Over 17 Million Nigerians from Nine Northern States Are Facing Hunger Crisis, Says United Nations

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Can of Worms in the Villa

BOSS OF THE WEEK

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Fashion Icon, Eniafe Momodu, Joins Berlin Contemporary Jury

By Eric Elezuo

The appointment of fast rising world's fashion influencer, Eniafe Momodu, into the Berlin Contemporary Jury, did not come as a surprise to as many that know the charisma and talent the young fashion enthusiast is endowed it. This is coupled with the landmark achievements that have trailed him in the pursuit of his chosen profession.

Eniafe is widely regarded as one of the most respected young figures in African fashion, whose work spans creative direction, image making, editorial development, cultural research, and brand strategy.

Sired by one of world's leading journalists, Aare Dele Momodu, arguably the most influential and famous DELE in Africa, Eniafe has completely carved a strong niche for himself, taking a deep dive into the world of self awareness.

From a very young age, Eniafe had exuded style, composure, elegance and the flair to 'look good' at all times. His signature large bourbon attires, that was privately original, created distinct visibility for the young man, who continually has success as his motivating slogan. And success he has achieved in such a brief 28 years period.

Fondly referred to as 'My Twin' by his dotting father, Eniafe has continued to not only uplift the Momodu brand, but continually project the image of Nigeria and

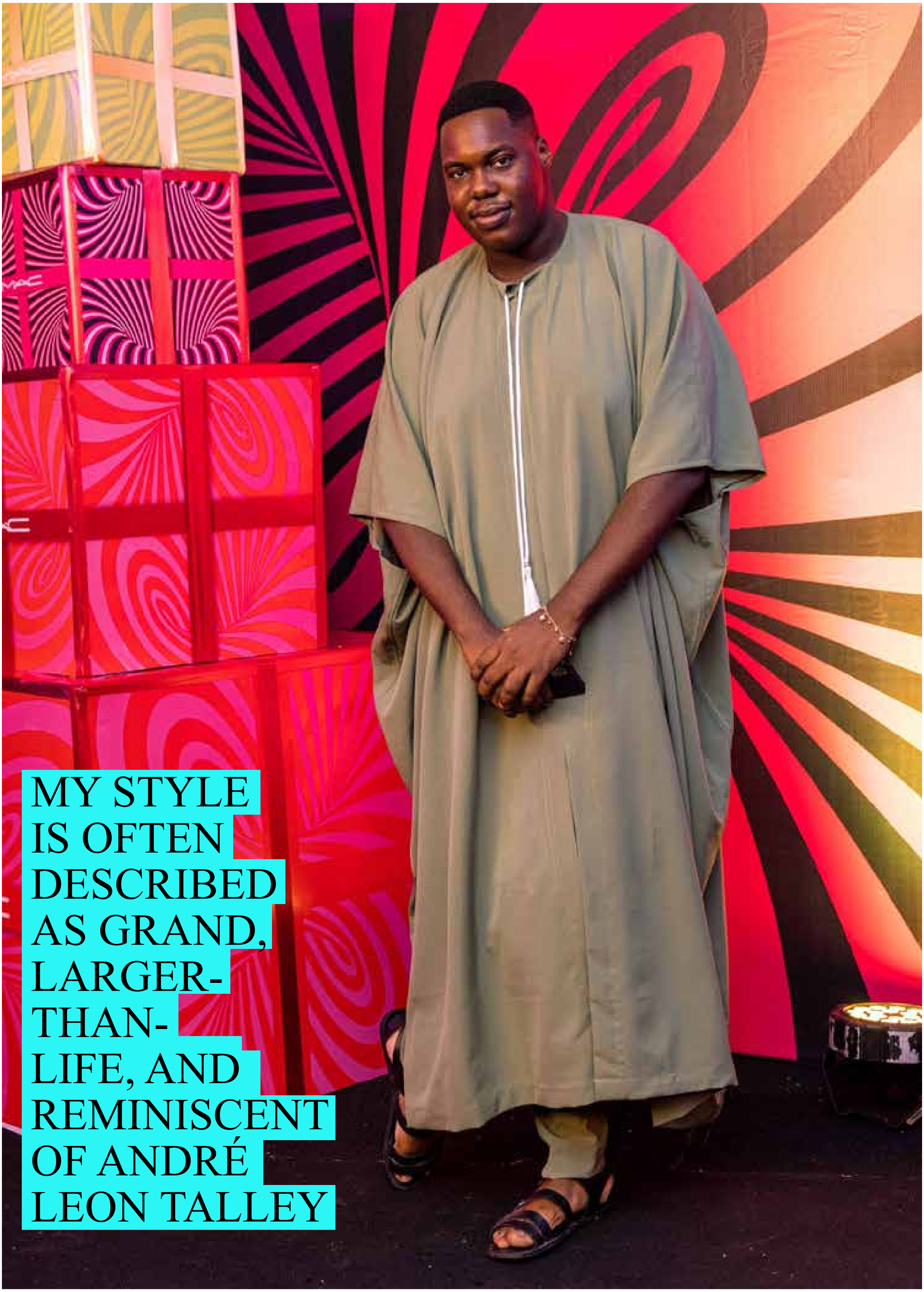
Africa in the brightest of colours.

Eniafe's appointment reflects his growing influence as a creative strategist, producer, photographer, writer, and cultural commentator whose work has helped shape contemporary conversations around African fashion and its global impact. Recognised by platforms like Vogue Magazine and ESSENCE as a leading voice in the industry, he has built a reputation for bridging fashion, culture, research, and storytelling across international markets.

"It's been an incredible process serving on the jury," said Momodu. "The jury selection this season includes designers from Asia, Europe, Africa and America. I think this really underscores the German Fashion Council's commitment to celebrating design talents from all over the world."

More so, his appointment places the Nigerian creative among the industry leaders responsible for selecting and supporting emerging fashion talent.

The programme, one of Europe's leading fashion development initiatives, awarded €25,000 grants to 19 winning concepts this season. Among the selected designers were Nigerian brands Orange Culture and Fruché, alongside talents from Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Americas.



MY STYLE IS OFTEN DESCRIBED AS GRAND, LARGER-THAN-LIFE, AND REMINISCENT OF ANDRÉ LEON TALLEY

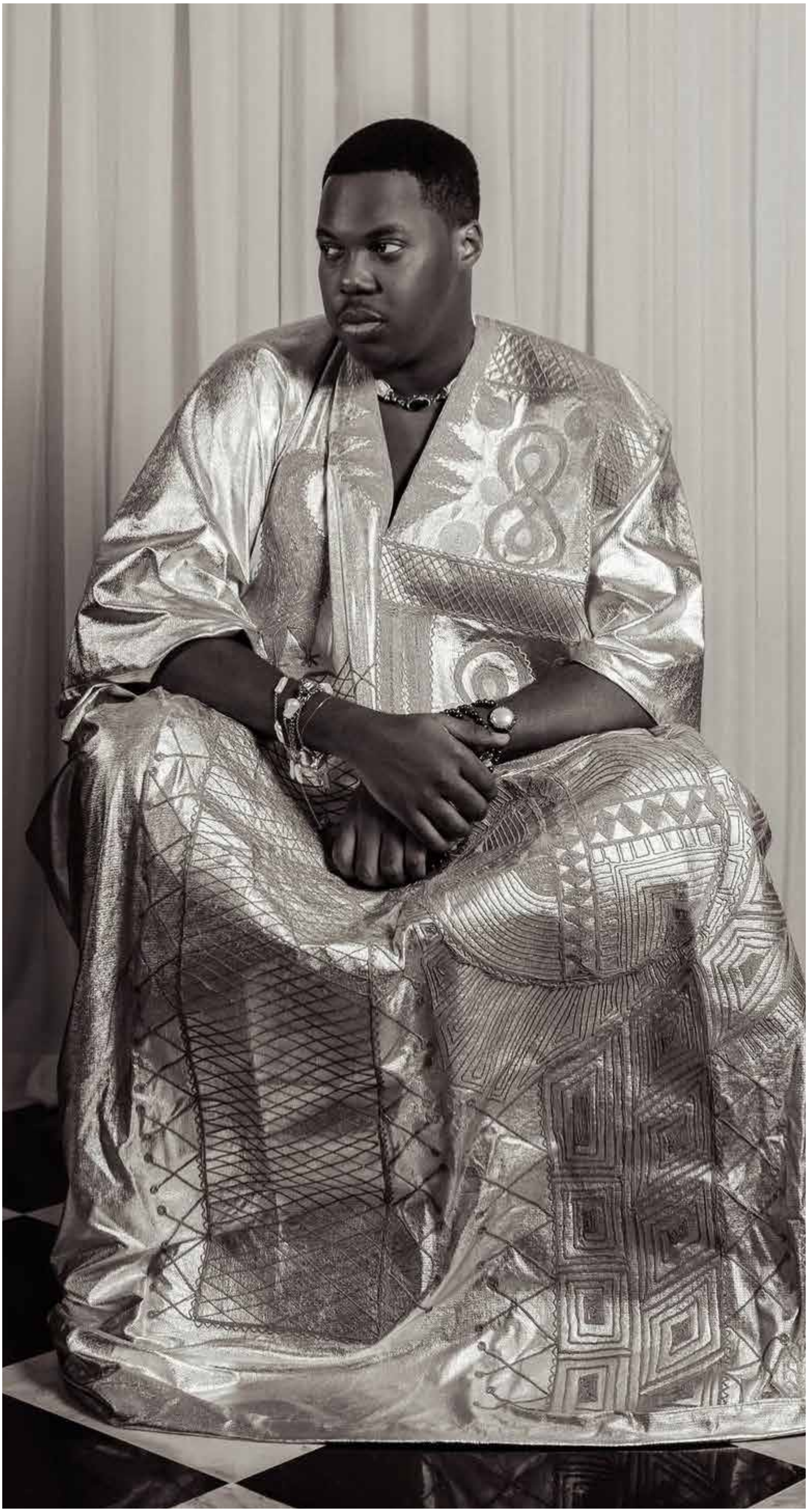
Momodu described the selection as a reflection of the German Fashion Council's commitment to celebrating design talent from around the world, further highlighting the growing presence of African voices in global fashion decision-making.

A PEEP INTO DESCRIPTIONS OF ENIAFE MOMODU BY FASHION MEDIA

In January 2022, Vogue captured the growing influence of Eniafe Momodu, through its reporter, Vincent Desmond, in story titled: Eniafe Momodu's Style Shows the Extravagance of Men's Fashion in Nigeria, as follows:

There's a changing of the guard in fashion and culture. Gen-Z creators are pushing the conversation forward in ways both awe-inspiring and audacious. Our latest project, Youthquake, invites you to discover how these artists, musicians, actors, designers, and models are radically reimagining the future.

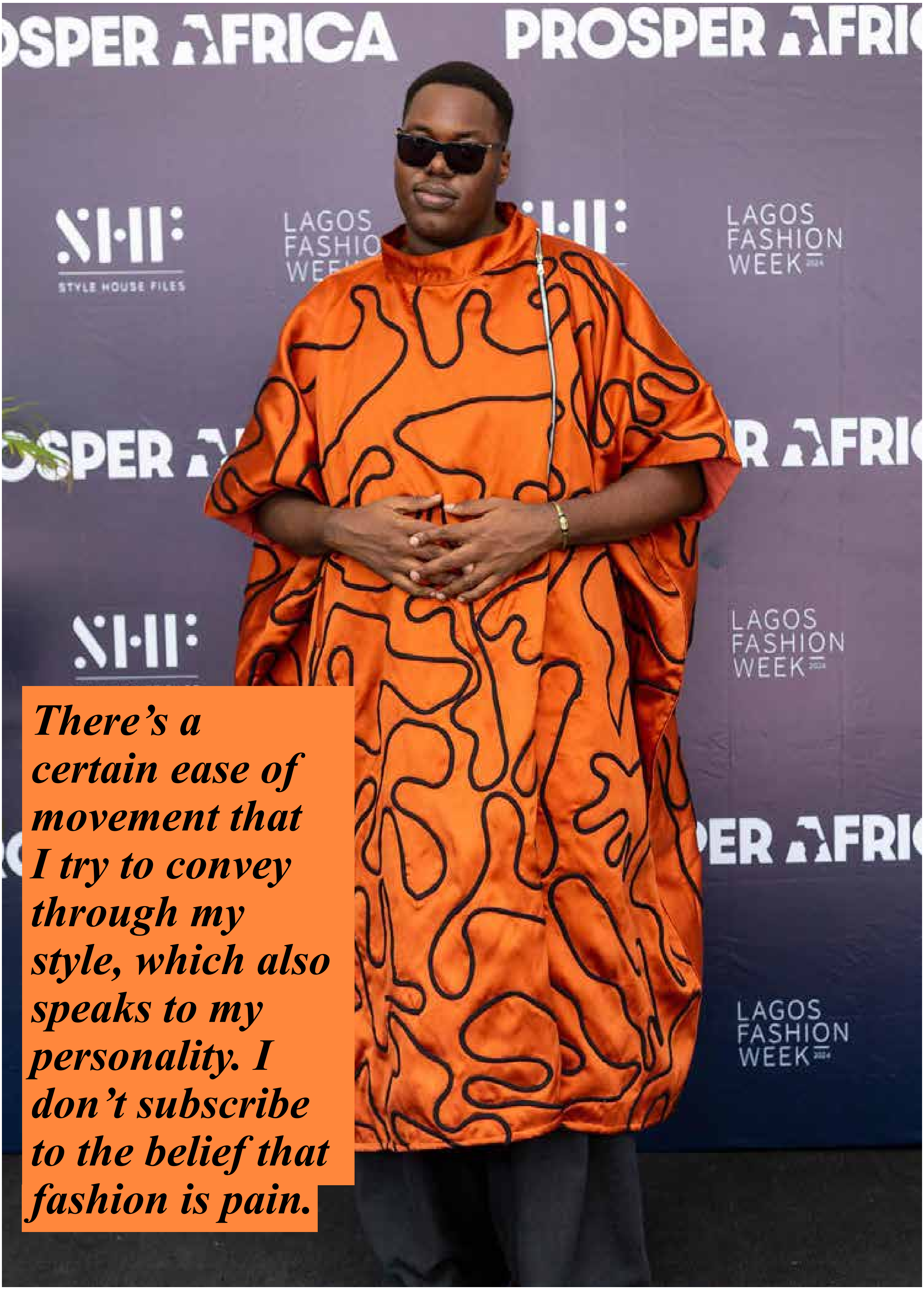
Where elsewhere men may shy from colorful fabrics and oversized dramatic silhouettes, in Lagos, Nigeria, they wear them as a symbol of wealth and great personal style. Each fashion week, you'll see these men dressed in their best eye-catching prints, dramatic arm details, and flowing bodices, determined to



outshine everyone else on the street style scene. Among this group is Eniafe Momodu, standing out and dominating over the rest not just in height—he stands at a towering 6’6”—but also with one of the best looks.

Within the last two years, Momodu, a graduate of the University of Leeds who currently works as a photographer, producer, and writer, has become one of Lagos’s most recognizable Gen-Z style icons with over 24,000 Instagram followers. Momodu has brought to life campaigns and productions for companies like Arise Fashion Week, Alara, and Ebony Life, and has also been a host for his own projects, like New World Brunch. His custom green aso-oke and gazar silk agbada from Fruche, which he wore to the last Lagos Fashion Week in November, was lauded by many publications, including Vogue, as one of the best looks from the event. To attend Lagos Is Burning, a ballroom-inspired party, he wore custom-made all-black robes, which, in his words, channeled “Andre Leon Talley, Billy Porter, and Dominique Jackson.”

“My style is often described as grand, larger-than-life, and reminiscent of André Leon Talley.” Eniafe Momodu says from Dubai. But that extravagance belies his core fashion philosophy. “My typical silhouette

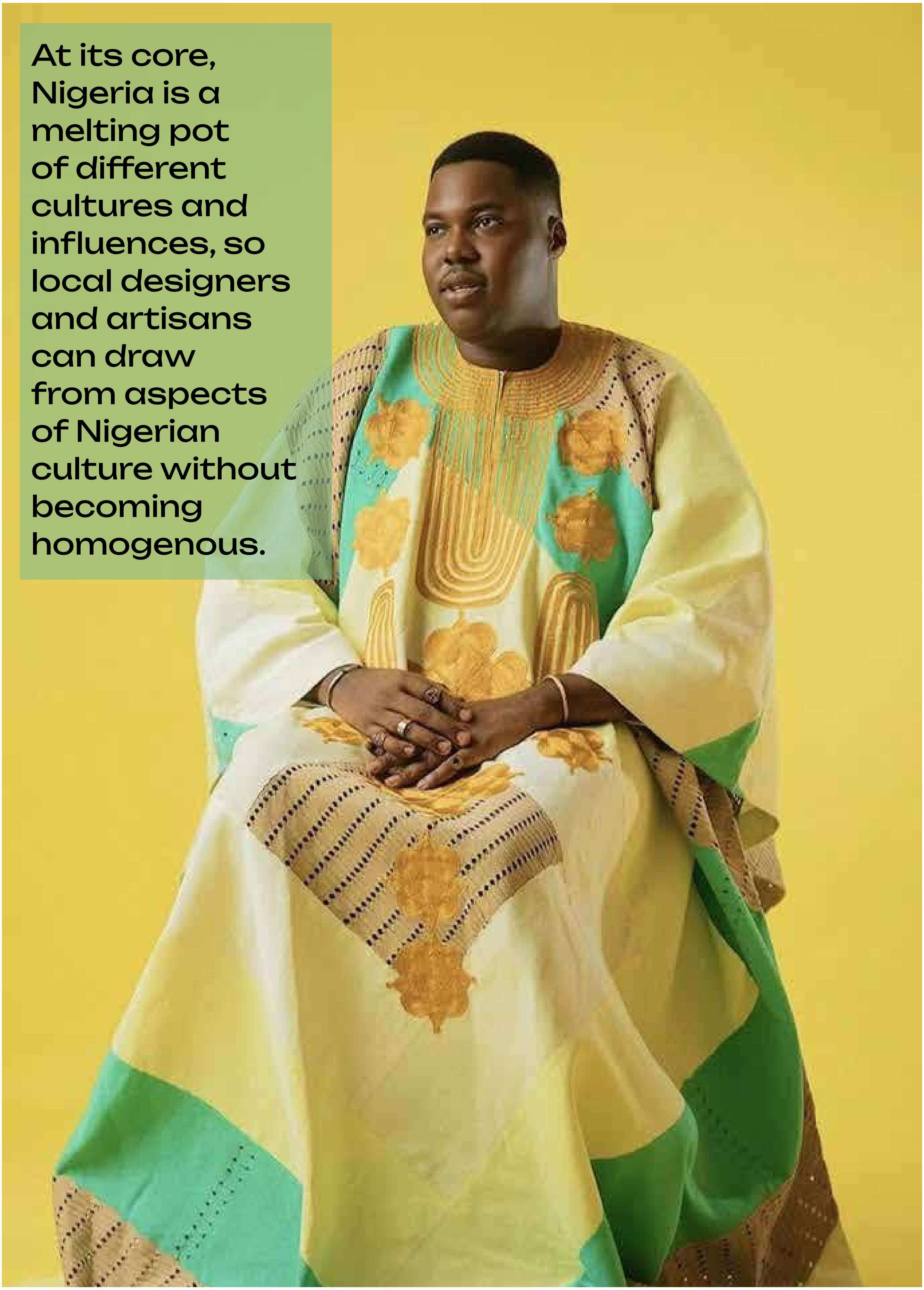


There's a certain ease of movement that I try to convey through my style, which also speaks to my personality. I don't subscribe to the belief that fashion is pain.

involves something long and free-flowing," he says. "There's a certain ease of movement that I try to convey through my style, which also speaks to my personality. I don't subscribe to the belief that fashion is pain. Comfort can be very stylish. For me, what I wear isn't really about how I look. I'm far more concerned with the message behind what I'm wearing. I always think deeply about what a garment says about me, but also what it says about culture, gender, sustainability, and other facets of our society."

