into office in April 2010, to get to the real truth of the matter. Even before we came in the GMD who served under Rilwanu Lukman, Alhaji Barkindo, who is today the Secretary General of OPEC, had written to the then Minister of Finance, Alhaji Muhktar, to enquire for clarity on the matter, to no avail.

Finally, I had to write to President Jonathan to get to the truth of the matter. President Jonathan pointed out that although he and President Yar'adua had wanted to cancel the entire issue of subsidies, the unions had objected and therefore the payment of subsidy had never been stopped. He directed that in the meantime we continue the payments but with the proviso that we prepare for complete deregulation as soon as possible(Annex-2C), which I of course moved to implement on Jan 1st, 2012. Today, we all know that the PWC report that was published cleared me of any wrong doing and no one up till now has been able to controvert the PWC report, nor has anyone been able to show that the \$20 billion is actually, or was ever, missing.

In addition, the Makarfiled committee in the Senate of The Federal

Republic of Nigeria, in a series of publicly-held hearings, also vindicated me on the matter of the purportedly missing funds. In late 2011, due to the incessantly high subsidy figures which we knew were coming from unscrupulous marketers who were dealing in Round-tripping at the expense of the Nation, I removed all 92 PPPRA throughput marketers, amongst whom we believed were those undertaking round-tripping and substantially raising the cost of subsidizing petrol for the entire Nation.

In doing that, I cut the subsidy bill to the Nation by almost 50% and put my life under immediate threat. Yet, I

was accused, in the now defunct NEXT magazine, of taking bribes from these same companies. At end December 2011, I directed PPPRA to move for complete deregulation, to rid the Oil & Gas sector of the speculators, the bloated middlemen and the parasitic influence of Godfatherism. This was in an attempt to create a far less corruptible system as it was quite clear that the intended benefits of the Subsidy system were not reaching the masses but were being hijacked by unscrupulous middlemen cabals.

And finally, to allow the true market factors of supply and demand to come into play.... And as you all know, the country pushed back

against it. Even after that, in early January 2012, I sought the permission and received the approval, of President Jonathan to write to EFCC asking that they please come in and investigate the entire Subsidy program and the fraudulence embedded in it(Annex-2D). And yet, I was called the corrupt one. It is pertinent to note here, that the incumbent government themselves maintained the full subsidy regime for over one year until they realised (as I had pointed out in 2011 and had championed continuously), that it was unsustainable. 7. My Stewardship I would like to state for the record that I performed my duty as Minister of Petroleum Resources with



the utmost sincerity and sense of responsibility, ensuring that all Nigerians irrespective of creed, gender or tribe enjoyed their rightful benefits from the Oil and Gas Sector. \$5.6 Billion LNG Dividend Fund It is pertinent to note that at the end of my tenure, I left behind in the LNG dividend fund, for the incoming Administration, the sum of \$5.6 billion (five billion six hundred million US Dollars) (Annex-6A). I did this to ensure continuity in the crucial gas sector development which underpins the entire Power and Energy Sector and which was and still is, absolutely imperative for the Country's current and future economic development. Local Content Having pushed for the full implementation of the Nigerian Local Content Act, despite resistance from various stakeholders, I actively promoted the benefits of 'Nigerians Right to First Consideration' in both the downstream and upstream sectors. The immediate effect of my actions was that for the first time in history, thousands of Nigerians were able to break through the barriers of a sector that had hitherto been the preserve of a few powerful groups with vested interest, and thereby earn a living. This remains a source of pride to me, that not only did it create wealth across the entire economic

value chain but it also ensured the unparalleled transfers of knowledge and expertise for our indigenous operators. It is noteworthy that the template is being adapted for use in other countries. Fuel Scarcity It is on record, that I immediately took the issue of incessant fuel queues head-on and in my time as petroleum

so could not afford school fees. This example, though at the most basic level, caused a chain reaction which was replicated in various facets throughout the economy. So, on the macro economic level, the main benefit of ending the fuel queues was an immediate increase in GDP, reduction in inflation and easier facilitation and

gas sector, knowing that gas was imperative for our future growth and prosperity. I put together a team to look at all aspects of growing Nigeria's Gas with the intent of turning Nigeria into a Premier Gas Exploring and Producing Country, even more than an oil producing country. We started working on Gas for Industry –



minister, Nigerians rarely experienced fuel shortages. These queues had long dominated our landscape, causing untold hardship to millions of ordinary Nigerians stuck in fuel queues for hours; like the bus driver who was unable to earn enough to go to the market, and the market woman who, therefore, earned less and

movement of people, goods and services, across the country. The continuing effect of all these measures were that even in the most remote locations, Nigerians could buy and sell petroleum products. Gas Supply & Infrastructure As soon as I assumed office, I put into play my wealth of experience in the oil and

The commercialisation approach, Gas for home use – LPG, and Gas for Power generation. We even sponsored a pilot scheme for Gas to power vehicles. I implemented a short, medium and long term project to put in place sustainable gas supply to underpin the power sector and began laying the requisite infrastructure

that was virtually non-existent when we took office. We worked with NERC and the CBN to put in place the necessary fiscal levers, to ensure that Gas supply would be competitively priced. I left behind a comprehensive and detailed plan for the rollout of LPG and the Industrialisation of GAS eg. The Ogidingenben project.

Petroleum Industry Bill I personally worked tirelessly through the night on many occasions, with the committee on the Petroleum Industry Bill, to finally get it to the point where for the first time in over 12 years, we could place it before the Federal Executive Council, and the National Assembly. I championed this in a bid to create a less corrupt, more transparent, accountable and responsible NNPC and Oil and Gas Industry as a whole. It was also to create additional funding inflows for the Nation. This was in spite of the fact that there was major resistance from powerful interest groups within and outside Nigeria. I take personal satisfaction even now, that the PIB template I presented to the country is still the benchmark for the current and future development of the Oil Sector in Nigeria. The Template is already being adapted for use in other countries.

MY POSITION

It is saddening that after eight years of serving my

country, my experience as a public servant has been fraught with continuous malicious castigation and character assassination, all in the name of 'personal vendettas' or political horse trading. It has become apparent to many that these untruths told were at best well-crafted fables. The most dramatic and damning accusation



was the infamous missing \$49.8 Billion Dollars, that went from to \$12 Billion and then up to \$20 Billion and which was alleged missing from NNPC. Today, we all know that the PWC report that was published cleared me of any wrong doing and no one up till now has been able to controvert the PWC report nor has anyone

found the "missing" 20 billion, or who took it. In addition, the Makarfi-led committee in the Senate of The Federal Republic of Nigeria, in a series of publicly-held hearings, also vindicated me on the matter of the purportedly missing funds. Yet, we are all silent as if these events never occurred! The allegations that I have

to me is STEALING FROM NIGERIA & DEFRAUDING MY COUNTRY! It is therefore sad and distressing that in spite of all that I tried to do in the best interest of our Nation, I continue to be faced with constant demonisation, unproven accusations and deeply personal insults. In response I have chosen

addressed above are no different, the character assassination continues, this time with a new set of hirelings. One of the basic tenets of the human trait is that we all have shortcomings and we all make our fair share of mistakes, whether we are in positions of Leadership, or not. However, one error that cannot be ascribed

not to insult, accuse or demonise anyone, any person or persons. In spite of all the allegations that have been made against me, not one has been factually proven. I remain very proud of the fact that all the policies, tenets and plans that I initiated in the Oil & Gas sector are still underpinning the entire structure. This is

because they were put in place with the good of the entire nation and its people in mind. They were not factional, or tribal, neither were they based on religious bias. I am a woman from the Niger Delta, who through perseverance and sheer hard work rose to one of the highest positions in the Country's premier International Oil Company, and in tune with my ethos of hard work I earned the prestigious British Foreign & Commonwealth Chevening Scholarship Award and was thereafter admitted to my MBA program at the World renowned Cambridge University. In 2006, I was appointed as the first female executive director in the history of Shell Petroleum, Nigeria. Just over a year later, I was nominated and appointed as a minister of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, culminating in my appointment as Nigeria's first female Minister of Petroleum, where again by dint of hard work I was appointed as the first female in history (in a completely male dominated space) to hold the Presidency of OPEC. I can therefore, NO LONGER SIT BACK and allow the fabricated accusations against my person designed by unscrupulous persons with a vengeful agenda go unchallenged. As a Christian, it is my

sincerely held belief that in the coming months, history will be the judge of exactly who Lied and who told the Truth. By the Grace of God, I shall be here to see the day when truth prevails. The fight against corruption in Nigeria will be far better served if the EFCC focus on incontrovertible facts, as opposed to

media sensationalism and completely distorted stories, in their bid to demonise and destroy a few specially chosen Nigerians. Documentary evidence is available to support the facts. If one thing has been consistent with the defence of the former Minister, it has been her unequivocal denial of

complicity in any missing money. Her lines have remained, 'I didn't steal Nigeria's money'. Overleaf are excerpts from her November 2025 interview with Chief Momodu. The interview that set in motion a chain reaction that has lasted 11 years.



ICYMI: I Did Not Steal Nigeria's Money – Former Minister, Diezani Cries Out

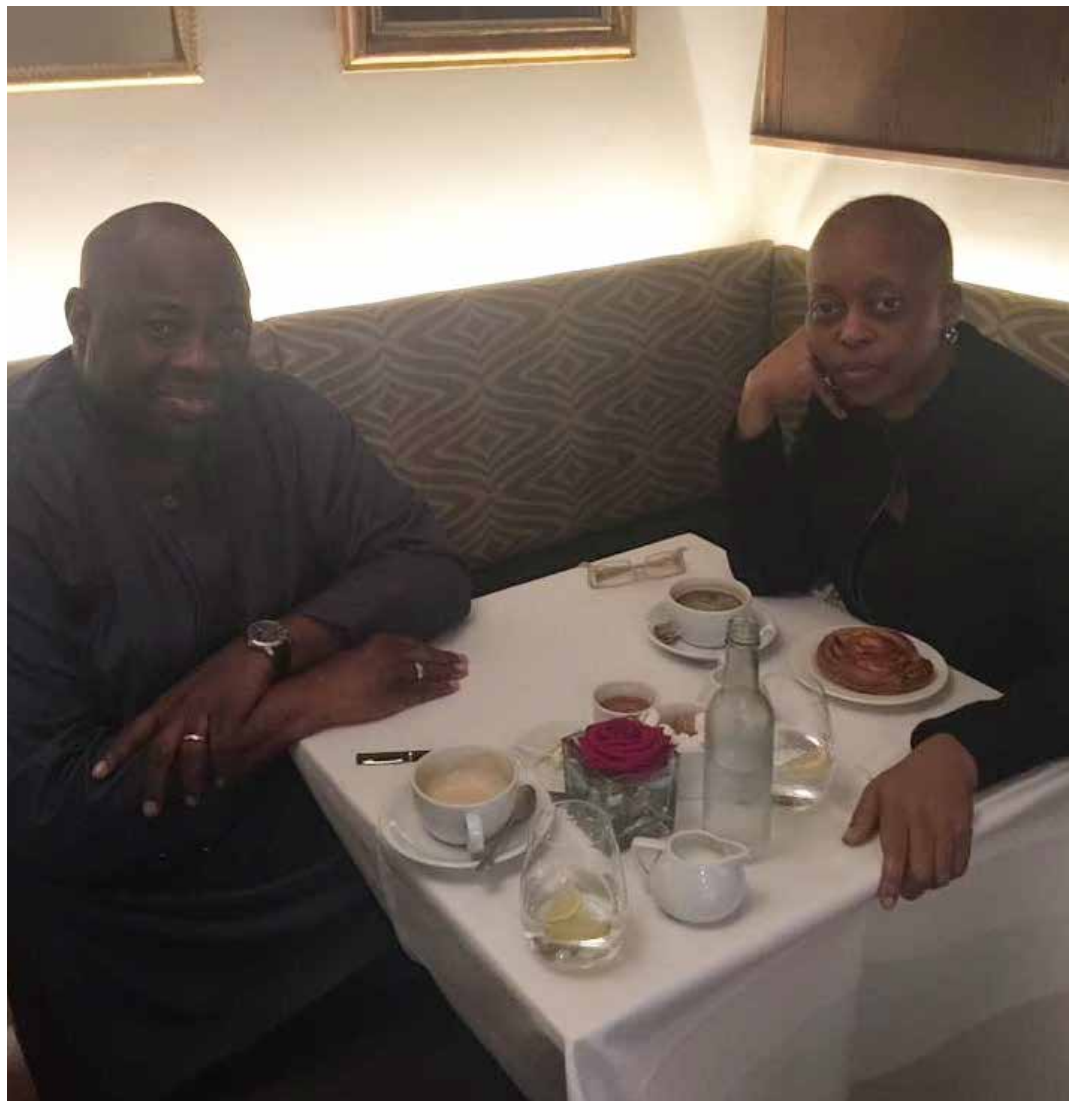
By Dele Momodu

What you are about to read is probably the most anticipated story of the year birthed in the long awaited authoritative investigative newspaper of the future. This pregnant saga fell into labour last week in the pre-natal wing of Pendulum ward of Thisday clinic and it has now given birth to a big bouncing baby christened The Boss.

This is an apt metaphor for the melodramatic scoop which is the cover of the first edition of what I believe will be a catalyst for unbiased investigative reporting in Nigeria. The Boss had long been conceptualised as a Leadership newspaper to occupy the void created by lack of true and credible investigative journalism in some traditional and online media. The original plan was to launch in December or early January.

But the Diezani Alison Madueke story changed all that. It was too compelling to restrict to the Pendulum column alone. And here we are with what promises to be an exciting addition to the media landscape in Nigeria and beyond featuring an enthralling cover story that will educate and entertain the readers.

After that effervescent introduction in Thisday,



in which Nigeria's most influential newspaper published the meeting between this reporter and the embattled former Minister of Petroleum Resources, Mrs Diezani Alison-Madueke, everyone requested for details of the encounter. Some unbelieving Thomases even suggested the story was pure fiction, or at the very best "faction" to borrow Kole Omotoso's coinage. They wondered why a more comprehensive

interview could not be published, garnished with clear crispy pictures of Madame Diezani. It was obvious many had read the story in a hurry and did not assimilate the carefully worded tale of a woman in deep pain and anguish for variety of reasons. Of course there were insinuations that it was a public relations stunt but mercifully most readers thought it was a well-balanced story. It even went viral.

At any rate, those who

took their time would have noticed that I had to settle for such gripping monologue because it was virtually impossible to extract more information from a cancer patient who had spent her day with her medical team in a private London hospital. Our protagonist had also probably taken the risk of meeting this reporter in order to check if he was going to play the quintessential antagonist or do his job professionally and dispassionately.

That meeting obviously impacted on her decision to open up eventually, two days after episode one. A call came through on Friday November 6, 2015, from a female aide of Mrs Alison-Madueke to request for a meeting the following day at 2.30pm at a location yet to be determined.

The appointment was immediately approved. Later in the evening, this ubiquitous aide made yet another call shifting the appointment forward by a few hours to 11am the same Saturday. My response again was yes. The pot that would eat pepper must endure some heat, says a Yoruba proverb. The Diezani story was worth all the sacrifice in the world. In other climes, journalists would have shown more than cursory in chasing that super exclusive chat. Her copyrighted picture would have fetched a few million dollars, probably. Anyway...

A text message flew into my phone very early Saturday morning. It contained the address and full postcode of a new venue different from the one of two days earlier. Not to worry. My wife offered to chauffeur me again but without her sister this time around. While on our way, the female aide called to ask if we were going to make the 11 o'clock time pronto or arrive late. I replied we would arrive earlier rather than later.

I would soon understand the import of her question. Madam Diezani was apparently on her way and I was expected to be comfortably seated prior to her arrival. Presumably, so I would not know how and from what direction she had come. There was no sign this time of any overbearing or anxious security man. Mrs Alison-



Madueke had laughingly dismissed as funny my James Bond imagination of Thursday, in any event. Since the meeting was supposed to be strictly one-on-one, my wife had to wait in the car while I was away. The venue turned out to be a popular restaurant near Regent's Park, famous for its breakfast.

I was a bit surprised and disappointed at the choice of location. I was hoping she was going to give me access to her now famous apartment which was said to have been bought at a most staggering amount, or the new multi-billion dollar home that was rumoured to have triggered the alarm leading to her arrest, claims she

could catch her glimpse whenever she arrives.

After waiting for about 20 minutes or so, I heard some footsteps and the once most powerful woman in Nigeria surfaced. She looked slightly better than at our last meeting and I sprang to my feet as we exchanged pleasantries. I mentioned to her that she looks better and she

would dismiss as tales by moonlight.

I called the mobile number I had been given as I approached the doorway of the restaurant, and her female aide emerged from the bowel of the restaurant to lead me to a somewhat secluded corner where a table has been reserved. I was seated facing the entrance, and hoping I

said she's been resting and gaining strength in preparation for her radiotherapy. She ordered full English breakfast while I settled only for cappuccino. But when the meal arrived she didn't eat it because she has lost appetite for food generally and was more on fluids. She then asked for American coffee, water

and fresh lime instead. She also ordered for tea at some point. Most of the time we spent talking, she coughed intermittently into a napkin and dabbed her mouth with it but she was clearly determined to pour out her obviously heavy mind despite the discomfort I could notice she was struggling to endure.

Let me reiterate for the sake of those who missed the first part of this story that our two meetings took place on Thursday, November 5 and Saturday, November 7, 2015 at different locations. The first was in a private apartment while the second was in this restaurant. Unlike the first which lasted less than half an hour, we were able to spend more time together this time. Indeed, we were at it for over a total of just over four hours, and I believe she spoke from the heart, I believe, but the reader is always the judge. There were several off-the-record interludes. More than anything we were both careful not to discuss in detail matters which might impact on the cases and legal problems now bedevilling her.

I did not expect otherwise. Mrs. Alison-Madueke is a smart and intelligent woman and had recently benefitted from being advised by lawyers both in UK and Nigeria in connection with her arrest in the UK and the search of her Abuja home.



Getting and persuading her to talk in detail about a lot of issues was therefore very difficult. There were other reasons. First, was her obvious paranoia of the Nigerian press. She's been bruised, battered and blistered, especially in print and on social media. She's been scandalised, summarily tried and precipitously convicted by the media, according to her. She did not expect anyone to lend her an ear or listen to her now muffled voice.

On top of her problems, she's having a running battle with the most dreaded form of cancer of the breast and she's had to undergo surgeries to remove the lumps and later some chunky tissue. The treatments have not

been that successful and it's been a ding-dong affair for this once ebullient and elegant lady.

We had to give assurances of not sensationalising her story if granted access. Of course it has never been our practice to do so and thus this was not a problem. We promised not to embellish her stories in any way or reveal off-the-record discussions which were truly personal and confidential and had nothing to do with her travails. There was a strict proviso that no form of recording would be allowed and we had to adopt the novelistic style. The result of that covenant is what you're reading today.

We must note that we were highly restricted

and encumbered by strings of events as well as existing litigation and other possible future developments.

We could not get as much revelations as we expected but the little we managed to get provided enough insight into a woman who had achieved so much and enjoyed substantial accolades before the sad turn of events. Had she remained in Shell, where she became the first and only female Director, and shunned the murky water of Nigerian politics, maybe she would have savoured the klieglights forever.

We knew it was going to be very difficult getting pictures in her present not too genial or glamorous condition. That was

practically tough on our first meeting as she was just returning from her hospital rounds and looked totally exhausted. We however succeeded in getting a few pictures this time some of which we are revealing for the first time today.

The Diezani Alison-Madueke story is a classic study in the intrigues of power-play. Barely months ago, she was at the pinnacle of the temple as Minister of one of the biggest oil-producing nations on earth. She was elected the President of the powerful Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC). And the world was at her feet. The cancer issue had crept in, like a thief in the night, but was being treated and managed by the best doctors available in England. There was that optimism that all shall be well at the end until everything that could go wrong started going wrong, like in Murphy's Law.

Madame Diezani confirmed that she and the government she served loyally and passionately never thought for one second that Nigerian general elections could turn out the way it did or that they would suffer the crushing and devastating defeat that they did. The first and major casualty would be the woman who controlled the destiny of Nigerians as Petroleum Resources Minister. Under

her care, a whopping \$20 billion was alleged to have vamoosed into thin air. Till this day, no one has come forward to authenticate the veracity or otherwise of such mind-boggling claims. Instead we've received conflicting figures on the supposed infractions. This is a story like no other and it cannot be

or from fame to infamy. Mrs Alison-Madueke had the world not just at her feet but firmly in her palm. She could apparently turn a certified pauper into a certificated billionaire within the twinkle of an eye. In short, she could make and unmake. Diezani was the subject of many fables. And this is the crux of

yours has a kid or kids for President Jonathan?" I asked. "That is totally untrue as I don't have any such sister or relative!" she said. She wondered how people could fabricate such blatant lies. I soon followed with what I regarded as an uppercut: "It was said that you and the former First Lady, Dame Patience Jonathan

and the former First Lady, Dame Patience Jonathan

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TECH NEWS P8
The Allegations that got MTN into trouble in Nigeria
The cliché: "To whom much is given, much is expected" seem to be true for telecommunications giant, MTN, especially as it pertains to its operations in Nigeria.
MTN launched its Global System of Mobile Communications (GSME) service on August 9, 2001 connecting 140,000 lines (24 hours after another license, Ecoset Wireless began) and from the get go, it benefited a lot from being a pioneer.
Not only was a sim card sold for as much as N30,000 (today it is virtually free), MTN got loads of tax rebates and concessions, because the then Obasanjo government wanted to make sure that its plan to democratize telephony had no hitch.

LIBERTY P11
Marion Ayonote makes history at the House of Fraser

"I DID NOT STEAL NIGERIA'S MONEY"
— Former Minister, Diezani Cries Out

Story by: *John Okonkwo*
What you are about to read is probably the most anticipated story of the year birthed in the long-awaited, authoritative investigative newspaper of the future. This pregnant

which is the cover of the first edition of what I believe will be a catalyst for unbiased investigative reporting in Nigeria. The Boss had long been conceptualised as a Leadership newspaper to

was too compelling to restrict to the *Pendulum* column alone. And here we are with what promises to be an exciting addition to the media landscape in Nigeria and beyond featuring an embroiling

Minister of Petroleum Resources, Mrs Diezani Alison-Madueke, everyone requested for details of the encounter. Some unbelieving Thomases even suggested the story was pure fiction, or at the very

told like any other. It is a tale from the super highway of power and the fast lane of confusion. Nothing is sweeter than power and money, in no particular order, as long as you have both you are in the rarefied company of national decision-makers. And nothing is sadder than having both and falling from grace to grass

the matter. Her closeness to President Jonathan and the influence she wielded on him was never a hidden matter. This lent credence to the mystical power over the Nigerian economy that it was claimed she possessed. I fired my first shot from that direction and it was as if she expected it:

"Is it true that a sister of

were in permanent conflict; why was it so?" She responded that their relationship was cordial enough and she gave the former First Lady the respect she should give the wife of her boss. She went further to say that "What people don't know is that we've been family friends for long. My mum, Mrs Beatrice Agama, has

always played the role of a godmother in the Niger Delta and all the militants love and respect her. I come from a royal and privileged background and lacked nothing.”

She said she was not unaware of certain insinuations about an intimate relationship with the former President but she never bothered her head about them because some people had made up their minds to spread those ugly tales about her. “If you are in the corridor of power, you must expect anything, including mud and even bricks being thrown at you.”

Now wait for the next shot! “You’ve been linked to so many young guys who made so much money from you and later absconded or turned against you... What was between you and Chris Aire, Kola Aluko, Jide Omokore, Tonye Cole, Dapo Abiodun, Wale Tinubu, Igho Sanomi and others?” I queried her.

Madame Diezani’s response was calm and unruffled: “I vehemently deny any intimacy or liaison with any of these gentlemen.” She noted that she is happily married like most of them are happily married and asserted that she is not the Scarlet Lady that people paint her to be. She sees those rumours as insults on accomplished women who cannot be seen in sensitive positions without running riotous with some men. She said



it was important to put in context how she met most of them:

“I was the Chairman of the Nigerian Content Development & Monitoring Board and I did my job to the best of ability and intentions. My boss and I were determined to empower Nigerians, especially the young ones, who had the brains and guts to dare.” She pointed out that her firm belief and desire to empower Nigerians stemmed from the manner that she and her parents and siblings were unceremoniously dumped out of Shell Camp where her father worked and lived while she was young.

The memory was apparently traumatic as I could notice her wiping her eyes with another

handkerchief. She said “I remember that day vividly. It was definitely one of the worst days of my life. We were not even allowed to finish eating before they hurriedly packed our belongings, threw them into trucks and drove us into an uncertain, unknown future.”

She continued “I was determined that what my father fought for, which was to ensure that Nigerians had a greater say in the scheme of things in Shell and thus in the petroleum industry would be championed and achieved by me in Government.”

She noted that in every government, some people must land the big jobs which every human being would love to have. She said “I chose to empower

mostly Nigerians and took the power away from foreigners who used to dominate the sector. That was why we pushed for the Nigerian Content Bill, which mercifully we got through. So you cannot expect some forces not to hate me but I was shocked that Nigerians themselves were ready to crucify me mostly on rumours and not verifiable facts. Most leaders before me have suffered a similar fate so I take some comfort from that experience.”

She added that people seem to forget that she is happily married to Rear Admiral Alison Madueke and would not do anything to jeopardise her marriage or smear herself in the eyes of her husband, children and family. She also said that some of these men

were unknown to her until she became a Minister and that although, in some cases, they later enjoyed a cordial relationship with her, it was no more than the kind of relationship she enjoyed with other successful Nigerian businessmen who respected and admired her for the way she was bringing Nigerians to the forefront of the industry:

“It is unfortunate that things didn’t work perfectly all the time as expected and as a leader I take the blame for those imperfections, but I’m certainly not a demon as being portrayed. I have no doubt that I served my nation well, the reason my colleagues at OPEC supported me despite the opposition from my own people. I still maintain that level of relationship with my former colleagues despite not being in government.”

I then asked why is she so controversial? “Controversy has nothing to do with your qualifications or performance. As a matter of fact, people often hate you for knowing so much and for being efficient and confident which they mistake for arrogance. We had to confront so many challenges, including oil theft and general insecurity but we did very well even if we did not succeed 100 percent. I must say that some of our own people delivered responsibly while a few of them

breached the faith and wasted the opportunities handed to them by my boss, President Jonathan. Unfortunately, no one ever remembers the things that went right but everyone remembers and tends to emphasise the things that went wrong...”

We soon moved the discussion to the many allegations of financial

because it was important to shed some light on her own involvement from the vantage point of someone actually in Government who believes these things simply cannot happen.

She was visibly angry at the mention of the \$20billion: “If there is one issue I must pursue in this world it is the biggest lie of this money. How can

Nigeria’s money...”

“Rather I worked hard to halt the rampant business of round-tripping. When I brought in Reginald Stanley to clean up the place, I requested for a list of the defaulters. There were about 92 of them and I made sure we sanctioned them. You can imagine the threat to my life but I was ready to defend



impropriety under her tenure, especially the alleged disappearance of \$20billion and other wasteful spending authorised by her. She observed that she could not go into any real details because of the criminal investigations in Nigeria and England as well as the civil case here. However, she told me she would try and provide general details about these matters

\$20billion disappear just like that? Where did it disappear to? Is it possible that such an amount would not be traceable? This is more painful coming from someone I considered a good friend who should appreciate the gravity of such allegation. I challenge anyone to come forward with facts showing that I stole government or public money. I’ve never stolen

the economic interests of my country. In fact, we were able to reduce the oil subsidy by about half. No one has applauded our effort.

“There were those who said the then Governor of Central Bank must have been angry at me because of the way the Presidency treated him. In all honesty, he was being blocked from seeing the President by some of Oga’s people

(presidential aides) but it had nothing to do with me. I was the one who even told Oga about the development and Oga said he would meet him in London on one of his trips. Unfortunately my boss fell ill and was rushed to King Edward Hospital and the meeting was aborted.”

“Sanusi and I had been friends. There was no way I would have done anything bad to him. He even came to my house to inform me about his interest in heading the African Development Bank and we discussed for about two hours. I promised to support him and I spoke to Oga about it. We were together on the Reconciliation Committee that looked into the accounts of NNPC. Yes there were gaps but not on the alarming scale being circulated. Markafi (former Governor of Kaduna State) did a thorough job. You know he is a very sound accountant.”

What about the allegations that she owns choice properties everywhere? “It is so sad that anyone could say such about me. Let me say something to you, I live with my husband in the same house we’ve lived since we married in 1999. Ask anyone who knows us. Our house in Abuja was bought in 2007 by my husband and as an architect and lover of interior décor I did it up to our own taste. It is not over the top because I have

good taste and appreciate bargains. I shop in regular shops like B & Q to do up all the places where I live. Anyone who tells you I have houses anywhere should feel free to publish them. That was how they said I bought an expensive property in Vienna. I went to court and I won the case. I never saw the house before except in picture. The house I stay in London is rented. As a woman I love to look

Director of NNPC was actively involved in ensuring that the best international practices were maintained. She added that her involvement in the conclusion of these transactions was limited and that some of the contracts had been executed before she became Minister of Petroleum Resources. In some other cases she only got details after the contracts had

discriminated against nor favoured anyone. She claimed some of those who benefited the most were even in opposition and mentioned how a renowned opposition leader and vocal critic of the Government at the time met her on about three occasions to discuss his interests in the business of oil.

“My boss didn’t want Nigerians to suffer because of politics so we



good. Some of my dresses and jewellery are often dumped on me by those I buy from and I pay them when I can...”

She went on to explain that virtually all the transactions in respect of which allegations of corruption are being levelled against her went through due process and that the Group Managing

been concluded when approached by some businessmen who complained about the terms. She usually admonished them to forego the contracts if they felt they were not profitable and seek other ventures within the industry.

But she emphasised that her boss neither

agreed to offer certain support to a company we knew was owned by the opposition once we were satisfied they controlled the market substantially and have what it takes to deliver the goods nationwide. We were that tolerant...”



The Oracle

CHIEF MIKE OZEKHOMÉ

SAN, CON, OFR, FCI Arb, Ph.D

08094777755 (SMS Only)

The Independence of the Judiciary in a Democratic Dispensation (Pt. 1)

INTRODUCTION

The judiciary is popularly referred to as the last hope of the common man. Yet, to maintain the attributes that qualify it for this populist appellation, the independence and integrity of the judiciary must be jealously guarded and sustained so as to continue to attract the confidence of the said common-man in the ability of the judiciary to do justice to all without fear or favour.

Indeed, the title of this paper becomes urgently relevant in view of the difficult times the judicial institution as a whole has been going through in recent times, as regards its integrity and retention of public confidence. Never in Nigeria's history (not even during the repressive and tyrannical era of military juntas) has the judiciary suffered such high degree of public bashing, ridicule and contempt as it has in recent times.

Of late, the Judiciary has come under intense criticism and experienced



serious erosion of public confidence, so much that its indispensable independence and impartiality have been put to serious doubt by an ever-increasing cross section of Nigerians. While some of the events that gave rise to these doubts were largely misunderstood by the public, the truth remains that some events have shown an even more urgent need to safeguard and defend the political, fiscal/economic and intellectual independence of the Judiciary in this dispensation.

The imperatives for an independent and impartial Judiciary in a democracy are great and pressing. This is bolstered by

the general feeling and expectation of greater freedoms in a democracy. The protection of human rights is implicit in open democracy. The Judiciary is the greatest bastion for protection of human rights.

The aim of this article is not to place the Judiciary in the dock and try it for the alleged 'offences' for which it has recently been perceived (rightly or wrongly) to have committed. Consequently, we would do no more than merely restate some of the events which in the opinion (however flawed) of most Nigerians seem to signify a compromise of its independence and integrity. Our own value

judgment would be minimal. We therefore enter a caveat that those who expect the main focus of this paper to be on trashing the judicial institution may be a little bit disappointed at the end. The paper shall conclude with a focus on the role of an independent Judiciary in Nigeria's nascent democracy.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

There is hardly any term than can be properly and exhaustively defined (strictu sensu). We shall however adopt dictionary definitions of our principal terms as working definitions to aid clarity of analysis.

The noun 'independence'

is derived from the adjective 'independent' which connotes the following attributes:

"Free from the authority, control or influence of others, self-governing... self-supporting, not dependent on other for one's living, not committed to an organized political party...not subordinate... not depending on another for its value." (Oxford Dictionary).