Despite being a fashion capital, Lagos stores offer limited options for plus-size customers, particularly from the ready-to-wear brands. Plus-size outfits are often

At its core, Nigeria is a melting pot of different cultures and influences, so local designers and artisans can draw from aspects of Nigerian culture without becoming homogenous.

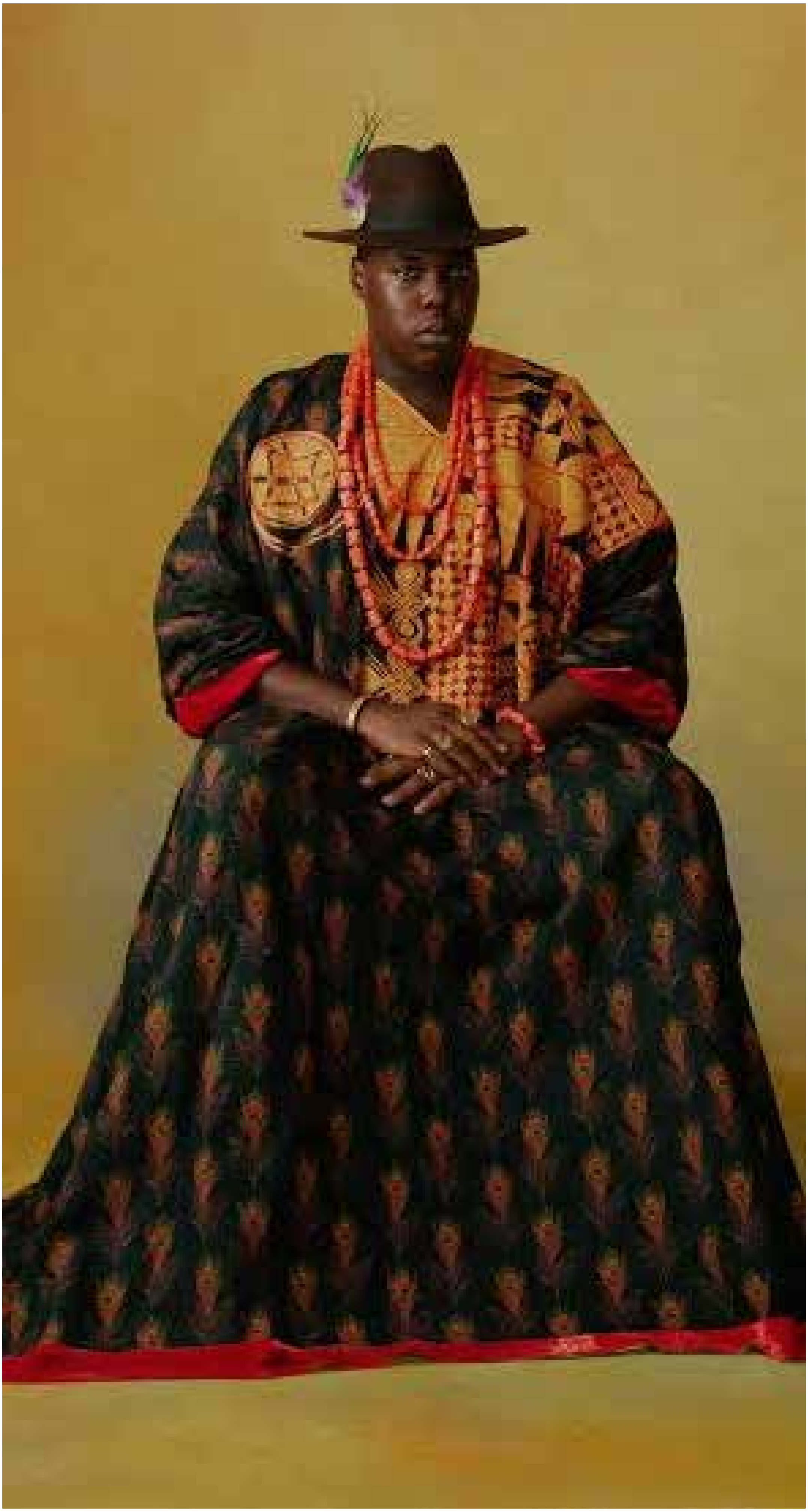


double or triple the price for the same outfit in a smaller size. Momodu has often faced this struggle and instead relies on easily accessible tailors in Nigeria to create his custom wardrobe. It's a process with less hassle, but still not ideal.

"I would not describe fashion in Lagos as particularly size inclusive," Momodu says. "However, thanks to the prominent bespoke culture in Lagos, the ready-to-wear industry and its shortcomings do not have as totalitarian an influence on our clothing as they do in other parts of the world. People here regularly turn to the made-to-measure industry and employ local tailors to create clothing for special occasions like weddings, funerals, and birthdays, as well as for their day-to-day traditional attire."

The caftans that Momodu has become known for are mostly made-to-measure by his favorite tailor (the two have a collaborative relationship and Momodu will send fabrics to him). He describes the process as many Nigerians would: Tailors rarely stick to deadlines, but they always get the job done well.

The easy access to tailors and bespoke fashion isn't the only thing Momodu is grateful for as a stylish man living in Lagos. He considers himself lucky to have access to the culture and history that surround him in Lagos.



The creative scene and the never-ending supply of fashion inspiration fuel his storytelling as a creator.

"In Lagos, we are privileged to have access to such a rich and vibrant cultural history. As a creative, you can find inspiration everywhere you look," Momodu says. "When it comes to prints, patterns, textiles, and color combinations, we have centuries worth of references to choose from. At its core, Nigeria is a melting pot of different cultures and influences, so local designers and artisans can draw from aspects of Nigerian culture without becoming homogenous."

In August 2025, prestigious lifestyle and fashion magazine, ESSENCE, through Ugonnaora Owoh, wrote the following on an encounter with Eniafe Momodu with the topic, How One Of Nigeria's Most Influential Style Icons Eniafe Momodu Is Crafting His Own Style Legacy

When I finally catch up with Eniafe Momodu, it's in person at the Nordic Hotel in the middle of Lagos' bustling suburbs, which Momodu has been calling home for the past week while working on some projects. Our conversation commences as we share thoughts on the recent Met Gala. He lights up as we unpack and undress this year's theme, "Superfine: Tailoring Black Style." It's a lighthearted conversation, but he speaks with the clarity and authority that you would expect from Nigeria's most prolific cultural dandy.

Momodu, a producer, photographer, writer, and entrepreneur is one of the most notable, young forces in African fashion. At just 27 years old, his creative repertoire is impressive. Born in London to a journalist father and an accountant mother, he describes his childhood as ridden with the characteristics of a multi-hyphenate. He was a precocious child whose earliest memories were shaped by his love of

stumbled across an old digital camera, which instantly sparked a long-term relationship with photography and filmmaking. Throughout his early teens, he would capture candid moments of his family and friends at school. At 14, advised by a cousin to pursue photography more seriously, Eniafe approached his dad asking if he could buy him a professional camera. “I was lucky to be a second-generation creative,” he says. “My dad always encouraged my creative interests, but he was also a stubborn believer in academia.” Momudu explains that when he asked his father if he could buy a professional camera

music and literature.

Momodu’s eccentric style has propelled his status as one of Lagos’ highly stylish individuals. Characterized by colorful garments and long-flowing silhouettes, his signature style has been replicated by many. Growing up tall and large, fashion to him was originally about concealment. His mother would dress him in clothes aimed at making him blend in and stand out as little as possible. The global pandemic and subsequent #EndSARS protests spurred his return to Lagos (having left at 16 to complete his studies in the UK), which led him to craft a new style identity.

At 11, he tells me he

he declared he would if he received all A's on his next report card. He notes that he doesn't recall ever studying harder–however, he ended up receiving all A's–and his camera was gifted by his father several weeks later.

That Nikon DSLR camera ushered in a new era for a young Eniafe, who quickly adopted photo-sharing apps like Instagram and Tumblr, becoming his secondary school's de facto student photographer and yearbook editor shortly after. When Venus and Serena Williams visited Lagos in 2012 and hosted an inter-school tennis tournament, he was the youngest photographer granted access to document the showdown.

"I was able to see that there was a real power in photography. Being able to document specific moments, whether they were intimate or big, and seeing the joy in people's faces as they relive moments you've captured. Not to mention the access it gives you. This was before everyone was a photographer and could take high-quality pictures from their phones. It was a superpower back then," he tells ESSENCE.

Eniafe's image continues to loom large, and it can be imagined how much more of a great achievement he is poised to bring to the table in the coming years.

A hearty congratulations to the fashion icon!


Congratulations
Eniafe Momodu

Glo Celebrates Executive Director, Sade Michael-Adenuga at 31

By Eric Elezuo

Communications giant, GLOBACOM, has celebrated its Group Executive Director, Madam Sade Michael-Adenuga, as she clocks 31.

In a message via the Group's X account, Globacom celebrated the go-getting abilities Ms Michael-Adenuga, recognising her dedication, professionalism and unwavering commitment, which have continued speak loud in the growth and development of the Gbobacom Group.

The message reads:

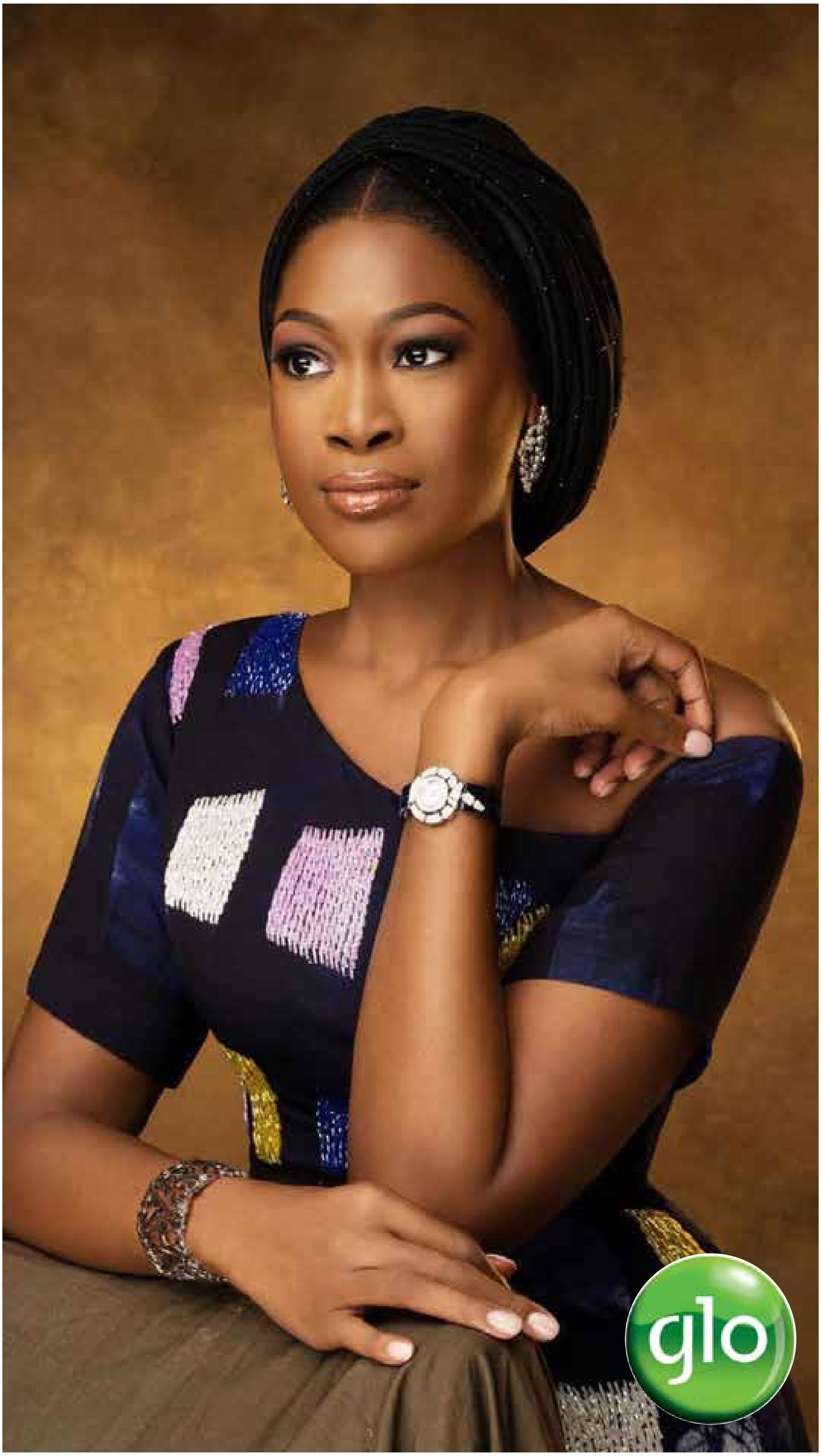
"Today, we celebrate Madam Sade Michael-Adenuga, whose dedication, professionalism, and unwavering commitment continue to make a meaningful difference.

"As you mark another year, we wish you good health, happiness, and many more years of fulfilment and remarkable accomplishments. May the year ahead bring every opportunity to continue making an enduring impact.

"Happy Birthday, Madam Sade Michael-Adenuga."

Sade Michael-Adenuga is the last daughter of the billionaire businessman, philanthropist and founder of the Glo brand, among many other business concerns.

Beautiful and highly ceregral, Sade is a certified Barrister and Solicitor of the Supreme Court of Nigeria. She currently serves as a Group Executive Director of Globacom Group, and is the founder of QuickLaw.




Happy
Birthday
glo
MADAM SADE MICHAEL-ADENUGA
Group Executive Director, Globacom

Sights and Sounds from the 250th Independence Day Celebration of the United States of America in Lagos

By Adekoya Adegbite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Trump Warns of Attack on American Identity As US Turns 250

America turns 250 on Saturday — a landmark birthday that coincides with a time of deep national division and a president determined to seize the festive center stage.

The independence anniversary also comes in the middle of a brutal heatwave that has placed some 160 million Americans under major or extreme heat warnings, playing havoc with planned parades and block parties in towns and cities across much of the country.

But the searing temperatures have done little to deter President Donald Trump, who has gone to great lengths to ensure the event becomes, in large part, a celebration of himself.

Executive Branch

On Saturday evening, Trump will hold a huge campaign-style political rally on the National Mall in the capital, Washington, along with roaring military flyovers and what he has touted as the world's biggest fireworks display.

"It's going to be approximately 107 degrees (41C) out, and I'm going to go, and I'm going to make a really long speech — just to show that I can do anything," he earlier said.

Late Friday, the president visited the Mount Rushmore National Monument for an address under the gaze of the giant granite heads of four of his legendary predecessors.

While he lauded American exceptionalism and praised the country's past leaders, he said that the American identity was "under a renewed attack."

Taking aim at domestic "radicals and extremists," he charged that there was "a resurgence of the communist menace in our land."

It is a theme that Trump has repeatedly hammered home in recent weeks, as the anti-establishment left of the Democratic Party carried a string of US primary victories.

The president has cast the rise of the left ahead of November's midterm elections as "communists" on the rampage, posing a major "threat" to the country.

On Friday, Trump said there has been an attempt to "beat the American spirit out of us, alienate us from our history" in recent years.

While his language fell short of the more violent anti-immigrant rhetoric he has wielded in past speeches, the underlying message was clear.

"You do not have to be born here, but you do have to love what we have built," he said.

The location of Trump's speech was a fitting backdrop for a president

who views himself as one of the greats.

Trump's supporters have even introduced legislation to have his likeness chiseled beside those of George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln, and Theodore Roosevelt.

For Americans, the 250th festivities offer a moment for reflection as well as celebration.

After two and a half centuries of triumphs and tragedies, slavery and freedom, civil war and world wars, multiple surveys indicate a nation divided about where it is and where it's going.

A Quinnipiac University Poll showed 61 percent of Americans thought the US was not living up to the ideals stated in the Declaration of Independence — though even opinion on that was divided, with most Republicans thinking it did, and most Democrats thinking it didn't.

"There's too many people that hate on each other, steal from each other. They don't love each other," said Los Angeles-based artist Johnny Presley.

"I'm sick of the way this country treats people. I'm sick of the way this country treats its foreign neighbors," he added. "I'm sick of a lot of damn things."

For others, like American-Iranian Karisa Tavassoli, an educator in Atlanta, the basics of the American dream still ring true.

"I have safety, I have freedom of speech, I have freedom of religion, I can wear whatever I want as a woman," she told AFP.

"There are many flaws here, but we have something very special that's worthy of protecting," she added.

Alonzo Coby, a member of the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes, is grateful to be able to celebrate 250 years of the United States.

"But I want people to remember that Native Americans have been here a lot longer than 250 years," he said.

Glo-sponsored African Voices Features Former CNN Anchor, Isha Sesay

Accomplished journalist and former Cable News Network (CNN) International anchor, Isha Sesay, will this week return to the studios of the global news network, not as an interviewer, but as the subject of its celebrated 30-minute magazine programme, African Voices, sponsored by telecommunications giant, Globacom.

The episode will shine a spotlight on the remarkable journey of the distinguished broadcaster whose career has traversed some of the most influential corridors of international journalism.

The 50-year-old British-Sierra Leonean media personality, born on January 6, 1976, rose to prominence through an illustrious career at CNN, which she joined as a news anchor in 2005 after distinguished stints with the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) and Sky News. Over the years, Sesay became one of the most recognisable and respected faces in global television news, bringing clarity and composure to some of the world's most consequential stories.

An alumna of Trinity College, Cambridge, United Kingdom, Sesay steadily carved a distinctive niche for herself in broadcast journalism. In 2009, she became the host of the inaugural edition of International Desk, CNN's weekly news programme, further cementing her reputation as a journalist of substance and international standing. Her career afforded her the opportunity to engage with numerous eminent personalities, including former Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo and his successor, the late President Umaru Yar'Adua, among other notable global figures.

Sesay also contributed to Anderson Cooper 360° as presenter of the 360 Bulletin, a role she assumed on January 17, 2011. Subsequently, she was reassigned as anchor of another flagship news programme, CNN NewsCenter, continuing a professional trajectory that reflected both versatility and excellence.

Beyond the newsroom, Sesay has demonstrated a deep commitment to social impact. In 2014, she launched her educational and humanitarian non-profit advocacy initiative for the African girl-child. The organisation, aptly named Women Everywhere Can Lead, has since provided educational support and empowerment opportunities aimed at nurturing a new generation of female leaders across the continent.

More recently, Sesay captured public attention with her personal journey into motherhood, welcoming her first child through In-Vitro Fertilisation (IVF) as a single mother. Her experience has resonated with many women around the world, adding another compelling chapter to a life story already rich in courage, resilience and inspiration.

On this edition of African Voices, Sesay will share insights into her distinguished career, her enduring advocacy for girls' education and empowerment, as well as her new and deeply personal adventure into motherhood. The programme will air on Saturday at 7.30am.

Repeat broadcasts will follow at 11.00am on the same day, while additional screenings are scheduled for Sunday at 3.30am and 6.00pm. Further rebroadcasts will air on Monday at 3.00am and 5.45pm, and on Tuesday at 5.45 pm, with the same time belt continuing into the following week until Monday at 3.00am

Elumelu Retires As UBA Chairman, Nnorom Steps In

By Eric Elezuo

Premier commercial bank, the United Bank of Africa (UBA) has announced the retirement of its chairman, Mr. Tony Elumelu after 12 years of meritorious service. The retirement notice will take effect from August 21, 2026.

The announcement was made on Monday after a meeting of the Board of Directors, according to a statement titled NOTIFICATION OF RETIREMENT OF GROUP CHAIRMAN OF UNITED BANK FOR AFRICA AND APPOINTMENT OF SUCCESSOR, and made available to The Boss.

Elumelu will be replaced by Non-Executive Director of the bank, Mr. Emmanuel N. Nnorom, chartered accountant with over forty years' experience in banking, finance and audit.

Expressinghisappreciation for the privilege of serving the bank for 12 years as Chairman, Elumelu noted: that "Serving United Bank for Africa has been one of the great privileges of my career. UBA has established a unique competitive position, across Africa and globally, and I leave the Board with great confidence in UBA's future. Emmanuel Nnorom is a leader of integrity, experience and sound judgement, and I am confident that the Bank will continue to thrive under his leadership."

In his acceptance speech, the incoming Chairman, Emmanuel Nnorom remarked that "I am honoured by the trust the Board has placed in me and deeply conscious of the legacy I inherit. I look forward to working with my colleagues on the Board, Management and our staff across all our markets to sustain UBA's momentum and continue delivering long-term value to our shareholders, customers and stakeholders."

The statement quoted the Board as placing on record "its profound appreciation to Mr. Elumelu for his visionary leadership and exceptional contribution to the strategic vision and institutional strength of the UBA Group."

It added that "Mr. Elumelu's tenure has been a defining chapter in the Group's history. Under his stewardship, UBA was transformed into a pan African institution, operating in 20 African countries and 4 global financial centres and serving over 50 million customers."

Peter Obi Decries Hunger Crisis In Northern Nigeria

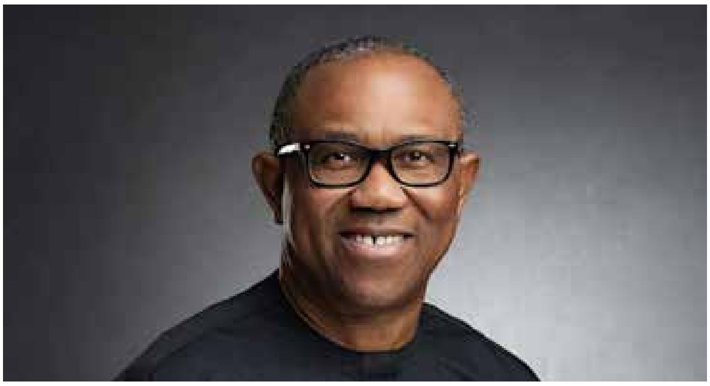
Presidential candidate of the Nigeria Democratic Congress, Peter Obi, has raised the alarm over what he described as an avoidable food crisis ravaging northern Nigeria, following a fresh United Nations report showing that over 17 million people across nine states in the region are facing crisis-level hunger.

Obi, in a post on his X handle on Saturday, said the crisis, described by the World Food Programme as the worst in nearly a decade, was a consequence of what he called incompetent and irresponsible leadership, given that the North remains the country's food basket.

He said more than 35 million Nigerians nationwide risked slipping into hunger during the ongoing lean season, adding that over 10,000 residents of Borno State had already entered what aid agencies classify as "catastrophic" hunger conditions.

"I am deeply troubled by the latest report from the UN's World Food Programme, indicating that northern Nigeria is experiencing its most severe hunger crisis in nearly a decade. Over 17 million people in nine northern states face crisis-level hunger, with more than 35 million Nigerians nationwide at risk during this challenging season.

"The fact that over 10,000 residents of Borno State have entered



'catastrophic' hunger conditions represents not only immense human suffering but also a profound national failure," Obi said, noting that Nigeria's ranking among the world's hungriest nations was inexcusable given its fertile, largely uncultivated land in the North.

The ex-Anambra governor attributed the crisis to two structural failures, insecurity and the inability of farmers to access their farmlands, saying banditry and insurgent attacks had turned agrarian communities into displacement camps.

"This food crisis stems from two critical structural failures: insecurity and farmers' inability to access their lands. Banditry and insurgency have turned agrarian communities into displacement zones. Until we secure our agricultural areas, we cannot secure our future," he said.

Jonathan Debunks Report To Run Against Obi In 2027 For N500bn

A former President Goodluck Jonathan has debunked as "entirely false and baseless" reports claiming he was offered N500 billion to contest the 2027 presidential election against Peter Obi in a bid to split votes in Nigeria's South-South region.

In a statement issued on Sunday, Jonathan's Special Adviser on Media, Ikechukwu Eze, described the report, which circulated widely on Facebook, as fabricated and urged Nigerians to disregard it.

"The report failed to state where or when Jonathan allegedly made such a claim, who was present or who purportedly made the alleged offer," CableNg quoted Eze as saying.

He added that the publication bore "all the hallmarks of fake news deliberately crafted" to mislead the public and drag the former president into unnecessary political controversy.

According to Eze, Jonathan was never involved in any "N500

billion offer to divide the South's votes against Peter Obi in the 2027 general elections."

He said the report failed to provide the basic details expected of a credible story, including when and where the alleged statement was made, the identities of those who supposedly made the offer, or any witnesses to support the claim.

"Jonathan has not made any statement suggesting he was offered money to contest the presidency or undermine any candidate," Eze said.

Over 17 Million Nigerians from Nine Northern States Are Facing Hunger Crisis, Says United Nations

The United Nations World Food Programme has warned that conflict in northern Nigeria, together with shrinking humanitarian assistance, is driving a food crisis to levels not seen in nearly a decade.

It said recent data showed that more than 17 million people across nine conflict-affected states are experiencing crisis, emergency, or catastrophic levels of hunger.

"Across all of northern Nigeria we have been seeing an increase and spread in insurgent attacks and violence," said Serigne Loum, WFP's Deputy Country Director in Nigeria.

"Families are being forced from their home and it's getting harder for WFP to access people who urgently need food assistance," he said.

Nigeria has been battling a jihadist insurgency centred in the north-east since 2009, with a resurgence in violence since 2025.

Jihadists have also been expanding into the north-west, which is already facing a separate, overlapping crisis from armed "bandit" gangs.

The WFP said the expanding conflict is forcing more people from farmland, driving displacement, and restricting humanitarian access.

Aid cuts under US President Donald Trump and other western countries have hit some of Nigeria's poorest households in recent years.

Habiba, a displaced mother with a young baby in Borno States, said sometimes they do not get food "for two nights" while occasionally they get only one meal.

"And when children keep going hungry, it's hard to be with them awake with nothing. That's how I gave birth to this baby, in this situation of total lack," she said.

The WFP said that, at the same time, the number of locations inaccessible to its frontline staff has doubled while cargo movements along major routes are increasingly disrupted by attacks and illegal checkpoints.

It said the suspension of food assistance is driving people towards desperate coping strategies, including cases of individuals joining armed groups in search of food or income.

In some camps, the lack of food aid due to funding shortfalls has triggered an alarming escalation in exploitation and gender-based harm that is particularly impacting women and children.

The WFP said it needs $89 million over the next six months to continue food and nutrition assistance across northern Nigeria before hunger deepens further.

INEC Extends Voter Registration, Launches Online Self-Service Portal

The Independent National Electoral Commission has extended the ongoing nationwide Continuous Voter Registration exercise by an additional two weeks.

The electoral body also unveiled an online self-service registration option for eligible first-time voters.

The commission announced the development in a statement issued on Friday and signed by the National Commissioner and Chairman of the Information and Voter Education Committee, Mohammed Kudu Haruna.

According to INEC, the decision followed a review of the exercise and feedback received from its state offices, political parties, civil society organisations and other stakeholders.

The nationwide CVR exercise, which commenced on August 18, 2025, was initially scheduled to end on July 10, 2026.

The exercise is expected to be the final major voter registration exercise ahead of the 2027 general elections.

However, the commission has now extended the exercise until Friday, July 24, 2026, to enable more eligible Nigerians to register ahead of future elections.

"The extension underscores the Commission's commitment to ensuring that every eligible Nigerian has a fair and reasonable opportunity to be included in the Register of Voters," the statement said.

INEC also announced the launch of an online self-service portal, which will allow eligible Nigerians to initiate and complete their voter registration process, including biometric capture, using their personal devices without physically visiting any INEC office.

The commission said a step-by-step guide would be made available on the portal to assist users.

According to INEC, the system has "robust identity verification, biometric validation, and backend integrity checks designed to preserve the credibility and accuracy of the National Register of Voters."

The electoral body urged all eligible Nigerians who had yet to register to take advantage of the extended registration period and the newly introduced online option.

FBN vs GHL: Supreme Court Voids Appeal Court Judgment, Orders Immediate Handover of FPSO Tamara Tokoni Crude Oil to General Hydrocarbons

The long drawn legal tussle between FirstBank of Nigeria Limited and General Hydrocarbons Limited over the ownership of the crude oil aboard the FPSO Tamara Tokoni, may have come to a conclusive end as the Supreme Court of Nigeria delivered its judgment.

The Apex Court, on Friday, ordered the Chief Registrar of the Court of Appeal and the Admiralty Marshal to immediately hand over the crude oil aboard the FPSO Tamara Tokoni to General Hydrocarbons Limited (GHL), bringing to an end a legal dispute over the asset.

In a unanimous judgment delivered by a five-member panel of justices, the apex court held that the suit instituted by First Bank of Nigeria (FBN) was contractual in nature and not an admiralty matter.

The court consequently ruled that both the Federal High Court and the Court of Appeal lacked the jurisdiction to entertain the case.

The Supreme Court accordingly allowed the appeal filed by General Hydrocarbons Limited and set aside the judgment of the Court of Appeal, describing it as perverse.

Justice Abiru, who read the lead judgment, announced the unanimous decision of the panel comprising Justices Uwani Aba-Aji, Salawa, Agim, Uwa and Abiru.

Fake Agency Scandal: NDC Demands Gbajabiamila's Sack

The Nigeria Democratic Congress (NDC) has called on President Bola Tinubu to immediately remove his Chief of Staff, Femi Gbajabiamila, over allegations linking him to an alleged multi-billion-naira corruption scandal involving a purported non-existent government agency, the Presidential Foreign Intervention Promotion Council (PFIPC).

In a statement issued on Friday by its National Publicity Secretary, Osa Director, the opposition party described the allegations as grave and said Gbajabiamila's continued stay in office could compromise any credible investigation into the matter.

The NDC's demand follows allegations made by Prince Mathew Adeniyi Adeyemi, who claims to be the Director-General of the PFIPC, an agency the Presidency has publicly denied exists.

According to the party, the allegations raise serious concerns about transparency, accountability and integrity within the Tinubu administration.

The NDC alleged that despite the Presidency's denial of the agency's existence, the PFIPC purportedly secured budgetary allocations in the 2026 Appropriation Act and opened a domiciliary account, a Pound Sterling account and a Treasury Single Account (TSA) domiciled with the Central Bank of Nigeria.

The party questioned how an agency described as non-existent could allegedly establish multiple high-level government financial accounts without official approval or the required documentation.

It also called on the Office of the Accountant-General of the Federation to explain whether forged documents were used in processing the accounts.

The statement further alleged that the Head of the Civil Service of the Federation approved 314 staff positions for the purported agency, describing the development as another issue requiring urgent explanation.

According to the NDC, the allegations also include claims that Gbajabiamila demanded 48 per cent of the agency's take-off grant, reportedly valued at N27.39 billion, a request Adeyemi allegedly rejected.

The party also cited Adeyemi's claim that he secured his appointment through the Chief of Staff after allegedly paying N600 million, of which N400 million was allegedly paid through proxies, while N200 million remained outstanding.

It said the alleged unpaid balance reportedly contributed to the Presidency's subsequent denial of the agency's existence.

The NDC further alleged that the claims point to a wider pattern of institutional corruption, including the alleged sale of public appointments.

The party also linked the controversy to the death of Babatunde Tanimola, whom it described as an intermediary between Adeyemi and the Chief of Staff.

According to the statement, Tanimola reportedly died in a fire incident at a hotel in Utako, Abuja, on October 22, 2025, a day after the police reportedly received a petition from the Chief of Staff.

The NDC also referenced Adeyemi's claims that he survived multiple assassination attempts, including an attack along the Abuja-Kaduna Expressway on September 7, 2025, and alleged that certain individuals within government are plotting to eliminate him.

Against the backdrop of the allegations, the party demanded the immediate removal of Gbajabiamila to allow what it described as a full and impartial investigation.

It also called on President Tinubu to establish an independent investigative panel to examine the alleged operations of the PFIPC, including its budgetary allocations, financial transactions, account openings and staff recruitment.

Venezuela Earthquake: Death Toll Hits To 2,954

The death toll from Venezuela's devastating twin earthquakes has risen to 2,954, according to official figures released on Saturday.

Fatalities increased by more than 300 from Friday, with over 16,000 injured following the June 24 disaster that toppled scores of buildings and left thousands still missing.

One of Latin America's worst earthquake disasters has left more than 16,000 homeless and collapsed 190 buildings, mostly in the coastal La Guaira area north of the capital Caracas.

Ten days after the 7.2 and 7.5 magnitude double shocks, rescue teams are starting to wrap up searches for survivors while families try to recover the bodies of loved ones from the rubble.

The critical window for rescues in disasters like earthquakes usually ends after 72 hours, though a few people have miraculously been found alive this week.

Iran's Supreme Leader Khamenei's Funeral Ceremonies Begin

Funeral ceremonies for Iran's supreme leader Ali Khamenei officially began on Saturday, state television reported, an event drawing thousands and intended to serve as a show of strength to the Islamic republic's foes.

Iranian authorities say they anticipate between 15 and 20 million participants in Tehran alone over the next three days for tributes to the man who ran the country for three-and-a-half decades.

Six days of funeral ceremonies are planned to commemorate Khamenei, who ruled the Islamic republic as its number one from 1989 until his killing aged 86 on the first day of the US-Israeli war with Iran on February 28.

The events will be scrutinised in particular for any signs of Khamenei's son and successor Mojtaba Khamenei, who was named supreme leader a week after the killing of his father but is yet to appear in public.

Thousands of mourners carrying red banners — a symbol of vengeance — gathered in the courtyard of Tehran's vast Grand Mosalla religious complex waiting for the arrival of Khamenei's coffin, an AFP journalist witnessed.

Chants of "death to America" and "revenge, revenge" echoed at the venue.

"We came (to the funeral) because we promised the supreme leader we would stand by him to the very end," 37-year-old university professor Reza, who gave only one name, told AFP.

"For a long time, we shouted that we would sacrifice our lives for the leader, but it was he who sacrificed himself for us."

Javad Akbari, 43, a food-processing plant worker, said: "I never had the chance to see the supreme leader up close, and I regret that. Today, I have come to bid him a final farewell."

Another AFP journalist saw mourners walking several kilometres to reach the venue. Hundreds of supporters of the Islamic republic had begun arriving on Friday evening outside the Grand Mosalla.

"We want to say a final goodbye to our leader, which is why waiting like this isn't painful or difficult for us," Somayye Hamedi told AFP.

Significant security measures have been imposed, with roads blocked and airspace expected to be closed for what is set to be the largest-scale public event in Iran since the burial of Khamenei's predecessor Ruhollah Khomeini in 1989.

Attempted Coup: DSS Arraigns Five for Alleged Refusal to Reveal Timipre Sylva's Hiding Place

The Department of State Services (DSS) at the Federal High Court in Abuja, arraigned five associates of former Minister of Petroleum Resources, Timipre Sylva. They are accused of concealing information regarding the whereabouts of their principal, who is alleged to be a financier of an aborted coup attempt against President Bola Tinubu.

Sylva, a former Governor of Bayelsa State, has been declared wanted by the Federal government, and his identified properties have been marked for forfeiture following his indictment as the sponsor and mastermind of the alleged coup plot.

The five associates are Reuben Ayuba, Musa Mohammed, Friday Paul, Paganengigha Anagaha, and Ayebaifife Suobite. They were arraigned on Wednesday before Justice Peter Lifu.

A two-count charge filed against them indicates that the accused became accessories after the fact of felony on April 28, 2026, by concealing the whereabouts of Timipre Sylva, who is classified as a fugitive. The alleged offense is contrary to Section 519 of the Criminal Code Act Law of the Federation of Nigeria, 2004.

Additionally, the DSS has accused them of conspiracy to commit a felony, specifically for concealing the whereabouts of Timipre Sylva, also a fugitive, in violation of Section 516 of the Criminal Code, LFN 2004.

All the accused persons pleaded not guilty to the charges when they were read to them.

DSS lawyer, Emmanuel Orubor, requested that the judge schedule a date for the DSS to commence their trial by calling witnesses to testify against the defendants.

In response, Sunusi Musa (SAN), who represented Reuben Ayuba and Paganengigha Anagaha (the 1st and 4th accused persons), filed a bail application for his clients on various grounds.

Similar applications were made by Ibrahim Imadegbelo, representing Musa Mohammed (the 2nd accused), I. G. Kelubia, standing for Friday Paul (the 3rd defendant), and E. C. Sogo, who argued for Ayebaifife Suobite (the 5th accused person).

The lawyers pointed out to Justice Lifu that their clients have been in custody since October 25, 2025, and urged the court to grant them bail on liberal terms.

In a brief ruling, Justice Lifu granted them bail in the sum of N5 million each, along with two sureties for each, in a similar amount. The sureties are required to swear to an affidavit of means, provide evidence of three years of tax payment, demonstrate visible means of livelihood, and submit recent passport photographs.

Justice Lifu ordered that the claims of identities of the sureties must be verified by the Registrar of the Court.

Pending the perfection of the bail conditions, the Judge ordered that the accused persons be remanded in Kuje Correctional Centre in Abuja and fixed July 22 for the commencement of trial.

2027: Obasanjo Cautions Yayi To Stay focused

Former President Olusegun Obasanjo on Friday urged the All Progressives Congress governorship candidate for the 2027 Ogun State election and senator representing Ogun West, Solomon Adeola, to remain focused on his ambition while seeking divine direction.

Obasanjo gave the advice while receiving Adeola, popularly known as Yayi, at the Olusegun Obasanjo Presidential Library in Abeokuta during a visit by the APC governorship candidate, who sought his support, blessings and guidance ahead of the 2027 election.

"My prayer is that your desires and your ambitions will be in alignment with what God has planned for you," the former President said.

He recalled how his youthful ambition to study geology and work in the oil and gas industry gave way to a military career, which he described as God's purpose for his life.

"I wanted to study geology and become a great geologist, but that was not God's plan for me. God's plan was for me to make progress through the military, and He helped me every step of the way."

"I pray that God's purpose for your life will also be fulfilled. Be focused on what you want to do and what you want to achieve. If anyone has a goal or an aspiration, let them pursue it with determination and leave the rest to God and to our people," Obasanjo added.

Speaking with journalists after the meeting, Adeola described the visit as fruitful, saying the former President shared his expectations for the development of Ogun State and offered guidance on governance.

He said, "I am here to pay homage to our father, the father of the nation, a former President and a respected national leader. As you can see, we received a very warm reception.

"We came to seek his support, his blessings and his guidance, and he graciously gave us all three.

"In his remarks, he made his views loud and clear. He spoke passionately about the future of the state, his expectations and what he believes we must do to keep the state on the right track.

"We have listened carefully, taken his advice to heart, and we will incorporate it into our plans and programmes as we move toward 2027.

"It has been a very successful visit, and I sincerely thank the former President for the warm reception he extended to me and my deputy," Adeola said.

The APC governorship candidate also visited former Ogun State Governor, Ibikunle Amosun, whom he described as his political leader, saying the visit formed part of consultations within the party.

"I am here to call on my leader and also seek his understanding and support, which he has graciously granted.

"I will still return for another scheduled visit when he will be ready to address the press. But today's meeting has been wonderful. As you can see, everyone is happy, the turnout was impressive and we are all speaking with one voice. It is victory for our party in 2027," he said.