We now turn to the key and operative word, the 'Judiciary'. The term has been defined as:

"That branch of government invested with the judicial power; the system of courts in a country; the body of judges; the bench. That branch of government which is intended to interpret, construe and apply the law."

It has however been argued at various times that this definition (as exhaustive as it might appear) is restrictive. It has been suggested that a working definition of the term 'Judiciary' may:

"Include the messengers, clerks, Registrars, Bailiffs, the Police, the other security forces, the members of the Bar and such persons that have anything to do with the Judiciary and this will ultimately include the generality of the populace"

For the present purposes however, it would be something of a stretch to suggest that perhaps the

generality of Nigerians are part of the Judiciary. Nwabueze agrees with the wide definition of the term, but sees the usage as a somewhat permissible ascription of terminology as regards its composite brother term, the Judicature. According to the learned author:

"There is a certain amount of looseness in the use of the word 'Judiciary'. In its strict meaning it refers to the 'judges of a state collectively, but it often (loosely) used



interchangeable with 'judicature', a wider term embracing both the institution (the courts) and the persons (the judges) who compose it."

'Democracy' is still best known with its Lincolnian definition as 'government of the people, for the people and by the people'. It is however important to state that our type of 'democratic dispensation' has not qualified to be simply referred to as

democracy (when the word is stretched to its utilitarian of limits). At best, Nigeria is passing through the process of democratization from years of military dictatorship to civilian governance. Being a process, democratization primarily embraces the steps that go into internalizing the norms of democracy after the institution of a democratically-elected government. In this connection, following

and order amongst the people."

The point we arrive at is that Nigeria's Judiciary (which involves both the system of courts and the judges has a pivotal role to play in this democratic dispensation in upholding the rule of law and holding the balance between constitutional and unconstitutional acts. Democratic practice in a limited government being essentially a regime of adherence to constitutionalism, legality and the rule of law, the presence of an independent Judiciary is a sine qua non for successful democracy. An independent Judiciary acts like a compass in complex and turbulent voyage of democracy. Its performance or lack of it determines whether or not the ship of state anchors safely.

democratic elections, there comes a period where governments, institutions and the populace imbibe the democratic culture and principles, and gradually drop autocratic and uncivilized tendencies. This is the cross-roads at which the contemporary Nigeria finds itself. Nwabueze, therefore, sees democratization as:

"The infusing of the spirit of liberty, democracy, justice, the Rule of Law

If the word 'independence' still connotes freedoms from the authority, control or influence of others, and if it still points to an institution which is self-supporting, (not dependent on others), not committed to a political party, not subordinate and not depending on any person or other institution for its value, then the Nigerian Judiciary must politically, economically and intellectually be seen to be self-reliant in order to be called an independent Judiciary. It has been urged (albeit ad ignoranta) that the doctrine of separation

of powers does not presuppose independence of one arm of government from the other. This flawed argument is usually impressively hinged on the doctrine of checks and balances. It was used extensively against the Legislative arm in their efforts to operate independently of the executive arm during the first (6) six years of return to democracy. It is, however, submitted that the constitutional doctrine of checks and balances does not derogate from the doctrine of separation of powers.

It is not intended to confuse the doctrine of separation of powers with the issue of judicial independence. Whilst it is right to argue that the latter is a fall-out of the former, it is important to note that the issue of judicial independence has an additional constitutional, political and moral importance in our national life. This is because after the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 has successfully separated the powers of government in sections 4, 5 and 6 thereof, it goes ahead to provide unequivocally that:

“The independence, impartiality and integrity of courts of law, and easy accessibility thereto shall be secured and maintained.”

It can easily be seen that judicial independence entails, but is not limited

to, separation of powers. Thus in construing the meaning of the expression ‘independence of the Judiciary’, Nwabueze argues:

“We tend to think that the independence of the Judiciary means just independence from the legislature and the executive. But it means much more than that. It means independence from political organs of government or by the public or brought in by the judges themselves through their involvement in politics.”

of the law without any let or hindrance or fear of repercussion from any quarters whether from the legislative, Executive, individual members of the public or even from the ghost of the individual judge’s past, present or future.”

Unless the Judiciary is aggressively shielded from political influence from the other two arms of government, especially the Executive, the chances of such influence being actually exerted over it are indeed bright. The Constitution

question as to the civil rights and obligations of that person.”

It is natural for a branch of government which wields a preponderant of coercive power and exercises power over the purse, (but still has the possible sanction of the Judiciary lurking over it), to attempt to stultify, hijack or control the machinery of the Judiciary. That is the only way, in a democracy, the government can check the ‘menace’ and interference, of the courts and thereby amass more powers and secure impunity unto



It is unarguably that the most prominent issue in judicial independence is the freedom of the Judiciary from any form of political influence, whether exerted from outside or self imposed. Another learned writer sees judicial independence to mean:

“The independence of the judges to think freely and act freely according to the dictates of their conscience in line with the provisions

made both the Executive and the Legislature generally amenable to the jurisdiction of the ordinary courts. Accordingly, the judicial power vested in the courts by the Constitution extends:

“To all matters between persons, or between government or authority and to any person in Nigeria, and to all actions and proceedings relating thereto, for the determination of any

itself in defiance of constitutionalism and due process. (To be continued).

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK

“The bedrock of our democracy is the rule of law and that means we have to have an independent judiciary, judges who can make decisions independent of the political winds that are blowing” – Caroline Kennedy



ADDING VALUE

WITH HENRY UKAZU

henrous@gmail.com

Why You Don't Need Excess Worry

Dear Destiny Friends, Worry is a part of human emotion, and every living entity worry about some things, some times. It's practically natural. People worry about life, finance, children, health, academics, career and even personal development or spiritual life. All these however, can distract and take away someone's peace.

Worry is an unfortunate habit, which many people have erroneously believe they can live without, but the stark truth is that no one can live without worry. It's inbuilt. Even when we think we have everything, we discover that there's something we are lacking. These could be what money can't buy. It's instructive to note here that nobody is perfect, and nobody has everything because everybody is limited.

To further buttress the limitation of man, imagine the human body; we have eyes, legs, mouth, tongue, nose, anus, hands among others, but none can say it is more superior than the other. If the leg, eyes or nose says it's more



important, the anus can decide to close, and the body system will be uncomfortable as it won't be able to discharge waste products. The eyes can't say it's more important than the ears, neither can the nose say it's more important than the legs or hands. Every one of them has different and definite functions.

So, when one of the body parts is not working well, it can make one worry. But the good news is that it is only a good attitude that can help us overcome challenges. It's instructive

to note that worry does not solve problems, rather it escalates the problem.

Problems do exist, I mean real life problems, do exist, some can be physical, spiritual, psychological, mental, spiritual, etc. When you have any of these problems, please don't spend so much energy on the problems because it can escalate or create new ones

Although you can't stop worrying entirely, there are steps you can take to better manage your anxious thoughts and reduce rumination.

1. Create a "worry period." Choose a set time and place for worrying. It should be the same every day and early enough that it won't make you anxious right before bedtime. During your worry period, you're allowed to worry about whatever's on your mind.

2. Write down your worries. If an anxious thought or worry comes into your head during the day, make a brief note of it and then continue about your day. Remind yourself that you'll have time to think about it later, so

there's no need to worry about it right now.

3. Make a list of all the possible solutions you can think of. Focus on the things you have the power to change, rather than the circumstances or realities beyond your control.

4. After you've evaluated your options, make a plan of action. Once you have a plan and start doing something about the problem, you'll feel much less anxious.

5. Get up and get moving. Exercise is a natural and effective anti-anxiety treatment because it releases endorphins which relieve tension and stress, boost energy, and enhance your sense of well-being. Even more importantly, by really focusing on how your body feels as you move, you can interrupt the constant flow of worries running through your head.

6. Meditate. Meditation works by switching your focus from worrying about the future or dwelling on the past to what's happening right now. By being fully engaged in the present moment, you can interrupt the endless loop of negative thoughts and worries.

7. Speak to a Licensed Therapist: Acknowledge and observe your worries. Don't try to ignore, fight, or control them like you usually would. Instead, simply observe them as if from an outsider's perspective, without reacting or

judging. Therapy has been shown to be extremely effective in helping people reduce worrying and manage anxiety.

8. Mindfulness: Mindfulness is a powerful practice for reducing worrying, by teaching us awareness and acceptance of our thoughts and emotions in the present moment.. Psychotherapy provides a structured environment for individuals to learn practical skills and gain insights into their worrying patterns, ultimately helping them worry less and feel better. Mindfulness effectively reduces symptoms of anxiety by teaching you to observe your worries without getting too caught up in them. One way to incorporate mindfulness into your daily life is through mindful breathing

and meditation. Whenever you notice worrying thoughts coming up, gently bring your attention back to your breath, over time, regular mindfulness practice can help rewire the brain to respond to stressors more calmly, which reduces the impact of worrying on your mental health.

9. Gratitude: Practicing gratitude is a powerful way to maintain a positive outlook and reduce worrying. Research has shown that gratitude may reduce stress and improve mental health. Gratitude activates regions in the brain associated with dopamine, the feel-good neurotransmitter, leading to increased feelings of contentment and decreased worry.

By focusing on what we're grateful for, we shift our attention away from

negative thoughts, which ultimately helps us worry less. Start by keeping a gratitude journal and try writing down 5 things each day that you're thankful for, no matter how small.

In conclusion, resolve today to be so strong that nothing and nobody can disturb your peace of mind...

Henry Ukazu writes from New York. He works with the New York City Department of Correction as the Legal Coordinator. He's the founder of Gloemi. He's a Transformative Human Capacity and Mindset coach. He is also a public speaker, youth advocate, creative writer and author of Design Your Design and Unleash Your Destiny. He can be reached via info@gloemi.com





VOICE of Emancipation

- Kayode Emola -

It's Another Father's Day Celebration

As we celebrate fatherhood across the world, I would like us to remember the would-be fathers and those of us who are already one in any shape or form. Being a father comes with enormous responsibility, sometimes very overwhelming even for the bravest of us.

This year, it is not the strongest or the weakest of fathers I am particularly worried about, if not for those who have lost their precious children. A few weeks ago, innocent children and their teachers were kidnapped in Ogbomoso, Oyo State. To date, none of those children have been rescued, causing a deep void in the hearts of their parents and families.

They are not the only ones in captivity, as several children are being carted away from their places of study or worship in Nigeria, nearly on a daily basis. Since the April 2014 Chibok schoolgirls kidnapping in Maiduguri, kidnapping of children en masse has now become a norm in the Nigerian society, one we should be



ashamed of.

I cannot believe that all this can happen in a society where we have the best brains in the world. Yet, it seems we have been reduced to a near state of helplessness, such that if nothing is done urgently, we may have serious trouble on our hands.

I would like us to use this moment of Father's Day celebration to put our fathers in prayer who go through such unimaginable pain to keep the family going. Let us use this summer solstice, which is the longest day of the year, to reflect on what fatherhood really means.

Fathers are already going through a lot in the world just to see their children grow strong and healthy.

The last thing they need is the stress of losing a child in the most gruesome of manners in the den of their captors.

No father should be made to go through the pain of losing their children to armed terrorists in a country that they are supposed to feel safe.

I watched a program where the husband of the Assistant Head Teacher of the school from which the children were kidnapped was pleading with the Oyo State Governor for help. The governor promised heaven and earth, but after more than a month of their kidnapping, none of those school children have escaped from the captor's den.

We must remind ourselves

that it may feel like a distant event, but the reality should hit home in every Yorubaland that nowhere is safe. Until we come together as one to rid ourselves of this menace, fathers will continue to lose their children in their prime for no fault of their own.

The children who were kidnapped did not pray to be kidnapped on that day. They went to school innocently to become somebody who would contribute to society in the future. Not knowing that it may be their last journey out of their home. As the children and their teachers continue to suffer in captivity, I want us to say a little prayer for their safe return to their families.



Panorama

BY DR SANI SA'IDU BABA

✉ drssbaba@yahoo.com

☎ 08054562222 (Text Only)

When Subsidy Removal Meets Responsible Leadership: Why Tinubu Owes Gov Adeleke a Big Thank You

Having traveled extensively across Nigeria over the years, I have had the privilege of observing firsthand the realities of governance and development in different parts of our country. I first visited Osun State in 2021 and again in May 2022. During those visits, I traveled through several communities and observed the developmental realities on the ground. Recently, I returned to Osun, and I must confess that I could hardly recognize the state I once knew. The transformation I witnessed was remarkable and convincing enough for me to conclude that if the additional revenues accruing to states from fuel subsidy removal were utilized the way Governor Ademola Adeleke of Osun State, Governor Abba Kabir Yusuf of Kano State, and Governor Alex Otti of Abia State have utilized theirs, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu would not be facing the level of criticism he receives across the country today. Since the removal of fuel



subsidy in May 2023, Nigerians have endured enormous hardship. Transportation costs have skyrocketed, food prices have become unbearable, rents have increased dramatically, and many families struggle daily to survive. Yet while citizens bore the pains of the policy, state governments began receiving unprecedented revenues from the Federation Account. The real issue therefore is no longer whether subsidy was removed, but what

governors are doing with the resources generated from that decision.

Based on my observations across the country, I have come to a simple conclusion: Osun State has become one of the clearest examples of how subsidy-related revenues can be translated into visible development when leadership is focused on the people.

Healthcare provides one of the strongest examples. Through the Imole Medical Outreach

Programme, thousands of residents have received free medical treatment, including surgeries for cataracts and hernia, services many families could never have afforded under normal circumstances. Thousands of senior citizens and vulnerable residents have also been enrolled in the Osun Health Insurance Scheme free of charge, ensuring that healthcare is not reserved only for the wealthy.

Beyond healthcare, the



Adeleke administration has implemented various social intervention programmes aimed at cushioning the effects of economic hardship. Through the Imole Business Empowerment Scheme, small business owners have received support in the form of POS terminals, start-up grants, and interest-free loans. These interventions have particularly benefited women, youths, and cooperative societies, creating opportunities for economic survival during difficult times.

Infrastructure development is equally visible across the state. During my recent visit, I personally observed significant improvements in parts of Osogbo, Ede, Iwo, and Gbogan. Roads that were once difficult to navigate have received attention, while rural electrification projects and portable borehole water

schemes have extended development beyond the urban centers.

Before my recent visit to Osun State, I came across a video of former President Olusegun Obasanjo speaking during the commissioning of some of Governor Adeleke's projects, including the VIP Lodge and major road networks. In his characteristic jovial manner, Chief Obasanjo

remarked in Yoruba: "Mr Governor, they call you a dancer. But you are dancing to praise God. And I heard you are working hard for your people." He urged Governor Adeleke to ignore distractions and the shortcomings of previous administrations and remain focused on delivering dividends of democracy to the people. At the time, I considered it a generous endorsement

from a respected elder statesman. However, after my recent visit to Osun, I now better understand why Obasanjo made those remarks.

One experience stood out for me. Seeing light virtually everywhere across Osogbo helped me understand why Governor Adeleke is popularly called "Imole." In Yoruba, Imole means "Light," and the visible improvements in infrastructure, electrification, and public services across the state give practical meaning to that nickname. Development, after all, is the light that dispels the darkness of poverty and neglect.

Governor Adeleke's commitment to long-term development is equally evident in its approach to the power sector. By signing the Osun Electricity Law, Governor Adeleke positioned the state to address chronic electricity



challenges through off-grid and renewable energy solutions. This is the kind of forward-thinking policy many states should be emulating.

Education has not been neglected. Instructional materials have been distributed to schools, and the state's performance in national examinations has reportedly improved significantly. Combined with the payment of salary and pension arrears inherited from previous administrations, these measures have helped restore confidence among workers, retirees, students, and families across the state.

In retrospect, my initial criticism of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's subsidy removal policy was understandable, given the uncertainty and hardship that followed. Today, however, I see the issue differently. The policy itself is not necessarily the problem. The bigger challenge lies with governors who fail to translate increased revenues into tangible benefits for their citizens. Osun State, much like Kano and Abia States, has demonstrated that when leadership is people-oriented, even painful economic reforms can produce meaningful outcomes.

In fact, President Tinubu owes Governors Ademola Adeleke, Abba Kabir Yusuf, and Alex Oti a sincere thank you.

These governors have shown Nigerians what subsidy-derived revenues can accomplish when managed responsibly. Their performances have given citizens practical examples of what they should be demanding from their respective state governments.