Responding, Amosun stressed the need for unity within the APC, saying members should work together rather than create divisions.

Pensioners Hail Tinubu Over N39.6bn Arrears Payment

The National President of the Nigeria Union of Pensioners, Godwin Abumisi, has commended President Bola Tinubu for approving the payment of N39.6bn being 10.6 per cent pension increase arrears owed to pensioners under the Defined Benefit Scheme.

Abumisi spoke in an interview with TVC News shortly after the Pension Transitional Arrangement Directorate and the Ministry of Finance announced the disbursement on Friday.

He said the gesture, alongside other pension interventions by the Federal Government, had strengthened confidence in the administration's commitment to the welfare of elderly citizens.

He said, "We are very happy with the present government. No president in Nigeria has achieved as much as His Excellency, Bola Tinubu, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, GCFR. No other president has done as much as he has."

The pensioners' leader listed other interventions he attributed to Tinubu, including N758bn released for the arrears of pension and gratuity owed to contributory pensioners under the Contributory Pension Scheme, and N58bn for the payment of pension arrears for those on the Defined Benefit Scheme.

"He has released funds to pay 10.6 per cent arrears of pension increase, amounting to N39.6bn. He also made available the sum of N758bn for arrears of pension and gratuity for PENCOM, for contributory pensioners.

"And he provided N58bn for the payment of pension arrears for those on the Defined Benefit Scheme.

"So we are congratulating him, we are thanking him, and we are appreciating all that he is doing for pensioners in Nigeria. We are hopeful he will do even more for us," he added.

Asked whether the development had reinforced pensioners' confidence in the government, Abumisi said the administration had shown commitment to regular payment of monthly pensions since it came into office.

"This government is very much committed to the welfare of elderly citizens in Nigeria. We also know he has plans in place for the regular payment of monthly pensions," he said.

He added that pensioners no longer experienced the delays that had previously characterised pension administration in the country.

"Since he took office, Nigerian pensioners and elderly citizens have been paid their pensions regularly. We no longer have the problems we used to have.

"So I thank him, on behalf of all pensioners in Nigeria, for what he has done, and we expect him to do even more," he said.

Abumisi urged other pensioners to remain loyal to the government and to support the President's re-election bid ahead of the 2027 general election.

"My advice is that we should be loyal to this government, because no other government has done as much as he has. We should support his bid to return to office and ensure he comes back in 2027," he said.

The Federal Government had, on Friday, announced the payment of more than N39bn in inherited pension liabilities owed to pensioners of the defunct Nigerian Telecommunications Limited, Mobile Telecommunications Limited, Power Holding Company of Nigeria, Assurance Bank, NICON and the defunct People's Bank of Nigeria.

According to PTAD, the payments comprised N25.05bn representing a 35-month pension liability owed to 9,675 eligible NITEL/MTEL pensioners, N9.48bn representing the initial 50 per cent payment of Back End Computation arrears to 3,959 PHCN pensioners, and N5.09bn covering the balance of the 10.66 per cent and 12.95 per cent pension increment arrears due to 11,180 pensioners of Assurance Bank, NICON, NITEL and People's Bank.

WHO Launches First Global Database To Track STIs

The World Health Organisation has launched the world's first global database on the prevalence of sexually transmitted infections.

This provides countries with a centralised platform to access standardised and quality-assured data to strengthen disease surveillance and improve public health responses.

Announcing the initiative on Friday, the WHO said the open-access database is the first global platform to consolidate STI prevalence data from low- and middle-income countries collected from 2010 onwards.

The agency said the new resource addresses long-standing challenges in accessing reliable country- and population-specific data by bringing together both published and unpublished evidence from multiple sources in a single platform.

WHO's Director of the Department for HIV, Tuberculosis, Hepatitis and Sexually Transmitted Infections, Dr Tereza Kasaeva, described the database as a significant milestone in the global fight against STIs.

"This database represents a first major step forward in our ability to understand the burden of sexually transmitted infections

across diverse populations and settings.

"By making these data openly accessible, we are equipping countries and partners with the evidence needed to design targeted interventions, strengthen surveillance systems, and accelerate progress towards reducing the global impact of STIs," Kasaeva said.

According to the WHO, the database currently covers five STIs, including chlamydia, gonorrhoea, herpes simplex virus type 2, syphilis, and trichomoniasis, saying it is designed to expand as more evidence becomes available.

As of June 2026, the platform contains data from 766 studies, representing 2,453 prevalence data points collected from a wide range of populations and settings.

IMF: Reveal Those Who 'Stole' 2% of Nigeria's GDP, Atiku Tells Tinubu

Former Vice President and presidential candidate of the African Democratic Congress (ADC), Alhaji Atiku Abubakar, has asked President Bola Tinubu to reveal to Nigerians those who stole two per cent of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

Atiku made the demand through a statement issed on Saturday by his spokesperson, Phrank Shaibu.

The demand followed revelations by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) that Nigeria omitted public expenditure equivalent to two per cent of its gross domestic product, GDP, from recent budgets.

Reacting, Atiku said the IMF's revelation has exposed what appears to be a deeply entrenched system of institutional corruption under the Bola Tinubu administration.

According to him, the IMF's disclosure, coming on the heels of the scandal surrounding the controversial Presidential Foreign Intervention Promotion Council (PFIPC), paints the picture of a government where public institutions are increasingly being converted into instruments for opaque financial dealings.

"The Constitution is not a book of suggestions.

Section 80 is unequivocal: no money shall be withdrawn from the Consolidated Revenue Fund except in the manner prescribed by the National Assembly. Budgetary appropriation is not a ceremonial exercise; it is the legal authority upon which every kobo of public expenditure rests.

"If, as the IMF has revealed, expenditure amounting to two per cent of Nigeria's GDP was omitted from the budget process, then Nigerians are entitled to one simple question: Who stole the missing two per cent of our GDP?

"This is no longer an accounting discrepancy. It is a constitutional, legal and moral scandal. Money does not simply disappear from a national budget. Somebody authorised it. Somebody approved it. Somebody spent it. Somebody benefited from it. Nigerians deserve to know who those people are.

Lake Chad: UNHCR Warns Crisis Nears Dangerous Tipping Point

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees has raised alarm over worsening insecurity across the Lake Chad Basin, warning that escalating violence and rising displacement are threatening to reverse years of fragile stability in the region.

Speaking at a press briefing in Geneva on Friday, the UNHCR Deputy Director for the West and Central Africa Bureau, Andrew Wyllie, said the humanitarian situation had deteriorated significantly across the Lake Chad Basin, which spans parts of Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria.

According to the UNHCR, more than 3.5 million people are currently forcibly displaced across the basin, while 8.2 million require humanitarian assistance.

The agency said security incidents increased by 80 per cent between January 2024 and April 2026.

The agency disclosed that between September 2025 and May 2026, nearly 1,800 security incidents and more than 5,700 fatalities were recorded, including attacks on civilians, killings, kidnappings, explosions, clashes between armed groups and raids on villages.

The UNHCR identified Borno State in northeastern Nigeria as the epicentre of the crisis, saying repeated attacks by non-state armed groups, military operations and growing insecurity along roads and displacement routes continue to force families from their homes while limiting humanitarian access.

It noted that the effects of the conflict have spread beyond the North-East, with insecurity and displacement increasingly affecting the North-West and parts of the Middle Belt.

The agency said that since January 2026, more than 77,500 people have been displaced across the four countries, including over 16,000 refugees who fled attacks in northeastern Nigeria to Niger's Diffa region, where humanitarian partners are providing emergency assistance.

The UNHCR warned that violence is increasingly crossing national borders, with attacks in one country triggering displacement in neighbouring states.

It said persistent attacks continue to fuel insecurity in Cameroon's Far North, while recurrent attacks and military operations in Chad's Lac Province have displaced about 60,000 people, prompting authorities to declare a state of emergency in May.

The agency expressed concern that civilians are bearing the greatest burden of the conflict, noting that recent protection monitoring found that one in five households no longer feels safe in its own community.

Women and girls, it said, face increasing risks of violence while specialised protection services remain critically overstretched.

The UNHCR added that the number of people who know survivors of violence has risen to 27 per cent in 2026 from 19 per cent in 2025, reflecting a worsening protection environment despite widespread underreporting.

Children have also been severely affected, with about half of those living in the hardest-hit areas out of school. In Chad's Lac Province, the figure exceeds 78 per cent.

The agency further reported that one in four people surveyed said there were separated or unaccompanied children in their communities, rising to one in three in Cameroon's Far North.

Wyllie commended governments across the region for keeping their borders open to people fleeing violence and for supporting displaced communities.

He said, "UNHCR is working with them across all four countries to assist people fleeing violence, monitor risks, support new arrivals and ensure families can access documentation, assistance, and, where conditions allow, pathways to return, reintegration and recovery."

Kidnapped Ekiti Worshippers Regain Freedom, Receieves Free Medical Care

The worshippers abducted during an attack on a Christ Apostolic Church in Eda Oniyo, Ilejemeje Local Government Area of Ekiti State, have regained their freedom.

However, one of the victims, a woman, died while in the custody of the kidnappers.

The freed victims are currently receiving treatment at the Ekiti State University Teaching Hospital, Ado-Ekiti, at the expense of the state government.

The victims, released in the early hours of Saturday, were kidnapped on April 28, 2026, when gunmen invaded the Christ Apostolic Church in Eda Oniyo, a border community between Ekiti and Kwara states, during an evening service.

The attackers shot the pastor before abducting 16 worshippers, including women and children, and marched them into the forest.

Sources in the community said the abductors initially moved the victims through forests into neighbouring Kwara State.

The kidnappers initially demanded a ₦1bn ransom, later reducing it to ₦50m. Although the community reportedly raised and paid ₦10.5m alongside other items demanded by the abductors, the victims remained in captivity, prompting protests by residents and a resolution by the House of Representatives calling for their immediate rescue Chairman of Ilejemeje Local Government Area, Alaba Dada, confirmed the victims' release on Saturday but lamented the death of one of the captives.

"I am so happy, and I am sad also. I am happy in the sense that they released the kidnapped persons. We lost one woman among them; that is what makes me sad. But we appreciate God for the people that came back home," he said.

Dada said the victims were initially taken to the General Hospital in Iye Ekiti before being transferred to EKSUTH for comprehensive medical care.

"Their condition is bad, they cannot walk, they are injured, the kidnappers beat them. They said they had not eaten for over a week. But we thank God for their release," he said.

A community leader, Ayodele Oni, described the victims' release as a huge relief after weeks of anxiety.

He said their release ended about 65 days of mental and psychological torture for the community and the victims' families

Confirming the development in a statement on Saturday, the Ekiti State Police Command said the victims were rescued through coordinated security operations.

The Police Public Relations Officer, SP Sunday Abutu, said the rescue followed sustained intelligence-led operations involving the police, military, other security agencies, the Amotekun Corps, local hunters and the Ekiti State Government.

"The rescued victims have since been taken to the hospital for medical examination and treatment to ascertain their health condition and ensure they receive adequate medical care," the PPRO stated.

He added that efforts had been intensified to apprehend the abductors.

The police spokesperson said the Commissioner of Police, Michael Falade, commended all security agencies for their collaboration and appreciated the support of the state government and residents in the operation.

Falana Asks Gbajabiamila to Step Aside for Probe over Alleged PFIPC Fraud

Human rights lawyer, Mr. Femi Falana (SAN) has charged President Bola Tinubu's Chief of Staff (CoS), Femi Gbajabiamila, to step aside and give room for investigation into the allegation of fraud involving his office and the self-acclaimed Director General of the Presidential Foreign Intervention Promotion Council (PFIPC), Adeniyi Adeyemi.

On June 11, 2026 Gbajabiamila denied knowledge of Adeyemi when he presented himself as the Director General of PFIPC which he claimed was non-existent.

Gbajabiamila said he petitioned security agencies in October 2025 after forged appointment letters surfaced and Adeyemi was later charged before the Federal High Court for forgery, impersonation and obtaining by false pretence.

In his reaction, Adeyemi dismissed all the allegations against him, saying he was ready to clear his name in court.

Adeyemi called for an independent panel from Tinubu because those behind the allegations were trying to silence him, stressing that Gbajabiamila issued him an appointment letter.

However, Falana said the Presidency has explanations to make to Nigerians on Adeyemi's travail.

Speaking on Eagle 102.5 FM, Falana insisted that the presidency has exposed Nigeria to "unprecedented ridicule.

He said: "How did an agency that is not created by law find its way into the Appropriation Act of Nigeria? How did that

body get an office in the Federal Secretariat? How did that body successfully open accounts in the Central Bank of Nigeria?

"How did the Head of Service post about 300 staff to that office? The government will have to explain to Nigerians how a sum of N24 billion was budgeted for an unknown agency, as well as how that agency had accounts with the Central Bank of Nigeria.

"If this is a conman that can con the Presidency into issuing a letter of appointment, con the Central Bank into opening accounts, con the National Assembly into inserting the agency into the budget, I think the government is kidding."

Falana said the National Assembly must explain how an "agency unknown to law" was inserted into the budget. Citing Section 81 of the Constitution, he noted that appropriation bills originate from the Executive.

"You cannot have an agency that is not created by law in the budget of a country.

"The government has a duty to ask Mr. Gbajabiamila to step aside to allow for a full investigation in the interest of the country and even in his own interest."

84 Senators Endorsed State Police Bill – Senate

The Senate has defended the passage of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (Alteration) (State Police) Bill, 2026, insisting that 84 of the 109 senators voted in support of the bill during its clause-by-clause consideration, describing the outcome as evidence of broad bipartisan backing for the constitutional amendment.

Defending the Senate's decision in a statement issued by his media office, Senate Leader, Senator Opeyemi Bamidele, said the proposal was the product of years of consultations, public hearings and stakeholder engagements across the country.

Bamidele also dismissed claims that the proposal was driven by partisan interests, insisting that it emerged from extensive

consultations with the Executive, the Nigeria Governors' Forum, the Conference of Speakers of State Legislatures and the leadership of the Nigeria Police.

He noted that public hearings conducted across the six geopolitical zones in July 2025 produced overwhelming support for state police.

N5.8bn Cash Recovered In Six Months - ICPC

The Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission has recovered N5.79bn in proceeds of crime between January and June 2026 as part of its anti-corruption drive aimed at strengthening accountability and national security.

This is as the commission said, corruption continues to undermine Nigeria's security architecture by diverting resources meant for critical public services.

The anti-graft agency disclosed this in a performance report obtained by our correspondent on Sunday.

The ICPC said, "Cash recovered within the review period amounted to N5,789,681,925.02."

The commission said the recovery formed part of broader efforts to safeguard public funds, strengthen institutional integrity and promote transparency across public institutions.

The anti-graft agency added that by safeguarding public funds and promoting transparency, it was directly contributing to creating a more stable and secure environment for all Nigerians.

It stated, "In the face of Nigeria's complex security challenges, corrupt practices remain critical enablers of instability, diverting essential resources from security infrastructure and eroding public trust.

"The Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission plays a pivotal role in curtailing this threat.

"By safeguarding public funds, strengthening institutional integrity, and promoting transparency, the ICPC directly contributes to creating a more stable and secure environment for all Nigerians."

Beyond asset recovery, the commission said it received 271 petitions during the six-month period, while 234 cases were assigned for investigation.

It added that 25 cases were filed before various courts, leading to 20 convictions.

"The ICPC received 271 petitions. Of the 234 cases assigned for investigation, 25 cases were successfully filed in court, resulting in 20 convictions," the ICPC said.

According to the ICPC, it also intensified corruption prevention efforts by conducting 33 systems studies and corruption risk assessments, carrying out 42 corruption monitoring exercises and inaugurating 58 Anti-Corruption and Transparency Units across ministries, departments and agencies.

The commission further said it expanded public enlightenment on anti-corruption through 291 sensitisation sessions and conferences, reaching 199,291 participants nationwide.

It also established 68 Anti-Corruption Clubs as part of efforts to promote integrity among young Nigerians.

Highlighting the significance of its achievements, the ICPC said, "These figures reflect more than statistics; they represent a reinforced front against impunity and a tangible recovery of public assets."

The commission added, "While the battle against corruption is far from over, the ICPC's first-half performance in 2026 demonstrates measurable progress, enhanced public engagement, and a steadfast commitment to building a Nigeria where integrity underpins national security."

Court Reserves Ruling in Times Multimedia Suit Against Afreximbank Over CAX IP Dispute

The Federal High Court sitting in Lagos has reserved ruling in the intellectual property suit between Times Multimedia Ltd. and the African Export-Import Bank, Afreximbank, and others, following arguments on a preliminary objection challenging the court's jurisdiction.

The matter came up on Thursday, July 2, 2026, before Honourable Justice Osiagor.

Times Multimedia Ltd., a Nigerian media and events company, is the originator and registered proprietor of "CAX" – the Creative Africa Exchange.

Court documents state that Times Multimedia conceived CAX in 2017/2018 as a continental trade and investment platform designed to finance, market, and monetize Africa's creative and cultural industries. In 2018, the company formally presented the CAX concept, framework, and business model to Afreximbank for partnership and institutional backing.

Following engagements with Times Multimedia on the CAX proposal, Afreximbank in 2020 launched its own initiative known as the Creative Africa Nexus, CANEX. Times Multimedia alleges that CANEX substantially adopted the core concept,

objectives, and structure of CAX without license, attribution, or contractual agreement, leading to the present suit for intellectual property infringement.

Afreximbank and other defendants filed a Notice of Preliminary Objection, contending that the bank enjoys immunity from judicial proceedings in Nigeria under the _Afreximbank Establishment Agreement, 1993_, Section 9 of the _Diplomatic Immunities and Privileges Act_, Cap D1, LFN 2004, and the _African Export-Import Bank (Privileges and Immunities) Order, 2014_.

Afreximbank was established in October 1993 by African governments and investors to promote intra-African trade. Nigeria is a founding signatory. Article 50 of the Establishment Agreement provides that the Bank enjoys immunity from legal process except to the extent that it expressly waives such immunity.

Counsel to Times Multimedia Ltd. opposed the objection. Counsel argued that the immunity claimed by Afreximbank is not absolute, and that the same Establishment Agreement contains provisions contemplating circumstances where the bank may be sued or subjected to judicial proceedings, particularly in respect of commercial transactions.

The claimant's legal team further urged the court to interpret the relevant instruments holistically and to avoid any construction that would unjustifiably deny an aggrieved Nigerian entity access to court in the absence of a clear and express exclusion of the court's jurisdiction, as guaranteed under Section 6(6)(b) of the 1999 Constitution.

Counsel for both sides argued extensively for over one hour. At the end of proceedings, Justice Osiagor reserved the matter for ruling and adjourned the case to Monday, 29 September 2026.

The ruling will determine whether the suit can proceed against Afreximbank before the Federal High Court.

Can of Worms in the Villa

By Eric Elezuo

The Nigerian public woke this week to the shock of a revelation as to the extent of rot that has engulfed the Presidency, with special reference to the alleged tripatite fraud incident involving the Chief of Staff to the President, Hon Femi Gbajabiamila, the Secretary to the Federal Government of Nigeria (SGF), Senator George Akume and the man in the eye of the storm, Prince Adeniyi Adeyemi Matthew.

The scandal is the case of the supposedly 'phoney' of 'fake' federal agency, the Presidential Foreign Intervention Promotion Council (PFIPC) and Presidential Economic Advisory Council, of which Prince Adeniyi Adeyemi Matthew is the Director-General.

While the Presidency insists that no such agency exists, Adeyemi Matthew maintains that the agency was legitimately established with all necessary and required protocol satisfied. The war of words that has resulted has left the Nigerian popula e bewildered with so many questions begging for answers.