More importantly, they have exposed the scale of resources now available to states. Citizens can

resources. If Nigeria truly wants to understand what the benefits of subsidy removal should look like, it should stop listening to excuses and start studying examples such as Osun, Kano, and Abia States.

As an outsider with no political stake in Osun State, I believe the people of the state should carefully reflect on the transformation they have witnessed

encouraged.

For me, the contrast between the Osun I saw in 2021 and the Osun I recently revisited is striking. The difference is visible, measurable, and difficult to ignore. If the current pace of development is sustained, Osun may well become one of the strongest examples in Nigeria of how responsible leadership can convert public resources



now ask legitimate questions: If these states can build roads, improve healthcare, support businesses, expand social welfare programmes, and invest in education, what is preventing others from doing the same?

The real debate surrounding subsidy removal is therefore no longer about the availability of resources but about the quality of leadership managing those

under Governor Ademola Adeleke. Elections are ultimately a report card on performance. They should be about results rather than rhetoric, delivery rather than promises, and tangible impact rather than partisan sentiments. When leaders demonstrate commitment to improving the lives of ordinary people, democracy demands that such performance be acknowledged and

into public good.

The lesson is simple: when leadership works, even difficult policies can produce positive results. And when leadership fails, even abundant resources become invisible to the people they are meant to serve.

Dr. Sani Sa'idu Baba writes from Kano, and can be reached via drssbaba@yahoo.com

The Father We Need, the Father We Have, and the Father We Hope to Become

By Anjorin Fehintola Stella

Father's Day is often filled with celebration, gratitude, and family photographs shared across dining tables and social media feeds. There are cards and phone calls, gifts and warm ritual of telling the men who raised us that we are grateful they did. For many people, the day carries genuine and uncomplicated joy. But for many others, it arrives with something more complicated, a quieter, more private kind of reflection that does not always make it into the public celebrations.

Not everyone had the father they needed.

Some grew up with fathers who were present in every meaningful way, providing guidance, protection, encouragement, and love. Men who showed up not only at celebrations and milestones but in the ordinary, unglamorous moments of daily life. Who sat with their children through homework and heartbreak, who modelled patience and responsibility not through speeches but through consistent action, and who made their children feel seen, valued, and safe. For those who had such fathers, the day is uncomplicated. It is simply a chance to say thank you to someone who deserved it.

Others grew up with fathers



who were physically present but emotionally unreachable. Men who provided materially but who never learned, or never felt permitted, to express tenderness or vulnerability. Who sat at the head of the table every evening but left their children feeling strangely alone. Whose love, if it existed, was never translated into the words or gestures that children need in order to feel it. This kind of presence can be its own particular form of absence, and the confusion it leaves behind, the love mixed with longing, the gratitude mixed with grief is something many adults carry quietly for years.

And then there are those who never knew their fathers at all. Whose fathers left before memory could form, or were taken by circumstances beyond anyone's control.

Who grew up answering questions about their fathers with rehearsed sentences designed to protect themselves from the weight of the real answer. For them, Father's Day can feel like a celebration happening in a language they were never quite taught to speak.

The truth is that fathers shape lives in ways that often go unnoticed until much later, sometimes not until we ourselves are grown and standing at the crossroads of our own choices, only then recognizing how deeply the paths laid before us were shaped by the man who either walked beside us or was nowhere to be found.

A father's words can become a child's inner voice. The encouragement he gives, or withholds, can determine whether a child approaches the world

with confidence or with a perpetual need to prove themselves. His actions can become a blueprint for how relationships are conducted, how conflict is navigated, how responsibility is understood, and how love is expressed or suppressed. Research in developmental psychology and sociology consistently shows that the presence, quality, and emotional availability of a father figure are among the most significant predictors of a child's long-term emotional wellbeing, self-esteem, and capacity for healthy relationships. His absence, too, leaves its mark, not as destiny, but as questions. Questions about worth, about belonging, about what it means to be loved by someone who was supposed to stay.

There is also the man

who loved his children deeply but never knew how to show it, shaped by a generation or a culture that taught men to equate silence with strength and emotion with weakness. Who worked long hours in the belief that provision was the fullest expression of love available to him. Who would have been bewildered by the idea that his children needed something from him beyond a roof and a meal. He is not a villain. He is a product of his own formation, of fathers and societies that never gave him the tools to do better. Understanding this does not erase the longing. But it can begin to make room for something other than bitterness.

And there is the man who broke the cycle. Who grew up without a father, or with one who caused harm, and who made a quiet and daily decision not to pass that on. Who had no template to follow and had to build his understanding of fatherhood from scratch, from instinct, from observation, from the determined conviction that his children would not carry what he carried. These men rarely receive enough recognition. Their victory is invisible because it consists of things that did not happen, the harsh word that was not spoken, the absence that did not repeat itself, the wound that stopped with them.

Yet fatherhood, it must be

said, is not simply about biology. It never has been. Throughout history and across cultures, countless children have been guided, protected, and shaped by men who stepped into the role of father without sharing a bloodline. Grandfathers who became the steady presence when everything else was uncertain. Uncles who showed up consistently enough to become something more than relatives. Teachers who noticed a child struggling and chose to stay a little longer. Coaches, neighbours, older brothers, family friends, and community elders who offered time, attention, wisdom, and the simple but profound gift of being present. These men are fathers in the truest and most meaningful sense of the word. Biology establishes a connection. Choice sustains it.

Perhaps that is why Father's Day means genuinely different things

to different people. For some, it is a day of uncomplicated gratitude, a chance to honour a man who gave them a foundation they are still building on. For others, it is a day of healing, of sitting gently with old wounds, of choosing not to let unresolved pain define the present. For many, it is both at once, gratitude and grief, celebration and quiet mourning, honour and longing all woven together in the complicated fabric of what family actually looks like for most people. Fatherhood is not a fixed or finished thing. It is an intergenerational conversation, passed down through behaviour, attitude, silence, and example. The fathers we had, whether present or absent, nurturing or withholding, intentional or oblivious shaped us. And in turn, we will shape the next generation, whether or not we are aware of doing so. This is both the weight and

the opportunity of being human in relationship with one another.

As we celebrate fathers today, we can also turn our attention to a larger and more urgent question; What kind of fathers are we raising for tomorrow? The boys who are learning about responsibility, respect, and relationships right now will become the fathers of the next generation. The young men who are taught that emotional strength is not the absence of feeling but the courage to feel and still act with integrity, who are shown that love is expressed through presence and consistency and not only through provision, who grow up in environments where fatherhood is modelled as something active and intentional rather than merely biological, these are the men who will change the story for their own children.

This means that investing in boys and young men



today is not separate from the conversation about fatherhood. It is central to it. How we socialize boys, what we teach them about masculinity, emotion, responsibility, and relationship, will determine the kind of fathers they become. Societies that raise boys to suppress vulnerability, to equate manhood with dominance, and to view emotional expression as weakness are, in the same

breath, producing fathers who will struggle to give their children what they need most. Changing this is not a small task. But it is a necessary one.

Maybe the goal, on a day like today, is not to dwell only on the fathers we had or the fathers we lacked. Maybe it is to learn from both, to carry forward what was given with love, and to gently set down what was passed on through pain. To honour

the fathers who showed up fully and consistently, whose presence was a gift that not everyone received.

To extend compassion, difficult as it may be, to those who did not know how, or who were never taught. To recognize and celebrate the men who are not biological fathers but who fathered nonetheless, through choice and commitment and quiet devotion. And to invest, with intention

and urgency, in building a world where more children grow up with the guidance, safety, and love they deserve, not as a privilege for the fortunate few, but as a foundation available to all.

Today, we celebrate the fathers we needed, appreciate the fathers we had, and invest wholeheartedly in the fathers we hope to become.

What's the Proof That Bandit Kingpin's Mother, Sister Got 40-Years Combined Jail Term?

By Ekunode Ayomipo Jolaoluwa

A claim circulating online alleging that the mother and sister of a notorious bandit kingpin were sentenced to 40 years imprisonment for aiding terrorism activities has continued to generate public interest and reactions.

A review of the claim shows that Nigeria's security agencies and judicial authorities have, in recent years, intensified efforts to dismantle criminal networks by targeting not only suspected bandits and terrorists but also individuals accused of providing logistical, financial or operational support to such groups. This approach forms part of broader efforts to curb insecurity across affected regions of the country.

However, despite the widespread circulation of the claim, available

information does not provide sufficient evidence to independently confirm that the individuals depicted in the image were convicted and sentenced to a combined 40-year jail term for terrorism-related offences. No official court documents, statements from relevant authorities, or verifiable judicial records were readily available to substantiate the specific details presented in the image.

The absence of key information, including the identities of the accused persons, the location of the trial, the date of conviction, and the court that allegedly handed down the sentence, makes it difficult to establish the authenticity of the claim. Such details are critical in verifying reports of criminal convictions, particularly in cases involving terrorism and



national security. Experts in media verification advise that claims relating to criminal prosecutions should be supported by official records and credible sources before being accepted as factual. Without such supporting evidence, there remains a possibility that the information may have been presented without adequate context or may

be inaccurate.

While the Nigerian government has maintained a firm stance against terrorism, banditry and related crimes, and courts have handed down significant penalties in proven cases, the specific claim regarding the alleged conviction of a bandit kingpin's mother and sister could not be independently verified at the time of this review.

Nigeria's Youth Crisis: When Education No Longer Guarantees Opportunity

By Anjorin Fehintola Stella

Education has been regarded as the golden ticket to a better life in Nigeria for decades. Parents worked tirelessly, often sacrificing their personal comfort and long-term financial stability, to ensure their children acquired formal education. Mothers sold produce in markets at dawn. Fathers took on multiple jobs. Entire extended families pooled resources together to pay school fees, buy textbooks, and keep a child in school. The promise that sustained all of this sacrifice was simple and seemingly unbreakable, work hard in school, obtain a degree, secure a good job, and achieve upward social mobility. For many families, education was not merely an academic pursuit. It was the single most important investment they could make in the future. Today, that promise appears increasingly uncertain.

Across the country, hundreds of thousands of young Nigerians graduate annually from universities, polytechnics, and colleges of education, only to encounter a labour market that is structurally unable to absorb them. According to the National Bureau of Statistics, Nigeria's youth unemployment and underemployment rate



has hovered at alarming levels for years, with a significant proportion of young people between the ages of fifteen and thirty-five either jobless or working in conditions far below their qualification and potential. The result is a growing population of educated but unemployed and underemployed youths navigating a future marked by uncertainty, frustration, and diminishing hope. They have done everything society asked of them, and it has not been enough.

While unemployment is frequently discussed as an economic challenge best addressed through fiscal policy and job creation

schemes, its implications extend far beyond income and employment statistics. It is fundamentally a social issue with profound and far-reaching consequences for individuals, families, communities, and national development. To understand the youth unemployment crisis only through the lens of economics is to miss much of what makes it so damaging and so difficult to resolve.

The relationship between education and opportunity has historically been one of the cornerstones of social stability in modern societies. Education serves not only as a means of acquiring knowledge and

technical skills but also as a primary pathway to social mobility. It enables individuals to improve their socioeconomic standing, participate meaningfully in civic life, and contribute to the development of their communities. In societies where this relationship functions well, education acts as a great equalizer, offering individuals from modest backgrounds a realistic chance at advancement. When it functions poorly, the consequences ripple through every dimension of social life.

However, when educational attainment consistently fails to

translate into employment opportunities, the social contract between institutions and citizens begins to weaken. People start to question the value of the systems they were taught to trust. They begin to wonder whether the sacrifices made in the name of education were worthwhile. And when enough people arrive at that conclusion simultaneously, it produces a shift with serious implications for social cohesion, institutional legitimacy, and collective purpose.

Many young Nigerians today find themselves trapped in what can only be described as a painful paradox. They have fulfilled society's expectations by obtaining academic qualifications, sitting through years of lectures, passing examinations, and earning certificates. Yet the rewards traditionally associated with those qualifications remain stubbornly elusive. Consequently, many graduates are compelled to accept jobs entirely unrelated to their fields of study, engage in low-paying informal work to survive, or remain economically dependent on parents and relatives long after completing their education. The degree hangs on the wall. The opportunities it was supposed to unlock remain firmly closed. This reality has given

rise to what many social observers describe as a crisis of expectations. Young people who once envisioned stable careers, financial independence, and steady social advancement now struggle to achieve milestones that previous generations considered not only attainable but expected. The gap between what



was promised and what is delivered has become one of the defining social tensions of contemporary Nigerian life. And that gap is widening.

One of the most visible consequences of this situation is the widespread delay in major life transitions. Marriage, home ownership, family formation, and financial independence are being postponed not by

choice but by economic necessity. In many Nigerian communities, adulthood has traditionally been defined by the achievement of certain milestones: securing employment, establishing a household, and taking on family responsibilities. Today, many young adults in their late twenties and thirties are unable to meet

these social expectations, not because they lack ambition or discipline, but because the economic infrastructure that would enable such transitions no longer exists in a reliable form. The social weight of this inability is significant. It generates feelings of shame, inadequacy, and frustration that many young people carry privately and silently. The psychological

effects of prolonged unemployment are equally significant and deserve greater public attention. Extended periods of joblessness are strongly associated in research literature with increased rates of anxiety, depression, and diminished self-worth. In a society where success is frequently measured by economic achievement and visible material progress, unemployment can quickly become a source of social exclusion and deep emotional distress. Young people who cannot find work often withdraw from social engagements, avoid family gatherings, and distance themselves from peers who appear to be progressing. The isolation compounds the suffering. What begins as an economic problem gradually becomes a mental health crisis, and Nigeria's mental health infrastructure is poorly equipped to respond to the scale of what is emerging. Another notable and deeply consequential outcome of this crisis is the growing appeal of emigration. The phenomenon popularly known as the Japa movement reflects the strong and increasingly urgent desire of educated Nigerians to seek better opportunities abroad. The word Japa, derived from Yoruba slang meaning to run or escape, has become a defining cultural phrase

of an entire generation. It is spoken with a mixture of aspiration, resignation, and bitterness. While migration has always existed as a human response to constrained opportunities, the current scale and demographic profile of Nigerian emigration is alarming. It is no longer only the unemployed who are leaving. Doctors, nurses, engineers, academics, and experienced professionals are departing in significant numbers, drawn by better pay, functional systems, and the basic assurance that their qualifications will be recognized and rewarded.

Reports from the United Kingdom, Canada, and various European countries consistently show rising numbers of Nigerian-born professionals entering their labour markets. Nigeria's healthcare sector in particular has been severely affected, with hospitals struggling to retain staff as medical professionals seek greener pastures overseas. While migration offers individuals better prospects, and while the remittances sent home by the diaspora contribute meaningfully to household incomes and the national economy, the long-term implications for national development are troubling. The departure of skilled and educated young people represents a significant loss of

human capital, talent, and innovation capacity that Nigeria urgently needs to address its own development challenges.

It is worth acknowledging that some analysts argue the relationship between education and unemployment is more complex than it appears, and that informal economies represent legitimate and sometimes vibrant pathways to livelihood and even prosperity. There is truth in this. Nigeria's informal sector is enormous, creative, and resilient. It employs millions of people and drives significant economic activity. However, the existence of informal pathways does not diminish the legitimate grievance of young people who invested years and resources into formal education specifically because they were told it would open doors. The issue is not whether informal work has value.

The issue is whether society kept its promise.

At the same time, many young Nigerians have turned to entrepreneurship as an alternative response to unemployment. Entrepreneurship is widely celebrated in public discourse as both a solution to joblessness and a driver of innovation and economic growth. While this is true in certain contexts, it is essential to draw a careful distinction between entrepreneurship driven by genuine innovation and market opportunity, and entrepreneurship driven purely by necessity and survival. A significant and growing number of young Nigerians are not starting businesses because they have identified a compelling product idea or underserved market. They are doing so because formal employment is simply not available, and they have no other viable option.