According Prince Adeniyi Matthew, the agency, a legal entity, was established in 2024, and has been running hitchlessly until an issue of repayment of N200million out of a supposed N600 million demanded by the Chief of Staff Gbajabiamila as kickback for the establishment of the agency and appointment of Adeyemi. The now embattled DG claimed that he made a down payment of N400 million at inception, remaining the balance of N200 million.

Adeyemi had stubbornly maintained alleged that Gbajabiamila was connected with his 'appointment' as well as making financial demands, part of which he paid. On the other hand, Gbajabiamila, supported by the Presidency, has denied all involvement, insisting that Adeyemi is a 'con artist', and that the agency never existed, and not known to the federal government of Nigeria. This has raised a huge can of worms that has seem difficult to control.

Nigerians have variously wondered how an agency said to be unknown to law found its way to office accommodation at the Secretariat, opened a Central Bank account, and has an approved allocation in the 2026 Budget passed by the National Assembly, comprising the Senate and the House of Representatives.

Meanwhile, the man alleged to have forged the government appointment letters and falsely paraded himself as the Director-General of the alleged agency, has remained steadfast in his denials, claiming the Presidency is attempting to shut him up. While speaking with PREMIUM TIMES from an undisclosed location, up in 2024.

"They are now after my life. I have gone into hiding. I'm underground," he said.

When asked whether he had fled the country, he declined to respond directly.

"I will not be able to disclose any information now. I don't consider myself safe," he added.

The embattled DG turned suspect also declined to provide his alleged

Presidency accused Adeyemi of forging appointment letters and other official documents while falsely presenting himself as Director-General of the Presidential Foreign Intervention Promotion Council and the Presidential Economic Advisory Council, agencies it insists do not exist.

Presidential spokesman, Bayo Onanuga, said Adeyemi and two others

Adeyemi insisted he had done nothing wrong and described the government's actions as a "defence mechanism," while refusing to disclose his location as he claimed his life was in danger.

He said, "You know the government we have. They are just playing a defence mechanism to shut me up. My organisation was set

appointment letter or any document to support his claim that he was legitimately appointed, saying his lawyers had advised him not to discuss the matter publicly.

"I just decided to speak to you out of respect. My lawyers are working on something. Whatever they say, I will let you know," he said.

Responding, the

have been charged before the Federal High Court on an eight-count charge bordering on forgery, impersonation and related offences.

According to the Presidency, concerns first emerged after the Nigerian Investment Promotion Commission reported that another body appeared to be performing functions similar to its statutory

responsibilities.

The Chief of Staff to the President, Femi Gbajabiamila, subsequently petitioned the Department of State Services and the Nigeria Police Force, alleging that forged appointment letters bearing fake signatures, official seals and reference numbers had been used to create the impression that the suspects were presidential appointees.

The Presidency said investigations revealed that Adeyemi and his associates allegedly operated from an office within the Federal Secretariat Complex in Abuja, held meetings with Nigerian and foreign officials and sought diplomatic support from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for visa applications.

According to the Presidency, police arrested Adeyemi on October 27, 2025, after which searches conducted at his office and residence allegedly yielded forged government documents.

Investigators also alleged that financial intelligence uncovered 34 bank accounts linked to Adeyemi, including accounts allegedly opened in the names of purported government agencies.

The Presidency further claimed that Adeyemi used forged documents to open an account with the Central Bank of Nigeria in the name of the alleged agency, although investigators found that no public funds were paid into the account.

Onanuga also dismissed allegations that Gbajabiamila demanded money from Adeyemi, saying the accusations surfaced only after the suspect was granted police bail.

The case is scheduled to come up before the Federal High Court on July 27.

The Presidency, in a statement issued on Wednesday by the Special Adviser to the President on Information and Strategy, Bayo Onanuga, described Adeyemi as “a con artist” who allegedly used forged appointment letters bearing the name of the Chief of Staff to the President, Femi Gbajabiamila, to create and operate a non-existent Presidential Foreign Intervention Promotion Council, later referred to as the Presidential Economic

Advisory Council.
According to the statement, the alleged scam was uncovered after officials of the Nigerian Investment Promotion Council raised concerns that another purported government agency appeared to be operating alongside it.
The Office of the Chief of Staff subsequently alerted security agencies, accusing unnamed individuals of forging official appointment letters purportedly issued from his office.
"The attention of this office has been drawn to the activities of certain individuals and groups engaged in the forgery of official appointment letters purportedly issued from my office," Gbajabiamila said in a petition dated October 17.
"The fake documents, bearing falsified signatures, reference/folio numbers, and seals, have been used to claim leadership appointments to non-existent entities, with particular reference to the Presidential Foreign Intervention Promotion Council."
The Chief of Staff disclosed that Adeyemi had allegedly established an office at the Federal Secretariat Complex in Abuja, where he reportedly hosted meetings with Nigerians and foreign nationals while presenting himself as the Director-General of the fictitious agency.
According to the petition, the group even sought diplomatic support from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to facilitate United States visas for its purported staff.
"The above development not only constitutes a serious criminal act but also undermines the integrity of the Presidency and the credibility of official government communication," Gbajabiamila wrote.
"I therefore urge you to initiate a thorough investigation to identify and apprehend those involved and also to uncover the network facilitating the forgery."

Foreign Affairs Ministry raises red flag

The statement revealed that concerns over Adeyemi's activities had also reached the Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs after he reportedly convened a meeting with ambassadors at the Wells Carlton Hotel and Apartments in Abuja on October 10, 2025, without the ministry's knowledge.
In a letter dated October 15, 2025, signed by Ambassador Anderson Madubuike and addressed to the Office of the National Security Adviser and the Office of the Chief of Staff, the ministry sought clarification regarding the status of the purported agency.
"This act contravenes extant rules and regulations guiding diplomatic practices globally," the ministry stated.
The enquiries triggered correspondence among the Office of the National Security Adviser, the Office of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation and the Office of the Chief of Staff.
Responding to the enquiries, Gbajabiamila categorically denied appointing Adeyemi or recognising the agency.
"Prince Adeniyi Matthew, Director-General of the Presidential Foreign Investment Promotion Council, is unknown to any office, nor do we have any dealings with the said council," he wrote.
"My attention was drawn to a letter of this purported application, which is fake, and my office has instructed the police and other relevant security agencies to carry out investigations on the person and the entity he claims to represent."
The Presidency stressed that the Chief of Staff could not have issued any appointment letter because appointments into

government offices are the exclusive responsibility of the Office of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation.

Police uncover alleged forgery network

Following the petition, the Police launched an investigation and arrested Adeyemi on October 27, 2025, at the Abuja office from where he allegedly operated the scheme.

Searches conducted at both his office and residence in Suleja reportedly yielded several documents and exhibits believed to be connected with the operation.

Investigators said Adeyemi claimed that one Dolapo Babatunde Tanimola assisted him in procuring the forged appointment letter.

However, police investigations established that Tanimola had died in a fire incident at Kachi Hotel in Abuja on October 22, 2025, five days before Adeyemi's arrest.

According to the State House, investigators established that the agency Adeyemi claimed to head never existed, while the appointment letters and several official documents recovered during the investigation were allegedly forged.

Police also accused him of falsely presenting himself as a presidential appointee and fraudulently requesting a diplomatic note verbale from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to facilitate visa applications for himself and members of his organisation.

Investigators further alleged that Adeyemi operated no fewer than 34 bank accounts, including nine accounts opened in the names of fictitious organisations, including the FCT Investment Promotion Agency and Public Private Partnership (FIPA-APP).

The investigation also found that he allegedly succeeded in opening a Central Bank of Nigeria account by misleading the Office of the Accountant-General of the Federation using forged documents.

The Presidency, however, noted that investigators confirmed no government funds were ever paid into the account.

"The act of the suspect constitutes criminal forgery, impersonation and obtaining by false pretence, thereby bringing the office of the Chief of

Staff to the President and the Presidency to disrepute before the public and international community," the police report stated.

Eight-count charge filed

Based on the outcome of the investigation, police filed an eight-count charge before the Federal High Court in Abuja against Adeyemi and two alleged accomplices on November 27, 2025.

The matter is scheduled for hearing on July 27.

According to the Presidency, Adeyemi, while on police bail, recently resurfaced with fresh claims that the Chief of Staff had genuinely appointed him as Director-General of the agency.

The statement noted that the claim directly contradicted the statement he voluntarily made to investigators during the police probe.

It said the renewed allegation prompted Gbajabiamila to issue another public disclaimer on June 8, reaffirming that Adeyemi was an impostor.

Presidency urges caution

The Presidency said Adeyemi had a history of alleged fraudulent misrepresentation, recalling that in 2016 he allegedly presented himself as President-General of the World Youth Organisation, claiming it was affiliated with the United Nations before the UN reportedly disowned the organisation.

Describing the case as that of "a con artist who appears to have built a web of false claims to deceive unsuspecting government officials and the public," the Presidency urged politicians and members of the public to avoid drawing conclusions before the ongoing criminal trial is concluded.

It further advised that, since the matter is before the court, interested parties should allow the judicial process to determine the allegations against Adeyemi and his co-defendants.

ADC DEMANDS JUDICIAL INQUIRY

The opposition party, in a statement issued on Friday, by its National Publicity Secretary, Bolaji Abdullahi, demanded an independent judicial inquiry into the scandal.

The ADC noted that the allegations surrounding the PFIPC and claims of bribery involving the President's Chief of Staff, Femi Gbajabiamila, go beyond individual wrongdoing and strike at the core of Nigeria's governance and institutional integrity.

The party said it has reviewed the Presidency's July 1 response to the controversy, issued by the Special Adviser to the President on Information and Strategy, Bayo Onanuga, but maintained that the government's explanation raised more questions than answers.

According to the ADC, "Rather than provide answers to the raging questions on this scandal, the statement has instead left more questions."

"If anything, it actually exposed the staggering depth of institutional decay under the APC-led administration of President Bola Tinubu, suggesting that under Tinubu's watch, the Presidency may have become a nest of fraudsters," Abdullahi stated.

The opposition party further alleged that the Presidency's focus on defending Gbajabiamila, instead of explaining how a supposedly non-existent government body allegedly operated across multiple federal institutions, indicated either complicity or gross incompetence.

The ADC argued that by the Presidency's own admission, the PFIPC was described as a "fictitious" organisation, yet it allegedly interacted with ministries, corresponded with government agencies, engaged foreign diplomats, secured official recognitions, and left behind official documentation.

According to the party, the implications extend

General of the Federation; the Central Bank of Nigeria; and relevant oversight committees of the National Assembly be probed.

According to the ADC, the institutions must explain how an organisation, the Presidency now claims never existed, allegedly obtained recruitment approvals, budgetary allocations, diplomatic engagements, and official recognition.

The party called for the immediate establishment of an independent Judicial Panel of Inquiry with powers to summon witnesses, compel the production of official documents, and determine whether negligence, abuse of office, collusion or criminal conduct occurred.

"This matter must not be swept under the Presidential red carpet," the opposition party beyond allegations against a single official and raise serious concerns about Nigeria's national security and governance structures.

The party called for investigations into at least ten individuals and institutions, insisting that only a comprehensive inquiry could uncover the full scope of the alleged scandal.

Among those listed were; Chief of Staff, Femi Gbajabiamila, whom the party said must be investigated over documents allegedly issued from his office and public claims that he received bribes ranging between N200million and N600million from Prince Adeniyi Adeyemi.

The ADC also demanded an investigation into Prince Adeniyi Adeyemi to determine his alleged role in creating and promoting the PFIPC, verify the authenticity of documents linked to the organisation, and examine claims that payments were allegedly made to senior government officials.

The party also demanded that Secretary to the Government of the Federation George Akume; Head of the Civil Service of the Federation Didi Esther Walson-Jack; Director-General of the Budget Office Tanimu Yakubu; the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; the Office of the National Security Adviser; the Department of State Services (DSS); the Nigeria Police Force; the Office of the Accountant-

declared.
The ADC argued that if the PFIPC was indeed fictitious, Nigerians deserved to know how it allegedly secured recruitment approvals for over 300 civil servants, appeared in the 2026 budget, conducted official correspondence and interacted with multiple government institutions.
It added that if the Presidency's claim was false and the PFIPC was a legitimate agency, Nigerians equally deserved an explanation for why the government was allegedly disowning it to shield senior officials from allegations of bribery.
The opposition party insisted, "These are serious questions that cannot be answered by press statements, selective denials, or criminal prosecutions alone."
The ADC also accused the Tinubu administration of applying different standards in the fight against corruption.
The party noted that federal anti-corruption and security agencies, including the ICPC, DSS and EFCC, were swiftly deployed over allegations involving former Kaduna State Governor Nasir El-Rufai, but no similar action had been taken against Gbajabiamila despite the seriousness of the allegations.
"This glaring double standard undermines public confidence and reinforces the perception that there is one standard of accountability for political opponents, and another for those within the inner circle of power," Abdullahi stated.
The party urged President Tinubu to immediately establish an independent Judicial Commission of Inquiry chaired by respected Nigerians to investigate every aspect of the PFIPC controversy.
It warned that failure to conduct a transparent investigation would reinforce public perceptions that the administration was unwilling to confront corruption allegations involving powerful government officials.
The ADC further vowed that should the current administration fail to investigate the matter, the PFIPC scandal would become "one of the very first accountability priorities of an ADC-led government."
The party also warned all officials allegedly connected to the controversy that every approval, financial transaction, budgetary allocation, and official correspondence linked to the PFIPC would face scrutiny under any future ADC administration.
"There will be no sacred cows, no untouchables, and no hiding place for corruption," the party stressed.

ATIKU ABUBAKAR ISSUES 7-DAYS ULTIMATUM

Presidential candidate of the ADC, Atiku Abubakar, has issued a seven-day ultimatum President Bola Tinubu to order an independent investigation into the alleged PFIPC fraud, warning that failure to act could suggest complicity.
Atiku said the scandal, involving claims of a fake agency, budgetary allocations, and recruitment processes, raises serious concerns about institutional failures rather than just individual wrongdoing.

NDC DEMANDS SACK OF FEMI GBAJABIAMILA

The Nigeria Democratic Congress (NDC) also called on President Bola Tinubu to immediately remove Gbajabiamila, over the allegations.
In a statement issued on Friday by its National Publicity Secretary, Osa Director, the opposition party described the allegations as grave and said Gbajabiamila's continued stay in office could compromise any

credible investigation into the matter.

According to the party, the allegations raise serious concerns about transparency, accountability and integrity within the Tinubu administration.

The NDC alleged that despite the Presidency's denial of the agency's existence, the PFIPC purportedly secured budgetary allocations in the 2026 Appropriation Act and opened a domiciliary account, a Pound Sterling account and a Treasury Single Account (TSA) domiciled with the Central Bank of Nigeria.

The party questioned how an agency described as non-existent could allegedly establish multiple high-level government financial accounts without official approval or the required documentation.

It also called on the Office of the Accountant-General of the Federation to explain whether forged documents were used in processing the accounts.

The statement further alleged that the Head of the Civil Service of the Federation approved 314 staff positions for the purported agency, describing the development as another issue requiring urgent explanation.

According to the NDC, the allegations also include claims that Gbajabiamila demanded 48 per cent of the agency's take-off grant, reportedly valued at N27.39 billion, a request Adeyemi allegedly rejected.

The party also cited Adeyemi's claim that he secured his appointment through the Chief of Staff after allegedly paying N600 million, of which N400 million was allegedly paid through proxies, while N200 million remained outstanding.

It said the alleged unpaid balance reportedly contributed to the Presidency's subsequent denial of the agency's existence.

The NDC further alleged that the claims point to a wider pattern of institutional corruption, including the alleged sale of public appointments.

The party also linked the controversy to the death of Babatunde Tanimola, whom it described as an intermediary between

Adeyemi and the Chief of Staff.

According to the statement, Tanimola reportedly died in a fire incident at a hotel in Utako, Abuja, on October 22, 2025, a day after the police reportedly received a petition from the Chief of Staff.

The NDC also referenced Adeyemi's claims that he survived multiple assassination attempts, including an attack along the Abuja-Kaduna Expressway on September 7, 2025, and alleged that certain individuals within government are plotting to eliminate him.

It also called on President Tinubu to establish an independent investigative panel to examine the alleged operations of the PFIPC, including its budgetary allocations, financial transactions, account openings and staff recruitment.

The NDC further urged investigators to probe the circumstances surrounding Tanimola's death and the alleged assassination attempts on Adeyemi, while recommending that Adeyemi be granted witness protection.

The party also demanded that the Chief of Staff produce all official documents signed since assuming office for forensic examination.

In addition, it called for the questioning of officials of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), the Office of the Accountant-General of the Federation, and the Office of the Head of the Civil Service of the Federation over their alleged roles in the matter.

The opposition party also urged the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) and the Nigeria Police Force to commence what it described as a thorough investigation without fear or favour.

"The NDC will not accept the usual tactic of issuing a mere defensive press release from the Presidency as a deflective ploy. Nigerians deserve to know the truth through a transparent process that promotes fairness and justice," the statement said.

INTERNAL CO-CONSPIRATORS FINGERED

On his part, Temitope Ajayi, Senior Special Assistant to President Bola Tinubu on Information and Public Affairs, has fingered possible involvement of internal collaborators in the fake agency scandal.

"Well, it's not impossible, because even the audacity to go and operate inside the government federal secretariat is enough to suggest anything could have gone at some point.

"We don't know how he was able to get a forged letter of appointment by the Chief of Staff to the president.

"We all know appointments into agencies or extra ministerial positions are done by the president exclusively," he said.

Today, Nigerians are divided among those supporting the Presidency and those calling for a sanction against the principal actors; Gbajabiamila and Akume.

Nigerians maintain that the scandal must be investigated to the last evidence, and not swept underneath the carpet.

The alleged scandal is one of many can of worms that has plagued the Tinubu administration since 2023.

The public awaits the outcome of investigations.

The Independence of the Judiciary in a Democratic Dispensation (Pt. 3)

INTRODUCTION

Another public outrage attended the ex parte order granted by a Lagos High Court against the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) restraining it from calling out workers on a planned nationwide strike to protest the hike in price of petroleum products by the Federal Government. An Abuja High Court had refused the application because there was no genuine case of urgency. The Federal Government went down to Lagos and surprisingly a Lagos High Court, which had co-ordinate jurisdiction with the Abuja High Court granted the order. The NLC president, Adams Oshiomhole had to tell the whole world that the order was not binding on the NLC as it was obtained from the "Black market". The strike went on as planned and the image of the Judiciary was worse off and its independence seriously put in question.

Another controversial ex-parte order was that made by a judge in the Abuja Division of the Federal High Court restraining the governor of Anambra State Dr. Chris Ngige from parading himself as governor. The order (which, apart from the questionability of the perceived extreme urgency attending it) could not be reconciled with the state of immunity enjoyed by the governor under the Constitution. The governor had to borrow the "Black market" appellation from Oshiomhole. Even more controversial and outrageous ex parte orders were dished out by the same court on the Anambra crisis alone.

At the heart of the issue of abuse of ex parte orders (especially in political issues) is the attendant erosion of public confidence in the independence and impartiality of the Judiciary. The ugly implications were rightly summed up by a writer as follows:

"In these instances of judicial recklessness, there was always the palpable belief that unseen hands moved the court to issue such controversial ex parte orders. That is the meaning of the 'black market' reference made by Oshiomhole and Ngige. None of them was prepared to obey a 'black market' order obtained outside the 'official market'! They never obeyed and nothing happened!

Abuse of ex parte injunction aside from the grave implications it has on the independence of the Judiciary, is also capable of wide scale socio-political disaster as was the case with the annulment of the June 12 Presidential Election. The Judiciary set the key note of the disaster that followed when an Abuja High Court presided over the late Hon. Justice Bassey Ikpeme made an ex parte order restraining the conduct of the presidential election.