This form of survival

entrepreneurship is a testament to the extraordinary resilience and creativity of Nigerian youth. Young people are finding ways to generate income through e-commerce, digital services, creative arts, fashion, food vending, logistics, and countless other ventures. They are adapting, innovating, and persisting under difficult conditions. But it would be a mistake for policymakers and institutions to celebrate this resilience as a substitute for structural reform. Resilience in the face of systemic failure is admirable, but it is not a policy. Young Nigerians deserve systems that support their potential, not just conditions that test their endurance...*continue reading on <https://thebossnewspapers.com/2026/06/19/nigerias-youth-crisis-when-education-no-longer-guarantees-opportunity/>*



Who Gets the Blame When Opportunities Disappear? The South Africa Example

By Anjorin Fehintola Stella

As South Africa approaches June 30, the date set by certain anti-immigrant groups as deadline for undocumented migrants to leave the country, tensions surrounding immigration have once again captured national and international attention. These groups have argued forcefully and publicly that foreigners are responsible for rising unemployment, escalating crime, and increasing pressure on already overstretched public services such as hospitals, schools, and housing. The debate has sparked strong and deeply divided reactions across the continent, raising urgent concerns about xenophobia, social cohesion, human rights, and the future of African unity at a time when continental cooperation has never been more necessary.

Yet beneath the headlines and the heated rhetoric lies a deeper and more unsettling question; Why do immigrants so often become targets during periods of economic and social uncertainty? And what does the persistence of this pattern tell us about how societies respond when the gap between expectation and reality becomes too painful to confront honestly?

The current tensions



in South Africa are not simply about immigration. They reflect broader and far more complex struggles over identity, opportunity, belonging, and the distribution of scarce resources in a society still grappling with the deep and unresolved legacies of apartheid and structural inequality. To reduce the debate to a question of who should or should not be in the country is to miss what is truly at stake, both for South Africa and for the wider African continent.

Throughout history, societies facing economic hardship have repeatedly searched for visible and identifiable groups to blame for problems that are in reality deeply structural and systemic. This is not a uniquely South African phenomenon. It is a recurring pattern in

human social behaviour that has appeared across cultures, continents, and centuries. In post-World War One Germany, economic devastation and national humiliation were channelled into blame directed at Jewish communities, with catastrophic consequences. In the aftermath of the 2008 global financial crisis, rising unemployment across parts of Europe fuelled hostility toward immigrant communities in countries including Greece, Hungary, and the United Kingdom. In the United States, periods of economic contraction have historically coincided with surges in anti-immigrant sentiment directed at whichever group happened to be most recently arrived and most visibly different

from the majority. The pattern is consistent, when jobs become scarce, living costs rise, and opportunities diminish, frustration seeks an outlet, and that outlet is rarely the complex institutional and policy failures that actually caused the hardship.

This phenomenon is commonly and usefully referred to as scapegoating. Rather than confronting the structural causes of social and economic challenges, which are difficult to understand, slow to change, and rarely produce a satisfying emotional response, public frustration is redirected toward groups that are politically vulnerable, socially distinct, and easy to identify. Immigrants fit this profile in almost every society where they are present in

significant numbers. They look different, speak differently, worship differently, and occupy a social position that makes them easy to portray as outsiders who do not belong and therefore do not deserve the resources they are perceived to be consuming.

South Africa's situation reflects many of these dynamics with particular intensity, shaped by a history that makes its current crisis both understandable and deeply tragic.

Despite being one of Africa's most industrialized and developed economies, South Africa continues to experience some of the highest levels of unemployment on the continent and indeed in the world. Official unemployment figures have consistently exceeded thirty percent in recent years, with youth unemployment reaching even more alarming levels.

Economic inequality, as measured by the Gini coefficient, remains among the highest of any country on earth. Millions of South African citizens continue to live in poverty, in informal settlements without adequate sanitation or electricity, with limited access to quality healthcare, education, and economic opportunity. These are not new problems. They are the accumulated product of centuries of colonial

exploitation and decades of apartheid, a system that was specifically designed to concentrate wealth, land, and opportunity in the hands of a small racial minority while deliberately excluding the majority from the formal economy.

For many South Africans, the promise of economic transformation that accompanied the end of apartheid in 1994 and the dawn of democracy remains painfully and



visibly unfulfilled. While political freedom was achieved, and while the legal architecture of racial discrimination was dismantled, economic inclusion has proven far more difficult and far slower to realize. Land remains heavily concentrated. Corporate ownership remains skewed. Access to capital, education, and professional networks continues to reflect the inequalities of the past.

This disconnect between the political promises of liberation and the economic realities of daily life has contributed to growing frustration and disillusionment, particularly among younger South Africans who were born after apartheid ended and who cannot understand why freedom has not yet translated into opportunity.

In such an environment, immigrants often become

constrained in their home countries. Their presence within local communities creates visibility. And that visibility, in a context of scarcity and frustration, can generate the perception that they are taking jobs, occupying business spaces, or accessing services that rightfully belong to citizens.

This perception, however, frequently diverges significantly from the evidence. Research on

symbols of broader anxieties that have little to do with immigration itself. Many foreign nationals living in South Africa come from Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Somalia, Ethiopia, and other parts of the continent. They operate small businesses in townships and urban centers, work in informal sectors, provide services, and seek economic opportunities that are unavailable or severely

the economic impact of immigration in South Africa and elsewhere consistently shows that immigrants do not simply take jobs from citizens. They also create jobs, start businesses that employ local workers, fill skills gaps in sectors where domestic supply is insufficient, and contribute to local economies through their spending, taxation, and economic activity. A Nigerian shopkeeper in a township is not stealing

an opportunity from a South African. In many cases, that shopkeeper has created a service, employed assistants, and provided affordable goods in a community that was previously underserved. The relationship between immigration and unemployment is complex, contested among economists, and cannot be reduced to the simple arithmetic of more people competing for fewer jobs. Consider, for example, the experience of a Zimbabwean trader who crossed into South Africa after Zimbabwe's economic collapse in the late 2000s. Having lost his savings and his livelihood to hyperinflation and political instability, he arrived with little more than skills and determination. Over years of persistent effort, he built a small clothing stall, then a shop, then a small enterprise employing three South African workers. He pays rent to a South African landlord, buys stock from South African suppliers, and contributes to the local economy in ways that are invisible in anti-immigrant rhetoric but very real in the daily life of his community. His story is not exceptional. It is representative of countless immigrants whose contributions are routinely overlooked in debates that reduce their presence to a threat. The reality is that unemployment, poverty,

and inequality in South Africa cannot be meaningfully explained by immigration. These challenges are the product of historical dispossession, inadequate education infrastructure, insufficient investment in skills development, failures of governance and service delivery, and the structural features of an economy that has not succeeded in creating opportunities fast enough to absorb its growing population. These are the real causes of South Africa's economic distress. They are difficult to address, require sustained political will, and do not lend themselves to simple solutions or satisfying emotional narratives. However, complex explanations rarely generate the same emotional response as simple ones. When people experience prolonged

hardship, when they watch their children go hungry, when they cannot afford school fees or medical care, when they have applied for jobs repeatedly and been rejected, the desire for immediate and identifiable answers becomes overwhelming. In that state of distress, a narrative that points to a visible group of outsiders as the source of the problem offers something that structural analysis cannot, a clear villain and the emotional relief of righteous anger. This is not a failure of intelligence. It is a very human response to pain. But it is a response that, when translated into policy or action, produces injustice rather than solutions.

The consequences of xenophobic sentiment extend far beyond those who are directly targeted. When anti-immigrant hostility becomes

normalized in public discourse, it weakens the social trust upon which functioning communities depend. It creates fear and suspicion where cooperation and mutual support are needed. It divides communities along lines of origin and nationality at precisely the moment when shared challenges require collective response. In South Africa, where the wounds of racial division already run deep, the addition of nationality-based hostility adds another layer of fracture to a society that is still in the long process of healing...*continue reading on <https://thebossnewspapers.com/2026/06/21/who-gets-the-blame-when-opportunities-disappear-the-south-africa-example/>*



FG, States, LGs Share N2.3tn FAAC Revenue

The Federation Account Allocation Committee shared N2.3tn among the Federal Government, states and local government councils from May 2026 revenue, representing an increase of N43bn from the N2.26tn distributed in the previous month.

The latest allocation marks a 1.9 per cent month-on-month increase and continues the upward trend in federation revenues. The N2.257tn shared from April 2026 revenue had itself exceeded the N2.04tn distributed for March revenue by N217bn, while the March allocation was N150bn higher than the N1.89tn shared in February.

The figures were contained in a statement on Wednesday by the Director of Press and Public Relations in the Office of the Accountant-General of the Federation, Bawa Mokwa, following the June 2026 Federation Account Allocation Committee meeting held in Abuja.

According to the statement, “A total sum of N2.300tn, being May 2026 Federation Account Revenue, has been shared to the Federal Government, states and the local government councils.”

The statement said the N2.3tn distributable revenue comprised N1.611tn in statutory



revenue and N688.785bn in Value Added Tax revenue.

A communiqué issued after the meeting showed that total gross revenue available in May stood at N3.395tn. From this amount, N123.546bn was deducted as the cost of collection, while N971.610bn was set aside for transfers and refunds. The committee reported continued growth in statutory revenue collections during the month. According to the communiqué, gross statutory revenue rose to N2.651tn in May from N2.378tn in April, representing an increase of N273.623bn.

However, VAT collections declined during the period. Gross VAT revenue fell to N743.668bn in May from N806.617bn recorded in April, a decrease of N62.949bn. Despite the drop in VAT receipts, stronger inflows from oil-

related taxes and other revenue sources helped lift the total distributable revenue.

The communiqué stated, “In May 2026, Companies Income Tax, CGT, SDT, Petroleum Profit Tax, Hydrocarbon Tax, Oil and Gas Royalty increased significantly, while Import Duty, Value Added Tax, Excise Duty and CET Levies decreased considerably.”

A breakdown of the N2.300tn distributable revenue showed that the Federal Government received N818.680bn, while state governments received N759.141bn.

The 774 local government councils received N534.277bn, while oil-producing states shared N188.132bn as 13 per cent derivation revenue.

From the N1.611tn statutory revenue, the Federal Government received N749.801bn, states received

N380.309bn, while local governments got N293.202bn. The oil-producing states also received N188.132bn as derivation revenue from the statutory component. The distributable VAT revenue of N688.785bn was shared with the Federal Government receiving N68.879bn, state governments receiving N378.832bn, and local government councils receiving N241.075bn.

The latest allocation shows the resilience of federation revenues amid mixed performance across major revenue streams.

While VAT receipts, import duties and excise duties weakened during the month, higher collections from Companies Income Tax, Petroleum Profit Tax, Hydrocarbon Tax and oil and gas royalties helped offset the decline and pushed statutory revenue to a new high.

DMO Targets N1.2tn Via Major Bond Reopenings

The Debt Management Office, acting on behalf of the Federal Government of Nigeria, plans to raise N1.2tn through the reopening of two Federal Government of Nigeria bonds at an auction scheduled for 22 June 2026.

According to the DMO's offer circular released on Monday, 15 June 2026, the government will offer N600bn each in a 10-year and a 20-year bond, with settlement set for 24 June 2026.

The issuance forms part of the government's domestic borrowing programme and comes amid elevated yields in the fixed-income market.

The circular reads, "The instruments on offer are the 22.60 per cent FGN JAN 2035 bond, a 10-year reopening valued at N600bn, and the 16.2499 per cent FGN APR 2037 bond, a 20-year reopening also worth N600bn.

"Successful investors will pay a price based on the yield-to-maturity that clears the auction, in addition to any accrued interest on the bonds. Subscriptions are priced at N1,000 per unit, with a minimum investment requirement of N50.001m and additional purchases in multiples of N1,000. Coupon payments will be made semi-annually, while the principal will be



repaid in full at maturity." The planned N1.2tn issuance comes at a time when the Central Bank of Nigeria is aggressively tightening liquidity through Open Market Operations, a move that has pushed yields higher across the fixed-income market.

Market analysts view the size of the offer as one of the largest single FGN bond auctions in recent months, underscoring the

government's funding needs and prevailing liquidity management measures.

While the 10-year bond carries a significantly higher coupon rate of 22.60 per cent, the longer-dated 2037 bond offers a lower coupon of 16.2499 per cent, reflecting the interest rate environment at the time of its original issuance.

Oando To Publish 2025 Financial Statement Report

Oando Plc, Nigeria's leading indigenous energy group, has announced that it is awaiting final regulatory clearance from the Financial Reporting Council of Nigeria to publish its 2025 Audited Financial Statements.

The company, which is dual-listed on the Nigerian Exchange Limited and the Johannesburg Stock Exchange, disclosed this corporate update on Monday, 15 June 2026, following queries regarding delays in its financial reporting timelines.

According to the management, the group's Board of Directors has

already approved the 2025 audited accounts and subsequently submitted the documents to the FRCN. However, the mandatory regulatory review process is still being finalised by the apex accounting watchdog.

In a corporate statement signed by the management, the energy firm explained that it was working closely with the federal regulators to accelerate the conclusion of the compliance checks. "The review process remains ongoing. The company continues to engage actively with the FRCN and other relevant regulatory authorities in connection with the



review process and is awaiting the completion of all requisite regulatory clearances," the company stated.

The statement further outlined the subsequent reporting sequence the energy firm will follow once the federal regulators grant final sign-off, saying, "Upon the conclusion of the regulatory review process and receipt of the necessary approvals, the company will proceed

with the publication of its 2025 Audited Financial Statements. Thereafter, the company will publish its Q1 2026 Unaudited Financial Statements."

Amid the regulatory wait, the indigenous energy giant assured its domestic and international shareholders, capital market operators, and institutional investors that it remains aligned with rigid transparency rules.

United Nigeria Airlines Loss N10bn amid fuel shock

The Chairman of United Nigeria Airlines and spokesperson for the Airline Operators of Nigeria, Prof Obiora Okonkwo, has disclosed that the airline lost about N10bn within three months as a result of disruptions caused by the closure of the Strait of Hormuz amid tensions involving the United States and Iran.

Okonkwo said the geopolitical crisis triggered a rise in aviation fuel prices, worsening operating conditions for domestic carriers already battling high operating costs and infrastructure challenges.

The Strait of Hormuz, a narrow waterway between Iran and Oman, is regarded as the world's most critical oil transit route, handling nearly 20 per cent of global petroleum shipments. Its disruption sent shockwaves through global energy markets and significantly impacted Nigeria's aviation industry.

He spoke during the unveiling of two newly acquired Boeing 737-800 Next Generation aircraft, registered as 5N-CFC and 5N-CFB, by United Nigeria Airlines. The aircraft were named after the Obi of Onitsha, Igwe Nnaemeka Achebe, and the late literary icon Chinua Achebe.

Reflecting on the airline's recent challenges,



Okonkwo acknowledged that reforms introduced by the Minister of Aviation and Aerospace Development, Festus Keyamo, had helped stabilise the sector, but external economic pressures remained severe.

“There are seasons when there are low passengers, but in the last three months, what we have seen is simply too much. We have lost about N10bn, N5bn, N6bn in a space of three months as a result of the closure of the Strait of Hormuz. We have to make up for the losses we have incurred in the last three months,” he said.

Despite the setbacks, the airline chief described the acquisition of the new aircraft as a major milestone and a sign of resilience in the Nigerian aviation sector.

“We have gathered here to celebrate. Two, three, four years ago, it was not clear what the future of aviation would be. There were issues, and in Nigeria, aviation was in total turmoil. But until our minister, Festus Keyamo, stepped in, we had a meeting in his office where he promised he would address the policy issues. Today, the right policies have helped us come this far,” he added. Speaking on the choice of names for the aircraft, Okonkwo paid tribute to both Chinua Achebe and the Obi of Onitsha.

“Today we have one Achebe that introduced Africa to the whole world. He is from my hometown. Wherever I go around the world, I tell them that Okonkwo in Things Fall Apart is my great-great-grandfather. We have

another Achebe who is a living legend and icon. We have here the Obi of Onitsha, Nnaemeka Achebe,” he said.

Providing insight into the airline's expansion plans, he revealed that the newly acquired aircraft are part of a broader fleet acquisition programme, promising that more aircraft will arrive in the country before the year runs out.

“It is going to be six aircraft in total, and we just have two here. I thank God Almighty for making this possible,” he said.

Okonkwo also commended the Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority for expediting the certification process for the aircraft, describing the regulator's support as crucial to the airline's growth.

Banks, Customers Loss N134bn To Fraudsters – CBN

Banks and their customers lost a combined N134.48bn to fraud between 2020 and 2025 amid a significant expansion in digital payments and financial technology adoption across the country, according to data contained in the Central Bank of Nigeria's Nigeria Payments System Vision 2028 document.

The document showed that attempted fraud across the banking and payments ecosystem amounted to N187.79bn during the six-year period, while actual losses stood at N134.48bn.

The losses were recorded across multiple payment channels, including over-the-counter transactions, Automated Teller Machines, cheques, e-commerce platforms, Internet banking, mobile banking, Point of Sale terminals, web channels and other electronic payment platforms, highlighting the growing challenge of safeguarding Nigeria's increasingly digital financial system.

An analysis of the data showed that fraud losses increased steadily from N11.61bn in 2020 to N12.77bn in 2021 and N14.32bn in 2022. The figure rose further to



N17.67bn in 2023 before surging dramatically to N52.26bn in 2024, the highest annual loss recorded within the six-year period.

The 2024 figure alone accounted for nearly 39 per cent of the total N134.48bn lost between 2020 and 2025, showing the scale of the fraud challenge faced by banks, payment service providers and customers.

Similarly, attempted fraud

climbed from N13.26bn in 2020 to N14.48bn in 2021, N16.41bn in 2022 and N19.72bn in 2023 before jumping to N86.36bn in 2024. However, both attempted fraud and actual losses declined in 2025, falling to N37.57bn and N25.85bn, respectively. The report attributed the sharp rise in fraud losses in 2024 largely to a major internal fraud case involving N30bn.

Lagos Secures €170m Boost For Waterways Project

EIB Global, the development branch of the European Investment Bank, has announced a €170m financial partnership with the Lagos State Waterways Authority to develop sustainable and efficient water transport in Lagos.

The partnership, which is the first collaboration between LASWA and EIB, the largest funder of the Omi Eko Project, was announced on Friday in Ikoyi, Lagos, and was witnessed by the EIB Vice-President, Ambroise Fayolle, European Union Ambassador, Gautier Mignot, and the Consul General of France in Lagos, Laurent Favier.

LASWA disclosed this in a statement on Friday obtained by Saturday PUNCH. LASWA explained that EIB Global, the development branch of the European Investment Bank, is the largest funder of the Omi Eko Project with €170m financing.

The statement explained that the project will improve urban mobility with socio-economic and environmental benefits for the population. It added that the project is part of the strategic Abidjan-Lagos corridor, which is supported by the EU under the European Global Gateway Initiative, noting that it responds to national and regional priorities and the Sustainable



Development Goals. “Today, Lagos State and EIB Global, the branch of the European Investment Bank dedicated to development and international partnerships, announced a €170m financial partnership to develop sustainable and efficient waterways transport in Lagos.

“The signing ceremony, followed by a site visit, was held at the LASWA headquarters in the presence of Ambroise

Fayolle, EIB Vice-President; Gautier Mignot, EU Ambassador; and Laurent Favier, Consul General of France in Lagos,” the statement read in part.

The agency explained that the innovative urban mobility project will implement 15 structured ferry routes along 140 kilometres, linking 25 upgraded and expanded ferry terminals across the city, and deploy 75 state-of-the-art electric vessels.

Cocoa Prices To Exceed \$10,000 Per Tonne

The Cocoa and Coffee Farmers Alliance Association of Africa has warned that global cocoa prices could surge beyond USD10,000 per tonne again if governments, chocolate manufacturers, and international stakeholders fail to address the worsening challenges confronting cocoa farmers across West Africa.

The warning comes ahead of the Cocoa and Coffee Fiesta scheduled to be held in Nigeria on 7 and 8 October 2026, where industry stakeholders are expected to discuss the future of cocoa and coffee production in Africa amid growing concerns over supply shortages, climate change, and declining youth participation in farming.

In a statement, COCEFAA Global President Adeola Adegoke said that although multinational food companies are ramping up investments in lab-grown and cell-cultured cocoa alternatives, millions of smallholder farmers who supply most of the world's cocoa still face persistent challenges, including crop diseases, ageing farms, low yields, and insufficient funding.

“Investing billions of dollars in laboratory-grown cocoa while neglecting the farmers who currently feed the global chocolate industry is not a sustainable



solution.

“If current trends continue, the world will face deeper supply shortages and another round of unprecedented price increases,” Adegoke warned.

The association noted that West Africa's leading cocoa-producing countries, including Ivory Coast, Ghana, Nigeria, and Cameroon, suffered severe production losses during the 2023 and 2024 seasons due to erratic weather conditions and the spread of Cacao Swollen Shoot Virus, one of the most destructive diseases affecting cocoa farms.

COCEFAA said the disease, combined with prolonged dry spells and ageing farms, contributed to significant declines in cocoa output and helped drive international prices to record levels in 2024.

“The cocoa sector is at a critical crossroads. Many farmers are abandoning cocoa for alternative crops because they no longer

see a viable future in the industry. Young people are leaving rural communities in search of better opportunities, and that has serious implications for future production,” Adegoke stressed.

The association warned that the continued spread of CSSV remains a major threat to cocoa-growing communities across the region: “There is still no effective cure for swollen shoot disease, and its impact on production has been devastating.

“Without large-scale rehabilitation of affected farms and stronger investment in disease management, productivity will continue to decline.” COCEFAA further expressed concern that recent improvements in cocoa production may prove temporary, with forecasts suggesting another decline in output during the 2025/26 season due to adverse climatic conditions.

According to the group,

rising temperatures, unpredictable rainfall patterns, and increasing pest and disease pressures are making cocoa cultivation more difficult and expensive for smallholder farmers.

“The current price situation should not create a false sense of security.

“High prices are a symptom of a supply crisis. If production continues to fall while demand remains strong, cocoa prices could once again exceed USD10,000 per tonne in the near future,” he averred.

The association called on governments, development partners, financial institutions, and chocolate manufacturers to increase investment in farm rehabilitation, climate-smart agriculture, improved planting materials, youth engagement programmes, and fair compensation for farmers.

Lagos CITN Increased By 28% For 2025

The Lagos & District Society of the Chartered Institute of Taxation of Nigeria has officially declared a 28 per cent increase in total district income for the fiscal year ended 31 December 2025.

The financial breakthrough took centre stage ahead of the district's 26th Annual General Meeting held physically at the Tax Professionals' House in CBD, Alausa, Ikeja, Lagos State.

According to the official financial reports compiled by the Executive Committee, the 28 per cent revenue surge was driven by a combination of member donations,

institutional corporate sponsorships, strategic event fundraising and a modernised digital subscription collection framework through the district's web portal.

Addressing the financial milestone, the Honorary Treasurer of the CITN Lagos & District Society, Dr. Ganiyu Oluwashola, expressed high optimism about the district's newly fortified balance sheet.

He said, "We met and exceeded our fiscal goals despite economic winds. This 28 per cent growth in our incoming revenue reflects disciplined financial oversight and an unwavering dedication from our members. By



leveraging strategic sponsorship drives and structured fundraising, the district has effectively covered all its statutory financial commitments and established a solid foundation for the next administration."

The district's robust financial statement correlated with its membership boom under the leadership of

the 19th Chairman, Mr. Iniobong Esau. Over the last 12 months, the district expanded its active membership strength from 498 members to 658 members, representing an influx of 97 newly registered tax professionals and numerous fellowship upgrades.

NLIP Assets Hit N2.79bn, Posts N1bn Net Surplus

The Nigeria Liability Insurance Pool has grown its total assets to N2.79bn as of 31 December 2025, underlining the pool's strong financial position and resilience amid a changing insurance landscape.

The Chairman of the pool, Mr Gboyega Lesi, disclosed this while presenting the NLIP's 2025 annual report at the pool's Annual General Meeting held on Thursday. According to him, the pool also recorded members' funds of N1.35bn, while its liquidity remained robust with cash and cash equivalents of N1.24bn, providing

sufficient capacity to meet obligations and support future growth initiatives.

Lesi, who was represented by the Managing Director, Tangerine General Insurance, Mr Ademayowa Adeduro, said the impressive financial performance was driven by prudent underwriting, effective claims management and a disciplined investment strategy, which enabled the pool to generate sustainable earnings while maintaining a conservative risk profile.

He revealed that insurance contract revenue for the year stood at N3.74bn, while the insurance service result amounted to



N786.83m.

The pool also posted a net surplus of N1.014bn, representing a 15 per cent increase over the previous year.

Subject to shareholders' approval at the AGM, the board recommended the distribution of N568m from the year's surplus.

"This surplus compares favourably with prior years and reflects the sustained strength of

our collective operating model," Lesi said.

He noted that the strong financial results demonstrated the Pool's resilience and the effectiveness of its collective operating model, adding that the board was encouraged by its ability to generate sustainable earnings while preserving adequate reserves to support future liabilities.

Q1 2026: Nigeria's Crude Imports Hit 309% To \$1.39bn

Nigeria imported crude oil worth \$1.39bn in the first quarter of 2026, highlighting a major shift in the country's petroleum trade dynamics as the Dangote Petroleum Refinery increasingly sourced feedstock from international markets despite Nigeria's status as Africa's largest crude oil producer.

Data obtained from the Central Bank of Nigeria's Balance of Payments Highlights for the first quarter of 2026 showed that crude oil imports rose from \$340m in the fourth quarter of 2025 to \$1.39bn in Q1 2026, representing a 308.82 per cent quarter-on-quarter increase.

The development comes amid the rapid expansion of local refining capacity, particularly at the Dangote refinery, which has continued to increase production volumes and exports of refined petroleum products while supplementing domestic crude supplies with imported grades.

The CBN report showed that crude oil imports accounted for about 81.8 per cent of Nigeria's total imports of crude oil, gas and refined petroleum products, which stood at \$1.70bn during the review period.

The figure highlights the growing dependence of the Dangote refinery on imported crude despite ongoing efforts by



regulators to improve domestic crude supply arrangements.

The increase in crude imports contrasted with a collapse in refined petroleum product imports, which fell by 87.5 per cent to \$310m in Q1 2026 from \$2.48bn in the preceding quarter. The sharp decline reflects the increasing substitution of imported fuel with locally refined products as domestic refining capacity expands.

According to the apex bank, the decline in fuel imports was one of the key factors that strengthened Nigeria's external position during the quarter. The report read, "Refined petroleum products imports declined to \$0.31bn in Q1 2026, from \$2.48bn in Q4 2025."

The reduction in fuel imports coincided with a rise in exports of refined petroleum products, which increased by 20.3

per cent to \$2.37bn in Q1 2026 from \$1.97bn in the previous quarter.

The trend suggests that Nigeria is gradually transitioning from a net importer of refined petroleum products to becoming a significant exporter, driven largely by the output of the Dangote refinery and other domestic refining facilities.

The CBN noted that the country's goods account surplus rose significantly to \$5.95bn in the first quarter of 2026 from \$1.77bn in the preceding quarter and \$3.35bn in the corresponding period of 2025.

"The goods account (a major sub-account in the current account) recorded a significantly higher surplus of \$5.95bn in Q1 2026, as against \$1.77bn and \$3.35bn recorded in the preceding quarter and corresponding period of 2025," the report read.

The stronger trade

position was also supported by higher crude oil exports. Earnings from crude oil exports rose by 19.79 per cent to \$8.11bn from \$6.77bn in the previous quarter, while gas exports increased by 12.95 per cent to \$2.53bn from \$2.24bn. Refined petroleum product exports also climbed to \$2.37bn from \$1.97bn.

Overall exports increased to \$15.49bn during the quarter from \$13.36bn in Q4 2025, while total imports declined by 17.69 per cent to \$9.54bn from \$11.59bn.

The improvement in trade flows helped lift Nigeria's current account surplus to \$4.98bn in Q1 2026, compared with \$1.40bn in the preceding quarter and \$3.41bn in the corresponding period of 2025. The latest figure represents a 255.71 per cent increase from the previous quarter and a 46.04 per cent rise year-on-year.

Regency Alliance Signs 3.2bn Share Rights Issue

Regency Alliance Insurance Plc has officially commenced its next major growth phase by signing a Rights Issue Agreement to issue 3.2 billion ordinary shares. The capital raise is structured to significantly bolster the company's underwriting capacity and accelerate its digital expansion across the region.

The offer will see 3,201,000,000 ordinary shares of 50 kobo each issued at 95 kobo per share. Current investors will be offered one new share for every five ordinary shares already held.

The formal signing ceremony, held at the company's corporate

headquarters in Lagos, brought together board members, issuing houses, legal advisers and stockbrokers.

Executive leadership energised the event, emphasising that the capital injection is designed to directly fund critical investments in technology, support new product innovation and improve overall customer experience.

Speaking on the strategic weight of the milestone, the Acting Chairman of Regency Alliance Insurance Plc, Chief Wale Taiwo, SAN, noted that the initiative marks a definitive commitment to the firm's long-term partners.



He said, "Today's signing is more than a formality. It is a statement of belief – belief in our people, our strategy, and the trust our customers and shareholders have placed in us over the years.

This capital raise will give us the firepower to meet evolving risks, expand our reach, and deepen the promise we make to every policyholder: that Regency Alliance will be there when it matters most."

Taiwo further urged eligible equity holders to fully engage with the offer to ensure their stakes remain protected.

"We are particularly encouraged by the unwavering support of our shareholders who have stood by the company through its growth journey. We urge all eligible shareholders to take advantage of this rights issue and fully exercise their rights."

Fortis Global To Slash Issued Shares To 3.23bn

Fortis Global Insurance Plc has plans to downsize the firm's equity float from over 12.91 billion units to 3.23 billion units as the company secures final regulatory approvals to implement a comprehensive share capital reconstruction model that will compress its total issued ordinary shares by 75 per cent.

The restructuring comes on the heels of a critical resolution passed by the firm's equity holders during an Extraordinary General Meeting.

The company stated, "Following the approval of the shareholders of

Fortis Global Insurance Plc at the Extraordinary General Meeting held on 4 April 2025, the company has obtained regulatory approvals to reconstruct its issued share capital."

According to the official notice released by the underwriter on Thursday, the baseline structure of the capital reduction will radically alter the volume metrics while maintaining the baseline nominal value per unit.

The notice read, "The company has obtained regulatory approvals to reconstruct its issued share capital from N6,455,515,293 comprising



12,911,030,586 ordinary shares of 50 kobo each to N1,613,878,823 comprising 3,227,757,647 ordinary shares of 50 kobo each on the basis of one new ordinary share for every four existing ordinary shares held."

To facilitate a seamless technical execution of the capital adjustments on the local exchange, the company has declared a

temporary freeze on all open market transactions involving its shares.

The company stated, "To enable us to reconstruct the shares, we hereby give notice that suspension of trading will be placed on the shares of the company for up to two weeks beginning from Wednesday, 17 June 2026."

1.46bn Ltrs Of Gasoline Imported By Dangote – NMDPRA

The Nigerian Midstream and Downstream Petroleum Regulatory Authority has revealed a growing reliance by Dangote Petroleum Refinery on imported gasoline blendstock, mainly to boost its refined fuel production.

Latest industry data obtained from the NMDPRA's Midstream and Downstream Petroleum Statistics for May 2026 and analysed by our correspondent on Sunday showed that the 650,000 barrels-per-day refinery imported about 1.46 billion litres of intermediates and gasoline blendstock between January and May this year, despite receiving volumes of domestic and imported crude oil.

The industry report showed that the refinery continued to supplement crude oil processing with imported intermediates, helping it sustain daily petrol production of 44.7 million litres and achieve an average capacity utilisation of 101.25 per cent in May.

It also indicates that the refinery continued to rely on imported intermediates and gasoline blendstock to optimise production of Premium Motor Spirit despite increased access to crude oil supplies.

Meanwhile, the gasoline blendstock refers to intermediate petroleum



products used in refining operations to produce finished petrol that meets required quality and environmental specifications.

The product, rather than being sold directly to consumers, serves as an intermediate feedstock that is blended with other refinery streams and additives to produce Premium Motor Spirit that meets required quality, octane and environmental specifications.

The blendstocks can be mixed with products generated from crude oil refining to increase petrol output, improve fuel quality and enhance refining flexibility. Common gasoline blendstocks include reformate, alkylate, naphtha and other high-octane blending components.

By introducing gasoline blendstocks into the refining process, a refinery

can increase the volume of finished petrol produced without relying solely on crude oil inputs. This can be particularly useful when domestic demand is strong or when refiners seek to maximise returns from specific products.

In the case of Dangote Refinery, the NMDPRA data suggest that imported blendstocks may be helping the facility sustain high petrol output and reach its nameplate capacity of 650,000 barrels per day.

An analysis of the report by our correspondent showed that Dangote Refinery imported 658.31 million litres of gasoline blendstock in January, 306.89 million litres in February, 102.35 million litres in March, 147.37 million litres in April and 240.59 million litres in May.