In the popular case of Kotoye V C. B. N 24 the Supreme Court settled the principles governing the grant of ex parte injunctions. Principally, the order can be made,

- When there is a real urgency but not a self-induced or self-imposed urgency.
- Where it is necessary to preserve the res which is in danger or imminent danger of being destroyed, and
- Where there is a real impossibility of bringing the application for such injunction on notice and serving the other party.

When these factors are inapplicable, a wise judge that imbibed good judicial milk would exercise his/her discretion by turning down the application and asking the applicant to put the respondent on notice.

The institution has always stood against the menace of this abuse over the years. The former Chief Justice of Nigeria, Hon. Justice Mohammed Bello once bemoaned,

"indeed, there is urgent need among some of us, the judges, to appreciate that ex parte injunction which was devised as a vehicle for the carriage of instant justice in proper cases should not be converted into a bulldozer for the demolition of substantial justice, we should all realize that justice should be done to public functionaries and public institutions.

It has also been reiterated that lawyers equally have a role to play in the war against abuse of ex parte injunction. In this direction, the Hon. Justice C. P.N. Selong opined thus:

"In as much as the speech of the learned Chief Justice was directed at judges, I beg to opine that the same caution should apply to legal practitioners, after all both judges and legal practitioners are Ministers in the Temple of Justice. It is my humble view that an honest lawyer who abides by the ethics of the profession should not bring an application which is manifestly unjust".

The need for restraint from both the Bench and the Bar on the issue was reiterated at the Annual Bar Conference, Enugu by the then Chief Justice of Nigeria, Honourable Justice Mohammadu L. Uwais, who counseled thus:

"I think it is not out of place to appeal to legal practitioners at large to exercise more restraint in and desist from advising their clients to bring absurd applications to court for ex parte injunctions. You will agree with me that unless such applications are brought, the inconsiderate and reckless judges amongst us will not find the opportunity to embarrass the judiciary and the profession in general".

It must be noted, that it is not in all cases where a judge grants an order perceived to be wrong that an actual case of influence arises. However, the perception of the public about justice is important – whether such perception is rightly or wrongly placed. This is because the standard of justice has always been objective: based on the notion of the reasonable man. Justice must not just be done, but manifestly be seen to be done. As one writer aptly put it:

"The role of the Judiciary in maintaining socio-political order cannot be compromised and once the citizen believes that somebody, other than the law and his judicial conscience, tells the judge what to say or do, then, the dangers of a system break down and institutional failure becomes real".

Accordingly, the resolve of the National Judicial Council (NJC) to henceforth deal with judges who grant ex parte orders with recklessness cannot but be supported and encouraged. Charity begins at home. The filthy Augean stable must be cleansed.

We have concentrated on the issue of in-house cleaning by the Judiciary itself because we realize that the most ready and devastating blow to the independence of the Judiciary in the mind of the public is usually struck by the inability of some of the judges themselves to conduct the affairs of the Bench so judicially and judiciously as to inspire public confidence in their independence from external influence. Even some lawyers themselves fall into the league of those members of the public who doubt the independence of the Judiciary on the ground of questionable judicial orders. In this regard, Uche Onyegorocha, a lawyer and member of the House of Representatives while responding to a question from the press on the unpopular pronouncements of a Federal High Court judge, said:

"I see undue influence in the whole process. I see a person that is not acting independently. Like I said earlier I see people playing the drum for him in the bush and he is dancing on the street".

But beyond the question of conduct of the members of the Bench in handling cases brought before them are more technical and political issues of political, economic/fiscal and intellectual independence. These we shall presently address.

POLITICAL INDEPENDENCE

The Judiciary ought to be apolitical in a democratic dispensation to safeguard its independence. Accordingly, judges should not only be free from political affiliation, but the system should be organized in such a manner as to ensure that a judge does not give a decision biased in favour of a political party, especially the ruling party. Accordingly, Nwabueze identified two forms of judicial involvement in politics (i.e organized politics) as:

- decisions biased in favour of a ruling party, and
- judicial membership of political parties.

It is submitted that Nigeria's adoption of multiparty democracy is healthy for the protection of the 'political independence' of the Judiciary. The term 'political independence' should be understood to mean the freedom of the Judiciary from having any form of political influence exerted ion it as to undermine its independence from any individual, group or another arm of government. Nigeria should strive to refuse any attempt to reduce the country into a one-party democracy since the political independence of the Judiciary would obviously be difficult to be achieved therein. The concept of an apolitical judge is utopian in a one-party system. According to Mr. Justice Georges, a former Chief Justice of Tanzania,

"The concept of the judge as neutral, belonging to no party in the multiparty democracy, can have no meaning …. Where there is one party".

It has been argued that the involvement of the Executive in the appointment of Judges undermines the imperatives for the freedom of the Judiciary from political influence. It is however, our view that the system of appointment under the Constitution is the best we can have at present. If more caution is employed in the appointment of judges, no problem of want of independence would be posed by the appointment method. Nigeria is not yet ripe for election of judges or else the system would be thoroughly polluted by politics. (We shall look at the issue of appointment of judges subsequently).

Indications that a cross section of Nigerians believe that a section of the Judiciary might have compromised their judicial oath can be gleaned from this passage from a major national daily:

"The Chief Justice of the Federation, from indications, prefers his colleagues to stand above the fray of Nigeria's turbulent political process. This position may have been informed by the ignominious role played by the judiciary in the country's chequered political history. But despite the goodwill enjoyed by the judiciary due to a mature handling of suits, that sought to stop the recent general elections, the (sic) a section of the bench may have unwittingly placed this third arm of government in the dock". (To be continued).

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK

"We are under a Constitution, but the Constitution is what the judges say it is, and the judiciary is the safeguard of our property and our liberty and our property under the Constitution" – Charles Evans Hughes

The Inherent Power of Gift-Nurturing

Greetings Destiny Friends,

The saying, the joy of life is not how happy you are, but how happy others can be because of you, is no fluke. The statement emphasizes the importance of building human relationships. Relationships are skills that need to be nurtured.

Building and maintaining relationships is a skill that everyone needs to learn. But importantly, one must be intentional in the kind of relationship they intend to build because failure to cross the t's and dot the i's can have devastating effects on a person.

As human beings, sometimes, we don't know what we have until we lose them. It's instructive to note that one of the major challenges Third World countries have is maintaining culture. These third world countries find it difficult to maintain their roads, schools, provide good health hospitals, or build infrastructural facilities for their citizens. Even as human beings, sometimes, we lack this mindset of not maintaining or developing what we have. This is because we might know how to sing, swim, dance, play soccer, write or even teach, but we don't develop it.

It's instructive to note that the world is usually attracted to strength and not weakness. Isn't it true that nobody celebrates poverty, rather they eulogize successful and wealthy people. So, if you desire to be celebrated, endeavor to develop what's inside of you.

Let me tell you, nobody can celebrate or talk about you if you don't talk or celebrate yourself, and nobody can save you without you making an attempt to save yourself. According to a former President of Nigeria, Dr. Goodluck Jonathan, "you can't wake a man who is pretending to be asleep". That's a powerful statement insinuating the power of self-determination. When you develop what you have, the world will resonate with you. This is what I mean by the power of maintenance.

The question we need to ask ourselves is how do we maintain what we have? Well, maintaining what we have is not as hard as it may appear. All that is necessary for one to be intentional in developing and adding value to their life.

Everyone has a gift or talent, but the challenge we have is that we don't take time to groom it. Beloved, if you don't groom your gift, nobody will do it for you. If you don't speak about yourself, nobody will speak about you. Sometimes, we want glory, but we are not willing to pay the price.

Furthermore, in every sphere of life, maintenance culture is very important. Failure to do so can make one spend more. Imagine having a car with a minor break, if the car is not properly fixed, it will affect other parts of the car. The same principle is applicable if one has a house which needs repairs. The principle of the broken window tells us when a window is damaged, it will be better to pull it out or fix it so we can focus on other things otherwise, it will affect other components in the house.

This principle is also applicable to business, politicians, academics, spirituality, health and family. As a matter of fact, it is applicable in every area of our life. According to Myles Munroe "whatever we don't manage we lose". So, imagine what will happen if we don't develop our skills and talent. The grave is considered the richest soil on earth because of the millions and billions of talents that have been buried inside the soil.

As a budding entrepreneur, we have been told about the power of consistency. When one is consistent, the universe has a way of showcasing us to the world. Let me share a practical example of how consistency works. In 2018, I was given an opportunity to publish weekly articles by Chief Dele Momodu on this online newspaper. I took up the challenge and have been consistently publishing inspirational and creative articles that will assist entrepreneurs and progressive minds to unleash their potential.

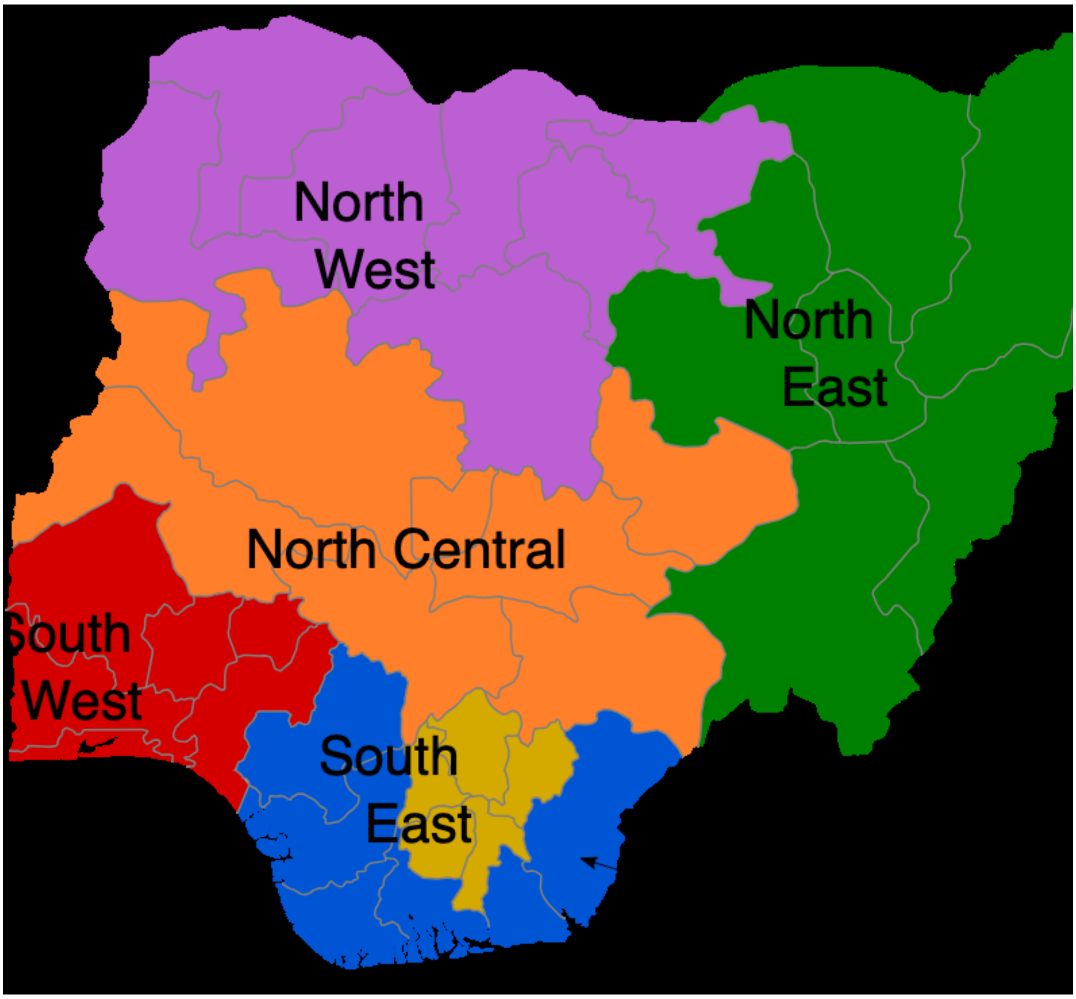
Here is the catch, I have received numerous opportunities and recognition globally from resourceful organizations, in addition to meeting great leaders of thought who have developed interest in my work. It's important to note that I wasn't a great writer at the initial stage, but over time, I have honed my writing skills by interacting and reading from resourceful minds

For business owners, if you have a business, consider learning all necessary information including taking certification classes, training and networking with the right people to acquaint yourself to the extent an opportunity presents itself. Also, sometimes we wait for people or big organizations to give you big opportunities to showcase your work to the world, but we fail to understand that we have what it takes to attract global attention which will bring the big names and organizations we desire to come to us. But we are not willing to pay the price.

I can remembered when I started my business, I had no clarity of what I was doing, but because I was intentional to learn, I attended many online trainings and today I can boldly say that by the special grace of God, my organization have partnered with global organizations and United Nations Development Programme to train youths in Rwanda on Leadership. The moral of this message is that I maintained my line, I maintained my skill, talent, I developed myself, but more importantly I didn't give up on what I have inside me. I may not know your experiences or situations or expectations, but if you can stay focused and do the needful, I have no doubt the world will celebrate you in due time.

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

Will Tinubu's Six Geopolitical Zones Save the One Nigeria Project



Governance of any people group is supposed to be by consent of the people; that is why even in a monarchical system of government, the King, with all their ultimate power, still consults with the people for their opinion. However, in Nigeria, governance seems more like by default of the presidency; as if it holds the absolute authority to decide what is good and bad for the people.

Nigeria, a creation of the British government in the twentieth century, feels now as though it has been reshaped by some unknown hands, far beyond what an ordinary man can decipher. For a starter, Nigeria was governed for most of the twentieth century by brute force, both by the colonial masters and then by the men in army uniform.

That century of terror has shaped Nigeria and Nigerians into obedient servants who will do anything to survive at the hands of their oppressors. For instance, apart from the 1963 constitution, Nigerians themselves have not been allowed to decide their own fate constitutionally. We are constantly being told how we must live and who we must live with. Worst of them all is the 1999 constitution, which is an aberration which should not be tolerated by any people group, yet over 200 million people suck up to it and do as they're told.

There seems to be another twist to the continuous deprivation of liberty of the people to decide their own future and dignity. Many proponents of the restructuring of Nigeria will hail President Tinubu's 2026 Six-Geopolitical-Zonal-Bill as the panacea for a New Nigeria. However, what they fail to realise is that a house that is built on lies can never stand the test of time.

If, truly, Nigeria is to be restructured along ethnic lines, then there needs to be a genuine Sovereign National Conference to discuss our living together as a multi-national entity. One that can guarantee the sovereignty of the people to determine their own future should the relationship go south.

By merely cooking up a bill in the National Assembly to declare Nigeria a six-geopolitical entity with a four-tier governance system seems a little excessive. One that is bound to waste valuable resources without real tangible benefits for the ordinary people.

The new structure, instead of addressing the marginalisation each region has been experiencing, will further put a great divide among the ethnic nationalities. There is no real foundation for the restructured unit order than creating a more complicated system of government, one that is bound to erode trust.

By passing this bill into law, the presidency is vesting the powers of the six geopolitical zones in the current State Governors, who shall take it in turns as Chairmen/ Chairwomen. We all know that the track records of our State Governors are nothing to write home about. Besides, there will be a conflict of interest when a Governor who is supposed to be administering resources of his/her state is also disbursing funds for the regional government.

It may seem as if the six geopolitical zonal arrangement is the glue that finally binds Nigeria together, but it is the ultimate doom for the "One-Nigeria" project. If Nigeria is to overcome the challenges it faced in the twentieth century, then it needs to be honest with itself in the direction it wants to take in the twenty-first century.

Politicians and their cronies cannot continue to behave as if they own Nigeria, or as if the opinions of the people don't matter. Nigeria don't need a four-tier governance structure, and the Yoruba land doesn't need the current Governors to run the affairs of the proposed zonal government.

If the Federal government were sincere about the geopolitical zonal arrangements, it should have allowed each zone to determine how they want to be structured and administered. Yorubaland can deal with one administrative head with numerous provinces administering their own sub-groups, thereby driving development down to their people.

I don't see what a sitting Governor can achieve within one year of being Chairperson of a geopolitical zone. That time alone is not even enough to do something tangible, let alone build any legacy project or infrastructure for the benefit of the people.

Whilst the six geopolitical zones are a step in the right direction for the dissolution of the "One Nigeria" project, we Yoruba must seize the opportunity that comes with reclaiming our sovereignty. We must ensure that we build a solid security architecture that can withstand any military takeover of Nigeria, so that we don't return to the mistakes of 1966.

Yoruba must now insist on using the nomenclature "Yoruba" to identify our geopolitical zone rather than southwest Nigeria. We must begin to build our Yoruba brand gradually from defence to sports and every other facet of development. We must not get entangled with the affairs of "One Nigeria", as we know the Nigeria of today is nothing but disaster for the Yoruba people, one which we must avoid like a plague.

AI and Neurodiversity: The Future Must Work for Everyone

I've been thinking about this question for a while now.

What if the problem was never the individual…but the way the world was designed?

For years, the conversation around neurodiversity has quietly leaned in one direction, that those who think or communicate differently need to adjust. Fit in. Learn to operate within systems that were never really built for them.

You see it everywhere.

In schools that reward one way of learning.

In workplaces that value one way of thinking.

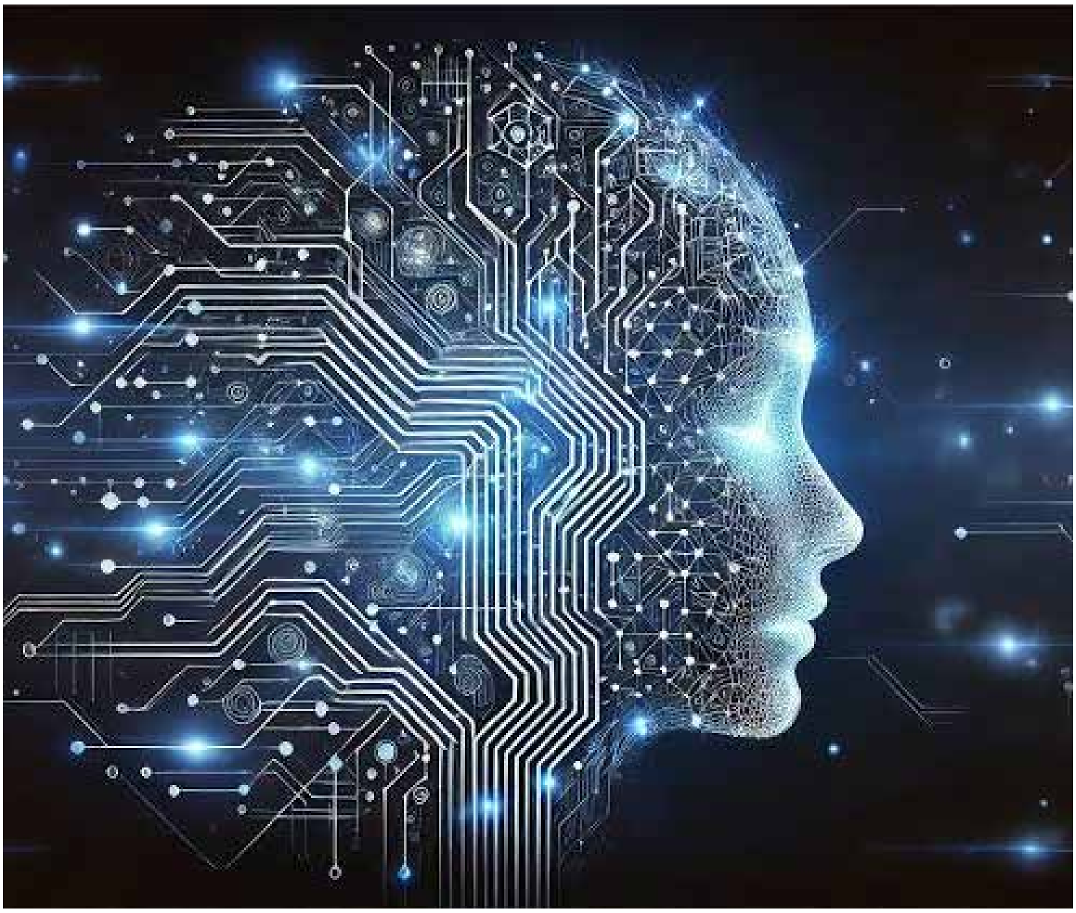
In everyday interactions that expect one way of communicating.