The cumulative volume imported during the five-month period stood at

approximately 1.46 billion litres. The latest data showed that after three consecutive months of decline between January and March, the refinery increased its blendstock intake in April and May, signalling stronger feedstock purchases as production activities expanded.

The May volume of 240.59 million litres represented a 63.3 per cent increase from the 147.37 million litres imported in April. The development comes as the refinery sustained high utilisation rates and continued to dominate Nigeria's domestic fuel supply market.

According to the NMDPRA report, the refinery operated at an average capacity utilisation of 101.25 per cent in May, underscoring strong operational performance at the facility.

6.8MW Solar Across Nestlé Plants - Daystar Power

Daystar Power Group says it has installed 6.884 megawatts of solar power capacity across four Nestlé manufacturing facilities in West Africa, covering sites in Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and Senegal.

The company disclosed this in a statement on Sunday, noting that the installations are operational at two facilities in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, one in Tema, Ghana, and another in Dakar, Senegal.

According to the statement, the projects form part of an ongoing energy partnership between Daystar Power

Group and Nestlé, bringing the total installed solar capacity across the four facilities to nearly seven megawatts.

The Chief Executive Officer of Daystar Power Group, Yischai Beinisch, said the installations reflected the company's growing relationship with the food and beverage manufacturer.

"Nearly 7 megawatts across four Nestlé facilities is a number we are proud of," Beinisch said.

The company stated that 3,447 kilowatts peak of solar capacity had been deployed across two facilities in Abidjan,



while a 2,547kWp system was installed at Nestlé's factory in Tema. It added that an 890kWp installation was operating at the company's facility in Dakar.

Daystar Power said the systems were designed to support energy resilience and reduce greenhouse gas emissions, while

aligning with Nestlé's sustainability objectives. Commenting on the development, the Chief Executive Officer of the Nestlé Central and West Africa Region, Samer Chedid, said the investment was part of the company's sustainability strategy.

Cornerstone Insurance Eyes Growth After Q1 Results

The Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Cornerstone Insurance Plc, Stephen Alangbo, has assured the investing public that the firm is well-positioned for sustainable growth as it announced its unaudited financial results for the first quarter ended 31 March 31, 2026.

The company registered a strong expansion in its top-line revenue, posting a total consolidated insurance revenue of N14.01bn for the three months. This figure marks a significant 25.2 per cent growth compared to the N11.19bn generated during the corresponding quarter of 2025,

demonstrating strong underlying performance across both its corporate life and non-life underwriting business segments.

Speaking on the financial performance of the company in a regulatory filing to the Nigerian Exchange Group Limited, Alangbo said, "We are navigating macro challenges to deliver value."

Despite this commercial momentum, severe macroeconomic headwinds in the domestic environment, particularly aggressive currency volatility, impacted the group's final bottom line. Cornerstone Insurance posted a consolidated



profit after tax of N1.48bn, representing a mild contraction from the N1.65bn recorded in the first quarter of the prior year, primarily weighed down by a substantial foreign exchange loss of N1.81bn.

Conversely, at the separate parent company level, the firm reported excellent profitability gains, with its standalone net profit

jumping 46.2 per cent to N1.82bn, up from N1.24bn in the opening quarter of 2025.

Alangbo expressed confidence in the firm's commercial resilience, explaining that the top-line revenue expansion of over 25 per cent demonstrated the continuing trust of institutional and retail clients placed in the Cornerstone brand.



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Mr Eazi Reveals Why He's Rapidly Growing Grey Hair

Nigerian singer and entrepreneur, Mr Eazi, has finally addressed the question many fans have been asking about his noticeably increasing grey hair.

The music star, who is married to billionaire heiress Temi Otedola, recently revealed that stress, hard work, and the responsibilities that come with building businesses are major factors behind his sudden and fast-growing grey hair.

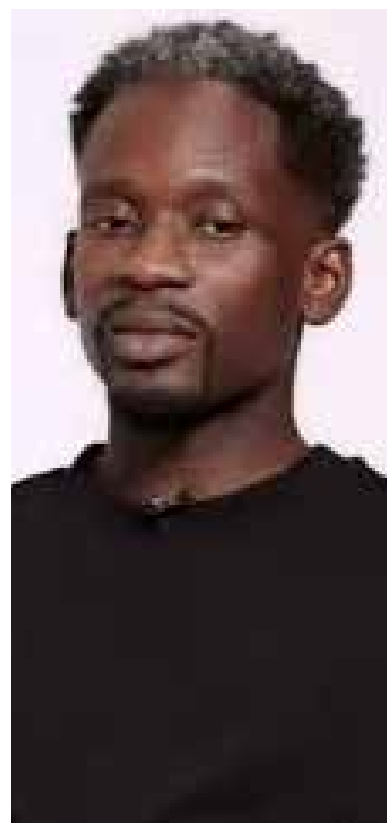
According to Mr Eazi, while many people associate grey hair strictly with aging, his experience has shown that life's pressures and relentless dedication to achieving goals can also accelerate the process. The singer explained that balancing his music career, managing multiple business ventures, and handling

various responsibilities has taken its toll over the years.

Despite the growing grey strands, Mr Eazi appears to be embracing the change with confidence. Rather than seeing it as a sign of decline, he views it as evidence of growth, experience, and the sacrifices made on his journey to success.

Fans have reacted differently to the revelation, with many praising the singer for his honesty. Others noted that the grey hair adds to his mature and distinguished appearance, while some jokingly suggested that the pressures of entrepreneurship are catching up with him faster than expected.

Over the years, Mr Eazi has successfully expanded beyond music, establishing himself as one of Africa's most influential entrepreneurs in the entertainment and technology sectors.



Iranian Singer Parastoo Ahmadi Sentenced To 74 Lashes For Singing Without Hijab

Iranian singer Parastoo Ahmadi has reportedly been sentenced to 74 lashes for singing without hijab.

Parastoo Ahmadi and eight members of a production team played a concert livestreamed on Ahmadi's YouTube channel in 2024. She sang a historic patriotic anthem, 'Az Khoon-e Javanan-e Vatan' ('From the Blood of the Youth of the Homeland'), and the video of the "Caravanserai Concert" has since gone viral.

According to rights activists, the criminal court of Qom province

sentenced her and several musicians to flogging, a two-year ban on leaving the country, and a two-year ban on engaging in artistic activities.

The ruling is yet to be published by the official judiciary news agency. However, the court documents seen by lawyers and rights groups reportedly state that the charges include offending public decency through the production and publication of "vulgar and immoral content" online.

Human rights activists say that Ahmadi's sentencing is proof that the situation in Iran has not changed.



Gehgeh Faults Peller's Marriage to Jarvis

Popular financial coach and social commentator Gehgeh has stirred reactions online after publicly advising social media influencer Peller against rushing into marriage at a young age.

In a statement that quickly gained attention on social media, Gehgeh expressed concern over Peller's plans, describing the influencer as someone who is still growing and has a lot to learn about life before taking such a major step.

"You still growing as a child, why get married now eehn? I tried my possible best to help you but you failed to listen to me," Gehgeh said.

The financial coach suggested that marriage comes with significant responsibilities that require emotional, mental, and financial maturity. According to him, young individuals should focus on personal development, career growth, and building a stable future before making lifelong commitments.

His remarks have sparked mixed reactions among fans and followers. While some agreed that early marriage can create unnecessary pressure.



Blessing Nze Reacts To Criticism Over Lesbian Role

Nollywood actress Blessing Nze Obasi has addressed the backlash she received after playing a lesbian inmate in the second season of the hit series Blood Sisters.

In an interview on Yanga FM, the actress revealed that her role in the show sparked criticism from some Christian viewers who questioned her faith and moral values based solely on the character she portrayed.

According to her, the reactions highlighted a common

misunderstanding about the nature of acting and storytelling. She noted that many people struggled to separate her real identity from the fictional roles she takes on in films.

Obasi explained that acting is a professional craft that requires performers to embody different characters, regardless of their personal beliefs or lifestyles. She added that her experience on the matter made her reflect on how audiences interpret films without fully appreciating the creative process behind them.

She further clarified that her character was not intended to promote or encourage same-sex relationships.



I Don't Like Flashiness — Elumelu's Daughter Gigi Opens Up About Growing Up Wealthy

Despite being the daughter of one of Africa's most successful businessmen, Ogechukwu Elumelu, popularly known as Gigi, says she has never felt the need to live a flashy lifestyle.

In a recent statement, Gigi, the first daughter of billionaire entrepreneur Tony Elumelu, reflected on her upbringing and the values that have shaped her perspective on wealth and privilege.

According to her, one of her childhood friends often questioned

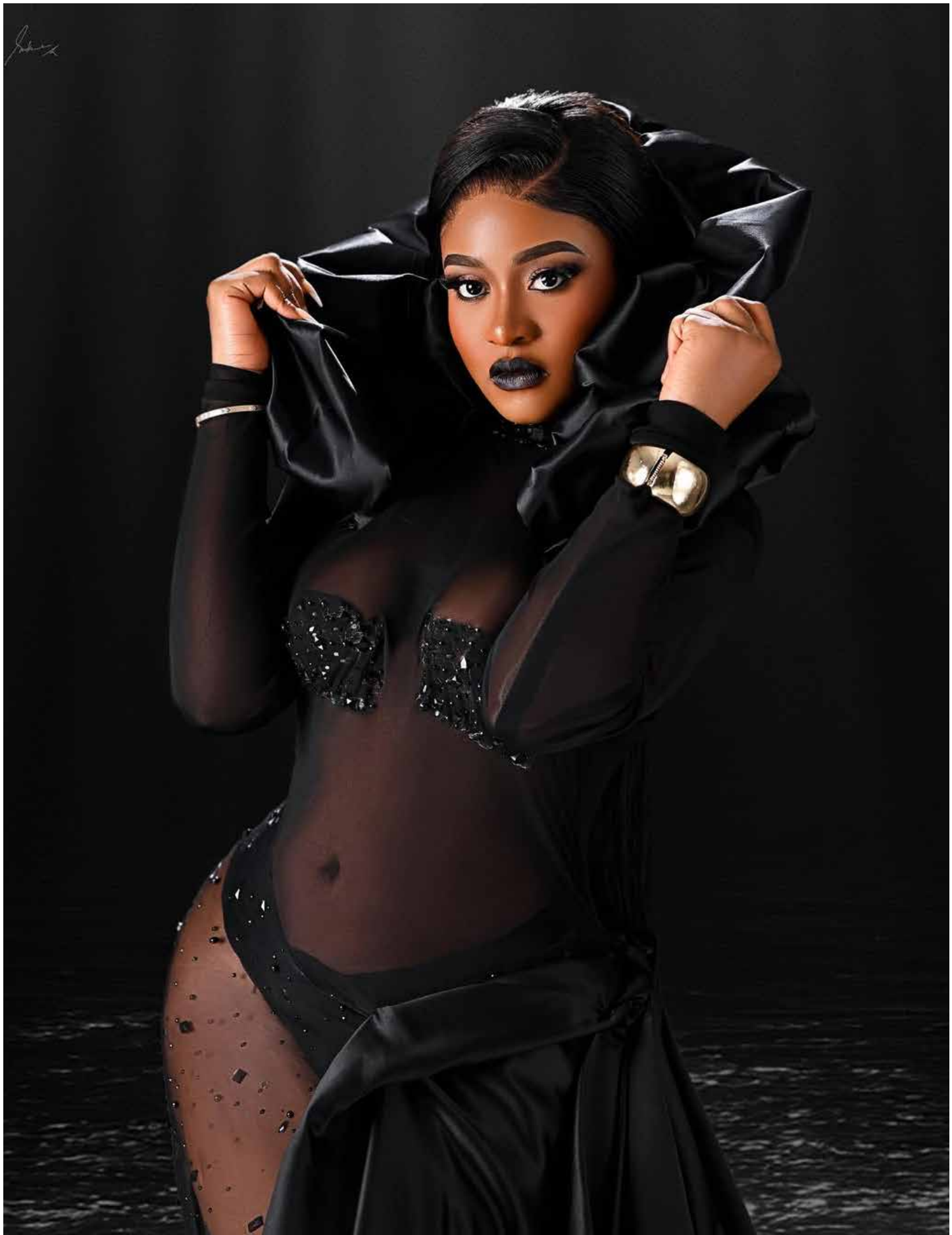
why she behaved so normally despite coming from a wealthy family.

"One of my childhood friends used to question me why I act so normal like my dad isn't rich," she revealed.

Gigi explained that she has never been attracted to excessive displays of wealth. Instead, she believes in being mindful of the realities around her and recognizing that many people are facing daily struggles. "I don't like flashiness. I feel like you can just read the room. You need to be aware of the people struggling out there," she said.



BBN S7 Winner Phyna Rocks All Black To Celebrate Her Birthday





When Your Family Wants a Wedding, But You're Not Ready

Handling Family Demands To Get Married

If you're in your mid-20s or 30s in Nigeria, you probably know the drill. You can't attend a family function or get together without being hit with the annoying question of when you'll marry.

It often starts as a light joke, but soon turns into lectures, comparisons, and even emotional blackmail. Family pressure to marry is real, but giving in when you're not ready can lead to an unhappy situation.

In this article, we'll look into how you can handle the situation without losing your peace or your family's respect.

Understand Where the Pressure Is Coming From

Family pressure often comes from love, tradition, or fear. Parents and relatives may worry about your future, compare you to married cousins, or simply follow cultural expectations. Recognising that the pressure is not always about you but about their fears and values helps you respond with empathy instead of anger. This makes it easier to stay calm instead of feeling attacked.

Be Honest About Your Readiness

Don't just laugh off the questions or dodge them with jokes. Sometimes, being firm but respectful



works best. You can say something like: "I want to get married when I'm truly ready, not just because of pressure." When your family sees you're serious about making a thoughtful decision, they may still talk - but they'll also know you're not careless about your future.

Focus on Building Your Life First

Marriage is not the only measure of success. While your family is counting how many weddings you've attended, focus on growing your career, finances, health, and passions. When you're

busy building your best life, it's easier to ignore outside pressure. A strong foundation also means that when you eventually marry, it's by choice not fear of family gossip.

Find Allies Within the Family

Not every family member is a source of pressure. Sometimes, you'll find an older sibling, cousin, or even an understanding parent who supports your decision to wait. Lean on them when the noise gets too loud. Having someone to speak up for you at gatherings can ease tension and remind others

to back off.

Educate Them Gently About Your Priorities

Older generations often see marriage as the ultimate achievement. They may not understand modern struggles, such as unstable jobs, rising living costs, or personal goals. Instead of arguing, explain calmly why you want to be financially stable, emotionally ready, or career secure before marrying. Sometimes, showing them you're not rejecting marriage but preparing for it makes them less anxious.

Vintage:

The True Definition of Charm and Style

By Ajibade Morakinyo

There's a certain allure to vintage fashion that modern styles rarely capture. Whether it's a crisp 60s shirt, a bold 70s print, or a sleek 80s silhouette, vintage clothing allows you to express individuality with timeless flair. These pieces aren't just garments—they're stories woven into fabric, offering character, nostalgia, and style all at once.

What makes vintage shirts stand out is their craftsmanship and quality. Made from durable materials and tailored with care, they often outlast many of today's fast-fashion alternatives. Each piece carries a sense of history that adds to its uniqueness and value, making it more than just a wardrobe choice—it's a style statement with soul. Styling a vintage shirt is all about intention. For a casual look, pair it with jeans or chinos and a clean pair of sneakers. For something more refined, layer it under a blazer or sweater, or wear it with a tailored suit and leather shoes. Add subtle accessories like a tie or pocket square to tie it all together without overwhelming the retro appeal. Here are some inspiring styles to choose from...









SERMON

- Babatunde Jose -

+2348033110822

Terrorism: The Curse of Islam 3

Terrorism is the premeditated, calculated and deliberate use of violence (or the threat of violence) against people in order to attain goals that are political or religious or ideological in nature; this is done through intimidation or coercion or instilling fear; coup de main, surprise attack. Ironically, given its usage today, the term originally referred to a legitimate system of government which used terror to assert itself. Its inspiration was the fearsome 'la Terreur' which engulfed revolutionary France under Robespierre's doomed command between 1793 and 1794, during the French Revolution.