So we ask, almost without thinking: How can they fit in?

But maybe we should be asking something else entirely.

Why hasn't the world learned to fit them?

For many families, this isn't a theory. It's just life. There's no clear roadmap. You figure things out as you go. Some days you feel like you're making progress, other days it



feels like you're starting again.

You find yourself stepping into roles you never imagined. Most often, you are either explaining, researching or advocating. And sometimes, just hoping that someone, anyone will take the time to really understand your child.

As a mother, this is not something I observe from a distance. It is my life…

My son, Akintade, is autistic.

There have been moments over the years where communication felt… difficult. Not because he didn't have something to say, but because the world didn't always offer him the right way to say it.

And there were times I would look at him and know with absolute certainty that there was so much inside him waiting to be expressed, if only the world knew how to listen.

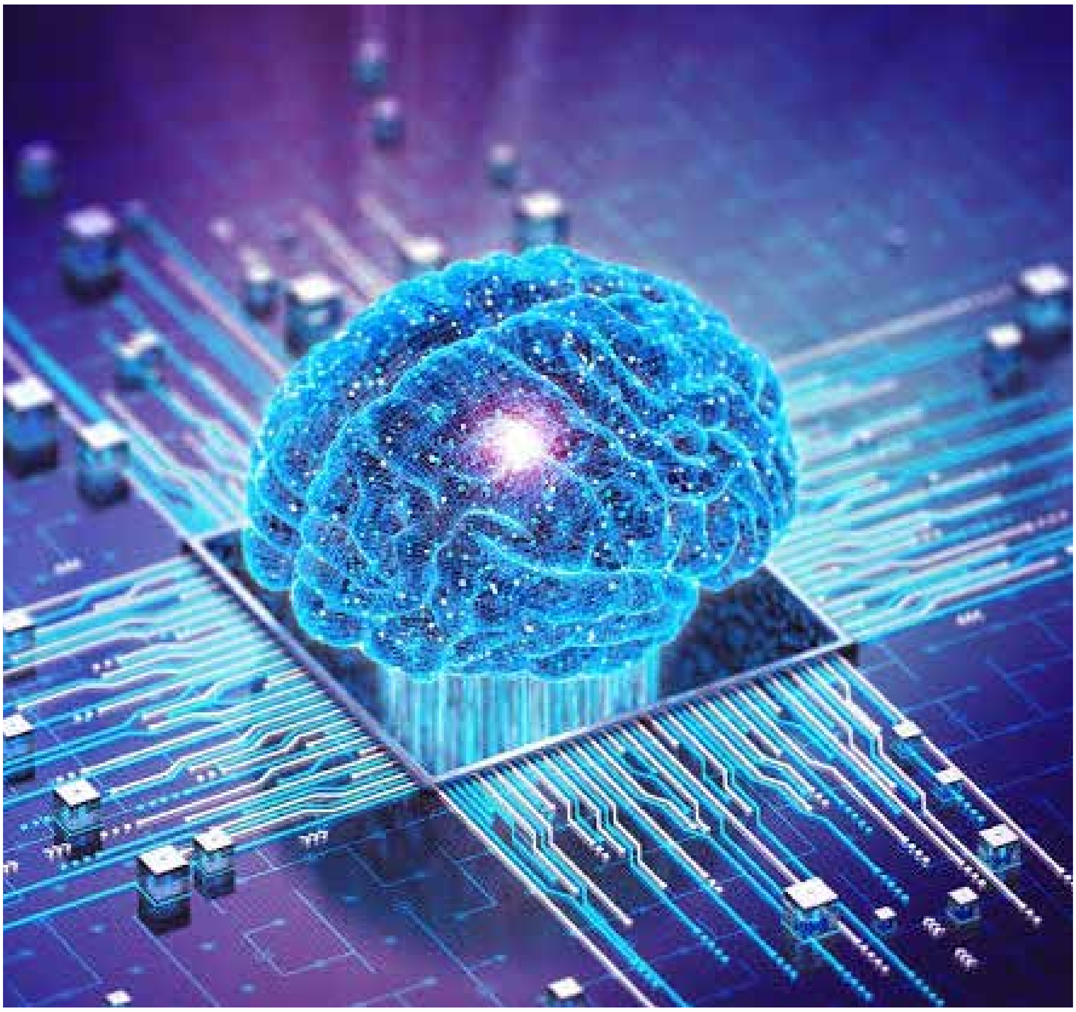
And that's something I think we often get wrong.

We see silence and assume there's nothing there.

We see difference and assume there's a limitation.

But that hasn't been my experience as a techie mother of an autistic child. I have used several technologies to facilitate my son's communication

skills.
What I've seen over time is that when the right support shows up, things begin to shift.
Not in dramatic, headline-making ways. But in quiet, meaningful ones.
Moments where expression becomes easier.
Moments where connection feels possible.
Moments where he engages with the world on his own terms.
Technology has played a part in that
Not as a solution to everything. But as a bridge.
And those moments change how you see things.
You start to realise that the issue was never ability.
It was access.
It was design.
It was understanding.
And that's where artificial intelligence starts to matter, not as a buzzword, but as something with real potential. Because unlike traditional systems, AI has the ability to adapt.
It can meet people where they are. It can support different ways of learning, different ways of communicating, different ways of processing the world.
And for neurodiverse individuals like my son, that's powerful. It shifts the conversation.
Away from "fixing" the individual…
and towards supporting their potential.
But I also think we need to be honest about something.
Technology on its own is not enough.
If anything, we've already seen what happens when systems are built without real understanding. They exclude. They overlook. They miss the people who need them most.
AI will be no different if we're not intentional.
If neurodiverse individuals are not part of the conversation — not just as users, but as voices that shape these systems — then we risk repeating the same patterns.
Just at a much bigger scale.
And that would be a missed opportunity.
Because this moment, we're in right now… it matters.
We're not just building tools.
We're shaping the kind of world people will live in.
When I think about the future of AI, I don't just think about how advanced it will become.
I think about whether it will be more thoughtful.
More inclusive.
More aware of the fact that not everyone experiences the world in the same way.
Through my journey with Akintade, I've learned something that stays with me.
Every person has a voice.
It might not always sound the way we expect.
It might not always be easy to understand straight away.
But it's there.
And when the right support is in place, when the right tools exist, when the right mindset is applied that voice can be heard.
So maybe that's the real question we should be asking as we continue to build and invest in artificial intelligence:
Who are we building it for?
Because a future driven by technology should also be a future guided by empathy.
Otherwise, we risk creating something powerful…that still leaves people behind.
And that, to me, would not be a failure of technology.
It would be a failure of humanity.



Panorama

BY DR SANI SA'IDU BABA
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ICYMI: How GLO's Customer-Centred Innovations' Keeping Nigerians Connected to the 2026 FIFA World Cup

The FIFA World Cup is more than just a football tournament. It is a global celebration that unites families, friends, colleagues and even strangers through a shared passion for the beautiful game.

During previous FIFA World Cups, it became a tradition for many Nigerians to gather in homes, viewing centres and sports bars to watch the matches together. In my own case, particularly during the 2014, 2018 and 2022 FIFA World Cups, friends and professional colleagues regularly converged at my residence to enjoy the excitement, analyse the games and celebrate memorable moments together.

However, the 2026 FIFA World Cup presents a different reality. Hosted across the United States, Canada and Mexico, many of the matches are scheduled to kick off at 12:00 a.m., 1:00 a.m., 2:00 a.m. and even 3:00 a.m. Nigerian time. These unusual hours make it difficult for many football lovers to travel to commercial viewing centres.

Even where viewing centres are available nearby, concerns about insecurity discourage many people from leaving their homes in the middle of the night. Added to this are the familiar challenges of unreliable electricity supply and the high cost of maintaining generators, solar systems, televisions and satellite subscriptions. For millions of Nigerians, watching the World Cup from home on a conventional television setup is simply not practical.

Fortunately, one device has become almost universal, the smartphone. With a smartphone and internet access, millions of Nigerians can now enjoy the World Cup from the comfort and safety of their homes through football streaming and live-score applications. Platforms such as Yacine TV, the World Football App, and other similar football streaming and match-tracking applications have made it possible for fans to watch live matches where available, follow live scores, receive instant match updates, enjoy highlights and remain fully engaged throughout the tournament without relying on a traditional television setup.

This is where Globacom's recent customer-focused innovations become particularly significant.

The introduction of the "More Data More Value" initiative gives subscribers substantially more data for the same amount spent. Since live football streaming consumes considerable data, larger data allocations make it more affordable for football enthusiasts to watch matches, follow highlights, monitor statistics, engage in online discussions and enjoy uninterrupted streaming throughout the tournament.

Just as important is Globacom's decision to expand its Borrow Me Credit service. Anyone who has experienced running out of airtime or data moments before an important match understands the frustration. Missing a decisive penalty, a dramatic comeback or the final minutes of a knockout game simply because of insufficient credit can be heartbreaking.

With the enhanced Borrow Me Credit service, eligible subscribers have an additional safety net. Even when airtime or data runs low unexpectedly, they have the opportunity to stay connected instead of being completely cut off from the action by simply dialing *303# and choosing from the available airtime or data borrowing options. This simple and convenient solution ensures that an empty balance does not necessarily mean missing the next goal, a dramatic equaliser or the decisive moments of a World Cup match.

These initiatives reflect Globacom's customer-centred philosophy of developing practical solutions that respond to the everyday realities of Nigerians. As the world focuses on the biggest football tournament on earth, millions of Nigerians are not just looking for a network; they are looking for reliable, affordable and uninterrupted connectivity that allows them to experience every goal, every save and every unforgettable moment.

The 2026 FIFA World Cup may be taking place thousands of kilometres away in North America, but through innovative services such as More Data More Value and the expanded Borrow Me Credit service, Globacom is helping bring the excitement closer to millions of football-loving Nigerians. Whether they are watching from their living rooms, bedrooms, hostels or offices during break periods, Glo's customer-centred innovations are making it easier for fans to remain connected to the world's biggest sporting event.

Beyond the World Cup,

the impact of these innovations extends even further. Thousands of small businesses across Nigeria depend on reliable and affordable internet connectivity to communicate with customers, market their products on social media, process online transactions, attend virtual meetings and deliver digital services. By providing more value through its data bundles and ensuring that eligible subscribers can remain connected through the expanded Borrow Me Credit service, Glo is also supporting entrepreneurs, freelancers, students, content creators and other participants in Nigeria's growing digital economy whose livelihoods depend on sustainable network access.

For many Nigerians, these are more than telecommunications products; they are timely innovations that offer hope and convenience at a time when the challenges of electricity, insecurity and economic realities could easily prevent football lovers from enjoying the World Cup. They are equally long-term investments in Nigeria's digital future, empowering individuals and businesses to remain productive long after the final whistle of the tournament has been blown.

Globacom deserves commendation for consistently demonstrating that innovation is most meaningful when it is driven by the needs of customers. Through the "More Data More Value" initiative and the expanded Borrow Me Credit service, the company has once again shown its commitment to solving real-life challenges facing Nigerians. By making it easier for football lovers to enjoy the 2026 FIFA World Cup and by empowering small businesses with more affordable and reliable connectivity, Glo has reinforced its reputation as a truly customer-centred and solution-driven network. These innovations are not merely new products; they are practical responses to everyday challenges and yet another testament to Globacom's enduring commitment to enriching the lives of Nigerians through innovative telecommunications solutions…

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The Inherited Fracture: Escaping the Divide-and-Rule Instinct Across Board

By Tolulope A. Adegoke PhD

"The old empire did not bequeath us a map; it bequeathed us a reflex. We are the first generation with the tools to see the fracture, and therefore the first with the moral chore of mending it—not through the erasure of difference, but through the deliberate weaving of it into a load-bearing fabric. The shackle was never iron; it was a story we mistook for our skin. The task, therefore, is not to break free, but to finally tell a truer one, and in the telling, become whole enough to bequeath wholeness."

Introduction: The Quiet Inheritance

No child is born with a map of enemies. No infant instinctively divides the world into "us" and "them." Yet by adolescence, most of us have unconsciously inherited a vivid cartography of division—lines drawn long before our first breath, tracing the borders of tribe, class, ideology, and nation. This inheritance is not accidental. It is the meticulously preserved residue of a strategy so ancient and so effective that it has become woven into the invisible fabric of how we organize our families, our work, and our geopolitics.

The strategy is "divide and rule," and its enduring victory is not that it conquered past civilizations, but that it continues to conquer future ones before they are even born. The shackle from the past is not a rusty iron chain we can see and cut; it is a psychological operating system, a default setting of fragmentation that tells us difference is dangerous, that another's gain is our loss, and that solidarity is a naïve dream. This write-up is an inquiry into how that inherited mantle still drapes itself over the three great arenas of human life—Peoples, Corporates, and Nations—and, more crucially, how we can finally, generationally, set it down.

Part I: Tracing the Original Wound

To understand why division feels so instinctive, we must first recognize that it was carefully taught. The imperial architects of history—from the Roman Senate setting Gallic tribes against each other to the colonial census offices that rigidly codified fluid identities into immutable castes—were not mere conquerors of land. They were engineers of human psychology. Their profound insight was chilling in its simplicity: a people busy fighting each other over manufactured scarcities of dignity, resources, and recognition will never marshal the collective strength to question the structure of the room they are all trapped in.

This method did not fade with the lowering of colonial flags. It shape-shifted. It flowed seamlessly into the architecture of modern politics, where wedge issues and culture wars create passionate, performative tribes that exhaust public energy on symbolic combat while systemic questions go unasked. It entered the economic realm, where labor is pitted against labor across borders, and the workplace is structured into competing fiefdoms. It found its ultimate amplifier in the digital age, where algorithms, optimized not for truth but for engagement, feed us a personalized diet of indignation, continuously redrawing the lines between "our" fact and "their" fiction.

The deepest shackle, therefore, is not an external policy but an internalized reflex. The generational problem we face is that we parent, manage, and govern with the inherited assumption that a cohesive whole is a dangerous fiction, and that a controlled, managed division is the safest form of stability. We have mistaken a centuries-old psychological warfare tactic for human nature itself.

Part II: Peoples – From Inherited Suspicion to Chosen Solidarity

The most intimate theater of the divide-and-rule legacy is the community, where the human need for belonging is manipulated into a weapon against other belonging. We inherit not just our grandmother's recipes but also her historical wounds, her curated list of historical betrayals by "the others." When identity becomes a fortress, and every interaction across difference is framed as a potential siege, society unravels into a zero-sum competition of grievances. One group's acknowledgment becomes another's perceived erasure, and the common ground—the very earth we all need to survive on—becomes a forgotten abstraction.

The Generative Pivot: The Loom, Not the Mosaic

The conventional metaphor for unity is the mosaic—distinct tiles fixed in place. But a more dynamic, human solution is the loom. In weaving, distinct, colorful threads do not merely sit beside each other; they actively interlace under creative tension to produce a fabric far stronger and more beautiful than the loose pile of individual strands. This is the generational work: to weave a social fabric where difference is not merely tolerated but is the essential, structural component of collective strength.

1. The Alchemy of Shared Enterprise: Nothing dissolves manufactured mistrust like sweating together for a common purpose invisible to ideology. When a neighborhood of diverse faiths and backgrounds collaboratively designs a green space, starts a community-owned energy cooperative, or builds a multi-generational

playground, something alchemical occurs. The direct, felt experience of shared competence and mutual reliance creates a counter-narrative to the inherited one. A child watching a Sikh father and a Muslim mother co-chair a local river cleanup does not just learn tolerance; they learn the tangible truth of interdependence. This solves the generational problem of social fragmentation not through lectures on unity, but by providing the real, material evidence that we live better, safer, and richer lives when we are bound together in practical projects. It transforms the public from an audience of divided spectators into a collaborative cast of problem-solvers.

2. Re-narrating the Past Together: The past is often a weapon, parceled out in separate, conflicting memories. A generational solution is the community-wide re-narration project—a collective, facilitated process where a town's entire history, including its moments of deep division and injustice, is documented and acknowledged not by one side for its own vindication, but by all sides for the purpose of a shared, complex inheritance. When a painful historical event ceases to be "their crime against us" and becomes "a tragedy in our shared story from which we must all learn," the emotional charge is diffused. The next generation inherits not a selective, incendiary pamphlet, but a full, somber, and ultimately uniting library of shared experience.

Part III: Corporates – From Fiefdoms of Turf to Ecosystems of Flow

The modern corporation, for all its talk of disruption, is often a deeply conservative feudal structure. The inherited mantle here is the cult of the silo. Departments become sovereign nations with their own languages, rituals, and guarded borders. Marketing and Sales engage in a cold war of blame; Product and Engineering view each other as obstacles. This is internal divide-and-rule in its most mundane, daily form: a management inheritance that subconsciously fears a truly unified, cross-functional workforce because a fluidly collaborating team is harder to control than a set of competing baronies.

The generational cost is the "perfect department, failing company" paradox, where each unit optimizes for its own narrow metrics—sales volume, lines of code, ad impressions—while the living, breathing organism of the enterprise, the thing that actually delivers value to a human customer, atrophies.

The Generative Pivot: The Symphony, Not the Org Chart

The solution is a fundamental shift in structural metaphor from a static hierarchy to a living symphony. An orchestra does not succeed because the brass section beats the strings. Every musician has a completely different, highly specialized instrument and a distinct musical line to play, yet all are integrated by a single unifying element: the full score.

1. The Shared Score of Radical Transparency: The corporate "score" is a single, universally accessible, real-time operating system that visualizes all work, all customer feedback, all financial flow. When a junior developer can see exactly how her code latency impacts customer churn in a chart viewable by the CEO, the informational hoarding that powers silo politics evaporates. Power no longer comes from guarding a border of knowledge but from contributing to the visible whole. This solves the generational problem of corporate sclerosis by ensuring that the enterprise inherits a nervous system, not a suit of armor. An organization that sees itself whole can act whole.

2. Mission-Driven, Ephemeral Teams: Instead of permanent departments, work flows to ephemeral, mission-specific teams that form, solve a problem, and dissolve back into the organizational fluid. A sustainability initiative, for example, is staffed not by a permanent "Green Department" that everyone else ignores, but by a temporary swarm pulling in a supply chain veteran, a materials chemist, a brand storyteller, and a frontline retailer. Their shared KPI is a unified, real-world outcome. When a professional identity is no longer "I am a Marketing person defending my turf" but "I am a problem-solver who brings marketing insight to the mission," the inherited mantle of internal division is finally unwoven. The company's grandchildren—its long-term future products and culture—are protected by this fluid, adaptive resilience.

Part IV: Nations – Beyond the Westphalian Straitjacket

The nation-state system is the most monumental and seemingly immovable of the inherited mantles. Born from the idea of absolute, internally homogenous sovereignty, it creates a world of hard containers where the most critical threats we face—a warming atmosphere, a migrating virus, the existential risk of ungoverned artificial intelligence—flow like water across borders we treat as concrete. We are trying to solve planetary-scale, networked problems with a batch of standalone, disconnected operating systems. An election-cycle-driven leader performing national interest for a domestic audience is structurally incentivized to prioritize a 2% short-term domestic gain over averting a 20% long-term global disaster.