Terrorism is a very broad field: Its variant, Islamic terrorism started in the late 1970s and the early 1980s, as an offshoot of the 'Cold War'. Until the rise of the modern nation state after the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648, the sort of central authority and cohesive society that terrorism attempts to influence barely existed. The Treaty of Westphalia in 1648 ended the Thirty Years' War and established principles of state sovereignty that shaped modern international relations. Communications were inadequate and



controlled, and the causes that might inspire terrorism (religious schism, insurrection, ethnic strife) were typically settled by open warfare. During the late 19th century, radical political theories and improvements in weapons technology spurred the formation of small groups of revolutionaries who effectively attacked nation-states.

Following the prevalence of violent terrorist activities, there is a need to put the origin of these terrorist groups in proper perspective. What is the origin of Al Qaeda and ISIS? Much like Al Qaeda, the Islamic State (ISIS)

is 'made-in-the-USA', which has a long and torrid history of backing terrorist groups; which will surprise only those who ignore history. The CIA first aligned itself with extremist Islam during the Cold War era. Back then, militant political Islam was considered an ally in the struggle against the Soviet Union. Our own Boko Haram is a copycat terrorist gang, made in Nigeria with international affiliation.

During the 1970's the CIA used the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt as a barrier, both to thwart Soviet expansion and prevent the spread of Marxist ideology among the Arab masses.

The United States also openly supported Sarekat Islam against Sukarno in Indonesia, and supported the Jamaat-e-Islami terror group against Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in Pakistan. Last but certainly not least, there is Al Qaeda.

In a 2004 BBC article entitled "Al-Qaeda's origins and links", the BBC wrote: "During the anti-Soviet jihad Bin Laden and his fighters received American and Saudi funding. Some analysts believe Bin Laden himself had security training from the CIA."

Between 1997–2001, the CIA had provided arms to the Arab mujahidin, including Osama bin

Laden; Throughout the '80s he was armed by the CIA and funded by the Saudis to wage jihad against the Russian occupation of Afghanistan.

According to Jason Hanna, of CNN, ISIS sprang from Al Qaeda in Iraq. It exploited Sunni resentment against Shiites. Saddam Hussein had led a secular government, but it was dominated by members of Iraq's Sunni minority and it brutally repressed opposition. When Saddam was ousted, power went to the majority Shiites, who wanted revenge.

Rather than promoting religious integration and unity, American policy in Iraq exacerbated sectarian divisions and created a fertile breeding ground for Sunni discontent, from which Al Qaeda in Iraq took root.

America's Middle East policy revolves around oil and Israel. The invasion of Iraq has partially satisfied Washington's thirst for oil, but civil war in Syria and economic sanctions and current war on Iran have everything to do with Israel. The goal is to deprive Israel's neighboring enemies, Lebanon's Hezbollah and Palestine's Hamas, of crucial Syrian and Iranian support.

ISIS is not merely an instrument of terror being used by America to topple the Syrian government; it is also being used to put pressure on Iran. U.S. Department of Defense report stated: "The data show a strong correlation between U.S. involvement abroad and an increase in terrorist attacks against the U.S." Truth is, the only way America can win the "War

on Terror" is if it stops giving terrorists the motivation and the resources to attack America.

Terrorism is the symptom; American imperialism in the Middle East is the cancer. Claimed Garikai Chengu, a research scholar at Harvard University; "Put simply, the War on Terror is terrorism; only, it is conducted on a much larger scale by people with jets and missiles."

Iran did not just start a nuclear program. When the



going was good, in 1957 the United States signed a civil nuclear cooperation deal with the Shah, paving the way for Tehran to build its nuclear program. In 1975, a West German company started building a nuclear plant at Bushehr. The tune changed with the Islamic revolution of Ayatollah Khomeini in 1979.

Some of the CIA's greatest Afghan beneficiaries were Arabist commanders; Sheik Omar Abdel Rahman, an associate of Bin Laden's, was given his visas to enter the US on four separate occasions by the CIA. Rahman was recruiting Arabs to fight in the Soviet-

Afghan war, and Egyptian officials testified that the CIA actively assisted him. Rahman was a co-plotter of the 1993 World Trade Center bombing.

The CIA created ISIS', says Julian Assange of Wikileaks. He said: "A decision by the CIA, together with Saudi Arabia, to plough billions of dollars into arming the Mujahidin fighters in Afghanistan to tackle the Soviet Union, had led to the creation of terror group Al-

Qaeda." "The 1979 current of Islamification spread to Pakistan where the US embassy was burned to the ground and Pakistan Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was executed."

Unlike the tightly-knit groups of the past, such as the Red Brigades in Italy or the Abu Nidal group in the Middle East, al-Qaeda is loosely knit. It operates across continents as a chain of interlocking networks. This would probably account for the operation of lone-wolves' in Europe and America.

United States and Iran relations; two countries that share a long, turbulent

history of friendship, antagonism and strife would epitomize the meddlesomeness of America in the affairs of other nations. The 1953 coup that removed Mossadegh; the Iranian Prime Minister who nationalized the oil industry, was orchestrated by America. British Petroleum originated in 1909 as the Anglo-Persian Oil Company, founded to exploit oil discoveries in Persia now Iran.

Iran's revolutionary authorities scrapped multibillion-dollar contracts for the construction of 23 nuclear facilities. Revolutionary students stormed and occupied the U.S. Embassy in November 1979, leading to a dramatic 444-day-long hostage crisis. Diplomatic relations between the two countries were cut in 1980. The United States would later back Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein in a bloody, eight-year war that kicked off that year with the then-fledgling Islamic republic: America created the 'monster' Saddam, unwittingly.

In 1983, a suicide bomber targeted a U.S. Marine barracks in the Lebanese capital, leading to the deaths of 241 U.S. military personnel; the deadliest single incident for American troops since the 'Battle of Iwo Jima'. The attack was linked to the Iranian-backed militia Hezbollah. A year later, the Reagan administration listed Iran as a state sponsor of terror. In 1988, an American warship, the USS Vincennes, shot down an Iranian passenger airline, killing all 290 people aboard: If not terrorism, what?

Terrorism spread to the

Sahelian region as a result of the Libyan crisis and the aftermath of the assassination of Kaddafi by American forces. The Libyan war led to the proliferation of arms into the Sahel which became handy for so-called Islamists and Jihadists.

Today, terrorism has become a fashion. The 2026 Global Terrorism Index (GTI) report reinforces the fact; terrorism is a highly concentrated form of violence, mostly committed in a small number of countries and by a small number of groups.

Nigeria recorded the largest increase in 2025, with fatalities rising by 46 per cent to 750. Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) and Boko Haram were responsible for 80 percent of all terrorism deaths in the country.

Here in Nigeria, traditional terrorism has morphed with other criminal enterprises into what Segun Adeniyi has labelled 'Kidnappings Incorporated'. According to the findings of a committee in Zamfara, the root cause of the new business include the pauperisation of local government, abandonment of political thugs after elections, collusion of rogue security officers with bandits, and the ease with which court orders freed arrested criminal kingpins. We can also add the sponsorship of terror gangs by political warlords and greedy moneyed individuals. We should not forget the activities of copycats who are determined to get their cut of the striving business. According to Adeniyi: Abduction for ransom had ceased to be

a crime of desperation. It has become an industry. Structured. Profitable. Scalable. And protected, including by those who were supposed to be fighting it.

According to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) Crime Experience and Security Perception Survey 2024, between May 2023 and April 2024, an estimated 2.2 million Nigerians were abducted, and approximately 600,000 killed across the country with about N1.42 trillion paid in ransoms. Between July 2024 and June 2025, SBM Intelligence also recorded at least 4,722 kidnappings across 997 incidents nationwide. The Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project reported that Nigeria accounted for 58 percent of all abductions in West Africa between 2019 and 2023.

But the point at issue here is the undeserved demonization of Islam. Now let us look at the reality on ground. Suicide of any shape or manner has gone out of fashion among the terrorist groups all over the world.

Terrorists have come to the realization that '70 virgins' are not awaiting anybody in heaven. However, recent happenings in Gaza and Lebanon have brought to the fore the problem of injustice and the possible groundwork for future terrorist actions against the oppressors of the Palestinians whose fathers, mothers, brothers and sisters have been killed, maimed and wasted by Israel and its American benefactor.

There was no single case of suicide bombing in Israel before 1948. And yet Islam had existed since 632 AD. Islam did not begin in 1948. If therefore there had been suicide bombings after the 1967 War, the cause must be located elsewhere.

The Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem's Old City is Christianity's most hallowed shrine. It's believed that the rock-cut tomb at the heart of the church is where the body of Jesus Christ was once laid. The intractable nature of the rivalries among various Christian sects over custody of the place led to a rather curious, unique

arrangement dating from the 12th century: Two Muslim families were entrusted. to be the gatekeepers of the church. The Joudeh family keeps the key, while the Nuseibeh family opens the church door every morning and locks it in the evening. The source of coexistence for Islamic and Christian religions is the Church of the Holy Sepulcher.

"And we do not help matters if we leave leprosy to grow wings while expending energy on mere irritating crawl-crawl." There is too much anger in the air. There is too much frustration. There is a frightening hopelessness. There is hunger. Mankind has lost its soul. Scapegoatism will not restore it.

Solution or part thereof is in Justice, Fairness and Equity. At all levels: in the home, locally, nationally and globally". If the poor cannot sleep; the rich cannot have their snore! Hmmm!

Barka Juma'at and happy weekend



World Cup 2026: I'm Ready, I'm Fit, Raring To Go — Rice Speaks Ahead Of England vs Ghana

Declan Rice insists he is ready to put his “body on the line” and bring his A-Game to the World Cup.

Rice admitted the schedule has been “crazy” and he has played an “obscene” amount of games for club and country after his appearance in England’s Group opener against Croatia was his 63rd of the season.

The Arsenal midfielder had to be substituted in Dallas and he admitted he has been nursing a lower back issue since Christmas which must raise concerns about his fitness levels for this tournament. Rice is not the only one because his

Arsenal team-mate Bukayo Saka is also managing his fitness because of a lingering Achilles problem which just goes to show the demands on players. But Rice is adamant that he is fit, ready to play and wants to start every game, including the next group match with Ghana in Boston on Tuesday. Rice told ITV (Mirror): “You get on with it. Obviously, it’s an obscene amount of games.

“The schedule is crazy but what can we do about it? You can’t sit and complain. We have to just get on with it for the moments.



Iwobi: Fulham Players Yet To Learn Identity Of Next Manager

Alex Iwobi has revealed that Fulham’s players are yet to be informed who will replace former manager Marco Silva.

Silva left Craven Cottage earlier this month to take charge of Portuguese giants Benfica.

Former Real Madrid coach Alvaro Arbeloa has been strongly linked with the vacant managerial position at the West London club.

Iwobi Awaits Decision On New Coach

Iwobi stated that he does not expect it to be difficult adapting to a new manager, having worked under Marco Silva for several years.

“Yeah, I mean, I can only go off my experience with the national team and at Everton,” Iwobi said during his appearance on the The Warm Up with Max Rushden and Charlie Baker on Sunday.

“I’ve had several managers there, so it won’t be difficult for me to adapt.

“We’ll be ready to play whoever the manager is.”



Salah Eyes More Wins After Egypt End World Cup Drought

Egypt captain Mohamed Salah hopes the Pharaohs can make history by winning more games at the FIFA World Cup 2026.

The Pharaohs defeated New Zealand 3-1 at BC Place Vancouver to claim their first FIFA World Cup victory since making their debut 92 years and 25 days ago.

Finn Surman gave New Zealand a deserved lead with a bullet of a header from a corner in the 15th

minute.

Zico equalised for Egypt with a free header two minutes before the hour mark.

Hossam Hassan’s side took the lead for the first time in the game through Salah, who guided a crisp low finish into the net after a fine team move.

Trezeguet added the gloss with Egypt’s third with eight minutes remaining.

Salah expressed delight after Egypt finally ended their long wait for a World Cup victory, calling it a great achievement.

“It’s incredible. I don’t know how to express it in words,” Salah told FIFA.com.



Dear CDS, NSA, Your Prodigal Sons, Brothers Have Killed General Braimah

Almost five months since the yet to be explained killing of Brigadier General Musa Uba, another high ranking military officer, another Brigadier General, has been unlive. He was Brigadier General Oseni Omo Braimah, Commander of 29 Task Force Brigade Operation Hadin Kai, Maiduguri Borno State.

The sadness that followed the brutal killing of the Brigade Commander, can almost be touched, dear Nigerians, with special reference to the National Security Adviser, Mallam Nuhu Ribadu, and his counterpart, the Chief of Defense Staff, General Olufemi Olujede. These men, have at separate fora concassed for the kid gloves handling of terrorism activities, and terrorists. Ribadu, it was, that asked that they be rehabilitated as they are 'our brothers. Olujede echoed the stand, saying the terrorists was equated to the biblical prodigal son, and therefore should be received with open hands. This he said to justify his latest 'Operation Safe Corridor', designed to welcome 'repentant' terrorists and bandits, and have them reintegrated into the society.

It is still these touted same brothers, and prodigal sons that overran a military base in Benisheikh, reportedly killing 18 soldiers including the Brigadier General. According to the Army, however, the number of deaths was overhyped, claiming that only two officers and two other soldiers were killed in the battle they said the military had the upper hand, and auccessfully repelled the assailants and maintained their positions.

Much as the military agreed that they lost four soldiers, they have failed to produce casualties, or even speak on the number, from the terrorists side, in a battle they said they had the upper hand. It's still had to believe, only that the prodigal sons and brothers snuffed the life of a general, and according to reports, he was caught like a sitting duck.

The prodigal sons with the 'brothers' did not stop there; they proceeded to kill Forest Guard Commander and five others in Kwara, just as they mercilessly hacked to death eight members of the same family in Bokkos, Plateau. The list is endless. Of prodigal sons and brothers. Thanks to the NSA and the CDS.

Someone once said that that the only



mercy a terrorist or bandit deserve is the mercy of God. And it is the duties of the authority to send them to God for such mercy.

Why do we keep handling merciless killers with kid gloves, and turn around to call them sons and brothers. They in turn, are only looking for opportunity to strike again.

These people have gone from being brothers to becoming animals, very dangerous and ugly beasts that have lost the capacity to show, and so should not be shown any mercy caught.

Dear NSA and CDS, you must understand that these people have been extremely radicalised, and can no longer fit into the society of sane beings, and therefore, should be put away permanently. We can't continue to safe corridor to experiment with the lives of Nigerians. No bandit or terrorist is worth rehabilitating, talk less of being integrated into the military. Whoever does that is complicit, and should be treated as an enemy of the Nigerian state.

The NSA and the CDS should begin now to revisit everyone they have ever pardoned or reintegrated into the society for they are part of our problem. They are culpable.

General Uba died saraa, as we say in our local parlance. We should let Braimah die saraa. We must not allow this irresponsibility happen again. I'm not borrowing any words from the president because all his words appear empty, while Nigerians continue in droves, even when the country is not really at war.

Time to jettison this brother, cousin, prodigal son rubbish, and deal decisively with terrorists and bandits.

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EDITORIAL TEAM

PUBLISHER/EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Dele Momodu
momodulele@yahoo.co.uk

ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER

Mobolaji Momodu

GROUP EDITOR

Eric Elezuo
erico72ng@yahoo.com

GRAPHICS DESIGNER/ CONTENT ASSISTANT

Ajibade Morakinyo

REPORTER

Ruth Akpan

PHOTO EDITOR

Adekoya Adegbite

PRODUCTION MANAGER

Isaac Edoh-Philip...Abiodun Adekoya

PHOTO JOURNALISTS

Dragan Mikki (UK)...Ken Ehimen Adeyemi
Funmilayo Ben Dzakah (Ghana)

OVATION TV CREW

Ben Osei-Bansah... Babatunde Bolarinwa
Saheed Aderopo... Temitope Ogunleye

WEB DESIGNER/MANAGER

Kwaku Yeboah Darteh

CONTRIBUTORS

Henry Ukazu... Mike Ozekhome SAN
Babatunde Jose... Kayode Emola
Sani Sa'idu Baba

LAGOS OFFICE

67, Oduduwa Way, Ikeja GRA, Lagos,
Nigeria

Tel: +(234)8055069220,
+234(0)8023002090, (4)4543030,
+234(0)8035032618

DIRECTORS

Segun Fatoye, Mobolaji Momodu,
Damola Aderemi, Dele Momodu (CEO)

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