This is the ultimate gerontocracy of concepts: an inherited 17th-century political structure mismanaging 21st-century existential threats. The shackle is a logic that says global cooperation is a zero-sum sacrifice of sovereignty, rather than a strategic extension of it...*continue reading on https://thebossnewspapers.com/2026/07/04/the-inherited-fracture-escaping-the-divide-and-rule-instinct-across-board/*

The Audacity of the Rubber Stamp Republic

By Boma Lilian Braide (Esq.)

I am going to drop the polite grammar and speak instead with the raw, burning anger that every suffering Nigerian now feels. The government's official response to this scandal is an insult to our collective intelligence.

How does anyone expect a nation of over two hundred million people, many of whom can barely afford a meal, to accept the childish story that, a lone con artist, armed with a single forged letter, conquered the apex institutions of the Federal Republic and printed his own sovereignty?

Are we truly meant to believe that one man hijacked the country's most powerful financial, legal and security institutions for over two years without high level assistance from within? Do the authorities genuinely take us for fools? The audacity is staggering.

We are asked to believe that, with the Department of State Services and our entire intelligence network at its disposal, a single individual, lacking protection from insiders, managed to run the operations of the Presidential Foreign Intervention Promotion Council from a physical office inside the Federal Secretariat for 28 months.

That he extracted a sovereign domain name from the National Information Technology Development Agency, ordered the Accountant General to deploy career civil servants, was received with honours by the Chairman of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, secured a seat beside the Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives, and opened 34 separate bank accounts across the country, all without a single accomplice inside government.

It is a physical impossibility. No single person wakes up, forges one letter, and compels ten major government institutions to do his bidding without powerful insiders clearing his path.

The legislative arm of government is equally complicit in this failure. The same senators and representatives who insist they are guarding our national treasury during budget defence sessions stood by while budget code 0111062001 was quietly inserted into pages fifty and fifty one of the 2026 Appropriation Act, handing ₦1.3 billion of public funds to a ghost.

This is a horror story unfolding in real time, in which the very people elected to protect our commonwealth were caught sleeping on duty, only to rush out with long, hollow press releases once the secret leaked and public outrage began.

So We are expected to believe that a phantom entity infiltrated government computer systems and inserted a multi-billion

Naira agency into the President's budget proposal before it even reached the National Assembly on 19 December 2025, without a single official noticing. This episode lays bare the broken pipelines that allow greedy politicians and their associates to clone the machinery of state, occupy government offices and siphon public funds from within.

The roots of this failure lie squarely within the Budget Office of the Federation and the Ministry of Budget and Economic Planning. The national budget is meant to be locked securely inside the Government Integrated Financial Management Information System; a portal built specifically to ensure that not a single kobo is spent unless it belongs to a legally recognised ministry. Yet a brand-new budget code for 2026, one with no legal or financial existence in either 2024 or 2025, was manufactured and smuggled into that very system.

Let us be honest with ourselves. For a fake agency to lock down a ₦1.3 billion allocation; covering salaries, office running costs and capital projects, including a highly specific ₦182.5 million earmarked for summit logistics, someone holding a high-level administrative password had to sit at a terminal and type those figures in personally. A budget code does not generate itself, and it certainly does not wander into a signed executive budget document by accident. That this fraudulent code survived every committee defence session and review stage on its way to becoming law proves that legislative oversight in the National Assembly has become theatre, a performance of political alignment rather than a genuine audit of public spending.

This financial decay extends directly into the banking sector, where a phantom agency was permitted to open and operate 34 separate commercial bank accounts, in open defiance of the Treasury Single Account policy. Nigerian banking regulations state plainly that no commercial bank may open an institutional account for a government body without a physically verified letter of introduction from the Office of the Accountant General of the Federation. That dozens of active accounts were spread across multiple well-known banks confirms that compliance checks have become a formality rather than a safeguard. It reveals that bank managers, driven by aggressive deposit targets, abandon due diligence the moment a well-dressed client arrives bearing a document stamped with the State House logo. This failure of compliance handed a criminal syndicate a secure, private channel through which to move, conceal and launder stolen public funds under the very nose of our financial regulators.

The digital and physical infrastructure erected for this fake agency in the heart of Abuja exposes a civil service built on blind obedience rather than genuine coordination.

On 30 September 2024, the National Information Technology Development Agency formally approved and activated an official government website, pfipc.gov.ng, for this ghost council. The agency's own guidelines mandate a rigorous verification

process, requiring explicit clearance from verified ministers or heads of legitimate agencies before granting the digital authority of a gov.ng suffix. That this fraudulent domain went live suggests that verification officers either abandoned their own rulebook entirely or were complicit in the scheme.

Once the fraudsters secured this digital camouflage, they used it to acquire a physical headquarters on the second floor of Phase III of the Federal Secretariat in Abuja, a heavily guarded government complex where legitimate agencies often wait months for a single office. The machinery of civil service ran on unquestioning deference. When the fake director requested staff on 4 April 2025, deployment officers at the Accountant General's office processed the request without hesitation. Three senior civil servants were formally deployed to a ghost agency, and their posting letters were proudly published on the government's official website on 28 August 2025. These civil servants reported for duty on 8 September, took up desks and drew salaries funded by taxpayers to serve a fictitious employer, exposing a payroll system entirely disconnected from statutory reality.

The mainstream legitimisation of this fraud reached its most embarrassing point because senior public officials appear more concerned with media appearances than with basic verification. On 16 May 2025, the leader of this fake council secured a formal, high-profile meeting with the Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives, Benjamin Kalu, inside the National Assembly itself. State television and major newspapers broadcast the encounter widely, lending an air of legitimacy to what was, in truth, an elaborate deception. The collapse of national security oversight became even more absurd on 4 September 2025, when the same individual walked into the headquarters of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission and was received warmly by its Chairman. The Commission went so far as to issue a joint press release with him on foreign direct investment. When the nation's foremost anti-corruption body stands shoulder to shoulder with an unverified actor and amplifies his scheme through its own official channels, it signals that our intelligence infrastructure has failed at its most basic function. Even after law enforcement eventually caught up with the man, the state-owned Voice of Nigeria continued, as recently as April 2026, to publish reports referring to him as an active state coordinator while he remained free on police bail, proof that different arms of government remain entirely unaware of what others are prosecuting.

The presidency's official statement, released on 1 July 2026, reads less like an explanation and more like a calculated effort to shield the truth and protect those responsible. It offers no account of how a fraudulent agency secured a fresh budget code and a ₦1.3 billion allocation inside a signed national law. It says nothing about the failure at the National Information Technology Development Agency. It withholds the names of every civil servant involved in the deployments. As if to underline the government's inability to manage even the basic mechanics of damage control, a simple WHOIS domain check conducted on 2 July 2026 confirmed that the fraudulent website, pfipc.gov.ng, remained live and active, even after the scandal had been fully exposed.

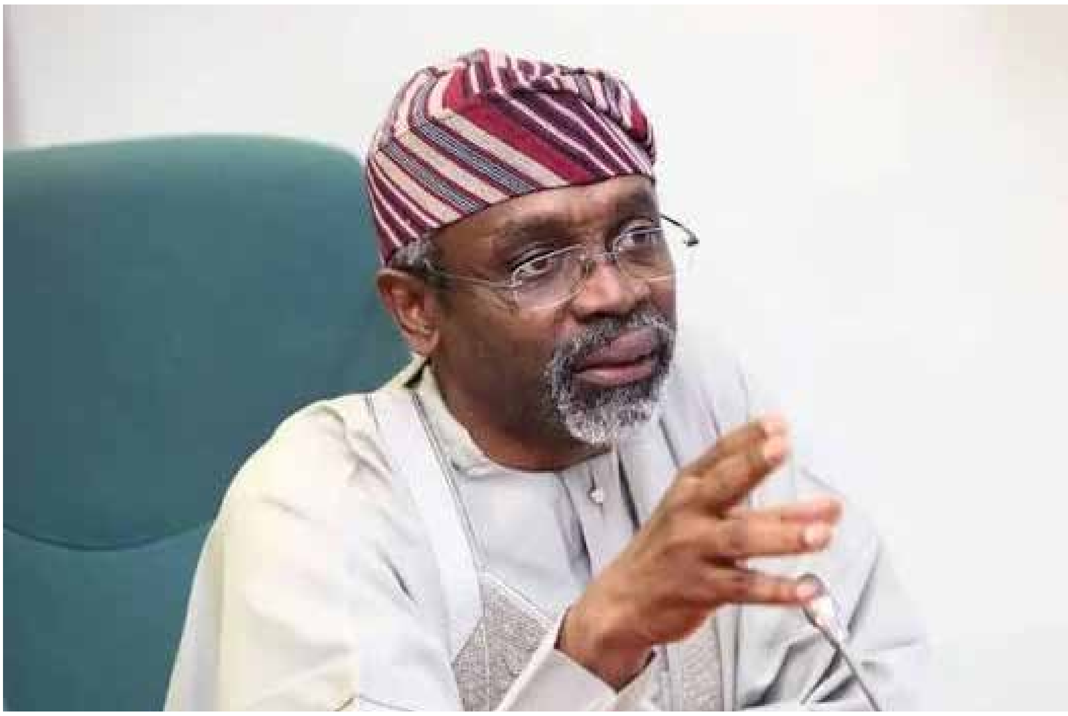
This is not the first time Nigerians have watched a phantom institution flourish inside a system that claims to operate on checks and balances. From padded budgets to non-existent contractors and duplicated agencies, the pattern is familiar even when the scale of this particular scheme is not. What distinguishes the Presidential Foreign Intervention Promotion Council affair is the sheer number of institutions it managed to pass through unchallenged. A forged letter does not, on its own, open 34 bank accounts, secure a government domain, furnish an office inside the Federal Secretariat and win an audience with a Deputy Speaker. Each of those steps required a human being, seated inside a genuine institution, choosing either to look away or to actively lend a hand. Until the government names those individuals, every reassurance issued from Aso Rock will remain an exercise in public relations rather than accountability.

There is a broader lesson here about the fragility of our institutional memory. Agencies that exist only on paper, tied to a fabricated budget line, are not merely a financial embarrassment. They represent a direct threat to the credibility of every genuine government programme competing for the same scarce resources. When citizens learn that a ghost council secured more administrative goodwill in twenty-eight months than many legitimate ministries manage in years, it becomes harder to convince anyone that public institutions deserve their trust or their taxes. That erosion of trust, more than the Naira value of the fraud itself, is the true cost of this scandal.

Nigerians deserve better than this. The fact that not a single senior official within the Budget Office, the National Information Technology Development Agency or the Accountant General's office has been suspended, named or prosecuted suggests that the rot extends far beyond one man and his forged letter. We are tired of a political system in which officials manufacture fictitious agencies to enrich themselves while ordinary citizens struggle under the weight of failing economic policy.

A nation cannot fight corruption with press releases alone; it must be willing to expose and punish the insiders who make such schemes possible in the first place.

We are neither blind nor naive. We will no longer accept a system of governance in which the machinery of the state can be simulated, occupied and exploited by anyone with the right connections, while the people who fund that machinery through their taxes and their patience are left to bear the cost. Until those responsible are named and held to account, this episode will stand as one more reminder that impunity, not incompetence, remains the defining feature of governance in Nigeria.



UBA Reinforces Commitment to Rewarding Customer-Loyalty with N400m Bonus

Africa's Global Bank, United Bank for Africa (UBA) Plc, has rewarded thousands of customers with over ₦400 million in anniversary bonuses under its flagship UBA Bumper Account, reaffirming the Bank's unwavering commitment to rewarding customer loyalty and promoting a strong savings culture.

The payout, one of the largest loyalty rewards under the Bumper Account initiative since its launch, saw qualifying customers receive anniversary bonuses directly into their accounts, demonstrating UBA's resolve to create lasting value for customers who consistently save with the Bank.

The UBA Bumper Account is a unique savings product that rewards customers simply for maintaining and growing their savings. Every year an eligible account reaches its anniversary, customers receive a cash bonus, making disciplined saving both rewarding and beneficial over time.

Speaking on the milestone, UBA's Head, Retail Products, Tomiwa Sotiloye, said the Bank remains committed to ensuring that customers benefit directly from their relationship with UBA.

"At UBA, we believe customer loyalty deserves meaningful recognition. Every bonus paid is our way of saying 'thank you' to customers who continue to trust us with their financial aspirations. Surpassing the ₦400 million milestone reflects our commitment to creating products that not only help customers save but also reward them in tangible ways. It is another demonstration that when our customers grow, we grow with them."

He added that both new and existing customers can open a UBA Bumper Account seamlessly through https://on.ubagroup.com/bumper-tc, any any UBA branch, the UBA Mobile Banking App, by dialing *919#, or online, positioning themselves to qualify for future anniversary rewards.

Also speaking, UBA's Group Head, Brands, Marketing and Corporate Communications, Alero Ladipo, said the Bank's customer-centric philosophy continues to shape its product offerings.

"The UBA Bumper Account reflects our unwavering commitment to putting customers first. We deliberately design products that reward responsible financial behaviour while delivering real value. Crediting over ₦400 million directly into customers' accounts is not just a payout; it is evidence of our promise to make banking more rewarding and to continually appreciate the confidence our customers repose in us."

The UBA Bumper Account remains one of the Bank's flagship retail savings products, combining competitive savings benefits, digital convenience and attractive loyalty rewards. It forms part of UBA's broader strategy to deepen financial inclusion by encouraging sustainable savings habits while delivering exceptional customer experiences.

Bank of Agriculture: FG Names New Board

The Federal Government has inaugurated a new Board of Directors for the Bank of Agriculture, charging members to work harmoniously and diligently with utmost fidelity to the nation in advancing the bank's mandate.

This was contained in a statement issued by the Communications Personnel, Office of the Managing Director of the bank, Abimbola Otepola-Ishaku, and made available to our correspondent on Saturday.

According to the statement, the constitution of the 10-man board is aimed at reinforcing corporate governance and setting the stage for renewed strategic leadership at the Federal Government-owned financial institution.

The statement said the inauguration was conducted by the Minister of Agriculture and Food Security, Senator Abubakar Kyari, at the ministry's headquarters in Abuja. It added that the new board is expected to strengthen the bank's role in driving agricultural development, food security, financial inclusion and sustainable economic growth.

Speaking at the inauguration, the minister urged the board members to "provide leadership that would support projects

capable of creating jobs, reducing poverty and improving the socio-economic well-being of Nigerian families."

In his remarks, the Chairman of the Board, Muhammad Babangida, reaffirmed the board's commitment to working closely with management to reposition the bank as a leading development finance institution supporting the Federal Government's priorities on food security, job creation and inclusive economic growth.

He said, "The inauguration represents more than the constitution of a new board. It marks a renewed commitment to strengthening the Bank and positioning it to deliver greater impact in support of Nigeria's agricultural transformation."

Dangote Backs Blue Economy To Create 500,000 Jobs

The President of Dangote Industries Limited, Aliko Dangote, has said strategic investments in aquaculture, hatcheries, feed production, processing, cold-chain logistics and export infrastructure could reduce imports, conserve foreign exchange, create more than 500,000 jobs and position Nigeria as a leading exporter of fisheries products.

Dangote stated this in Lagos while speaking at the recent Second Quarter 2026 Citizens' and Stakeholders' Engagement of the Federal Ministry of Marine and Blue Economy.

The engagement, themed "From Policy to Action: Mobilising Sub-National Governments for Effective Implementation of Nigeria's National Policy on Marine and Blue Economy," brought together government officials, diplomats, development partners, industry leaders, academics and representatives of state governments.

In his paper presentation titled, "Driving Private Sector Investment and Industrialisation in Nigeria's Marine and Blue Economy: Opportunities for Sustainable Economic

Growth," Dangote, who was represented by the Managing Director of Dangote Port Operations, Simeon Omole, said, "This is not merely a food security challenge; it is an industrial and investment opportunity.

"Strategic investment across the fisheries value chain, from aquaculture and hatcheries to feed production, cold-chain logistics, processing, and export infrastructure, supported by private sector leadership and an enabling government environment, can strengthen food security, reduce imports, conserve foreign exchange, create over 500,000 jobs, and position Nigeria as a competitive exporter of fisheries products."

Shippers' Council Blocks N86bn Unjustified Demurrage

The Nigerian Shippers' Council said it prevented shippers from paying N86.06bn in unjustified demurrage between November 2023 and June 2026, while also securing savings of N4.54bn and $1.348m through regulatory interventions and alternative dispute resolution.

The Executive Secretary and Chief Executive Officer of the council, Dr Pius Akutah, disclosed this on Saturday during a media luncheon with journalists in Lagos.

According to Akutah, the interventions protected more than N90.60bn in economic value for Nigerian shippers and the wider economy.

"Within the period under review, the council protected over N90.60bn in economic value for Nigerian shippers and the national economy.

"This includes preventing N86.06bn in unjustified demurrage payments and securing savings of N4.54bn and $1.348m through alternative dispute resolution and regulatory interventions," Akutah said.

Akutah said the council also received 558 complaints during the period and resolved 295 commercial disputes.

He added that the council harmonised bonded terminal invoice charges from 18 categories to six, secured statutory funding through the 2025 Appropriation Act for the first time since 1978, advanced the implementation of the National Single Window Project and the International Cargo Tracking Note, deployed an Enterprise Content Management System and introduced a leadership and succession planning project.

The NSC boss also said both chambers of the National Assembly had passed the Nigerian Port Economic Regulatory Agency Bill, which is awaiting presidential assent.

"Once assented, the legislation will establish an independent port economic regulator with enhanced powers to regulate tariffs, service standards, competition and commercial conduct, thereby strengthening transparency and investor confidence across the port industry," Akutah stated.

According to him, once signed into law, the legislation will establish an independent port economic regulator with powers to regulate tariffs, service standards, competition and commercial conduct, a move he said would improve transparency and boost investor confidence in the port industry.

Akutah said the reforms were reducing the cost of doing business, improving regulatory certainty and supporting the Federal Government's target of building a $1tn economy by 2030.

He added that the council had substantially concluded preparations for the 18th International Maritime Seminar for Judges.

The NSC chief said that since assuming office in November 2023, his management had focused on strengthening the council's role as Nigeria's port economic regulator through reforms aimed at improving consumer protection, trade facilitation, digital transformation and stakeholder engagement.

Opec+ Increases Oil Quotas As Middle East Calms

Seven OPEC+ members decided on Sunday to again raise oil production quotas as Gulf countries reel from the Middle East war.

Ministers from key OPEC+ countries Saudi Arabia, Russia, Iraq, Kuwait, Kazakhstan, Algeria, and Oman met virtually on Sunday and "decided to implement a production adjustment of 188 thousand barrels per day," a statement from the organisation said, adding that "this adjustment will be implemented in August 2026".

Gulf countries had to cut output after the near-paralysis of the Strait of Hormuz orchestrated by Iran during the war in the Middle East, which blocked their oil exports for several months.

Between the first quarter of 2026 and May, combined production by Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and Kuwait — three of the seven countries raising their quotas — fell by some six million barrels per day, OPEC data have shown.

But on June 17, Tehran and Washington signed a memorandum of understanding, committing themselves to removing obstacles to maritime traffic in the Strait of Hormuz for the duration of talks following the signature.

Giovanni Staunovo, a commodity analyst at the Swiss bank UBS, told AFP that "for now, production is probably still below" OPEC+'s targets.

Time-consuming restart

Since the memorandum of understanding was signed, ship transport in the region has slowly recovered, with oil prices dropping sharply to levels comparable to those seen before the war in anticipation of a gradual return to normal.

Oil supplies through this shipping lane may already have exceeded ten million barrels a day, according to a US official quoted by the Bloomberg agency.

But the oil currently leaving the strait has up to now been sitting in tankers or storage facilities, said Saxo Bank analyst Ole Hansen.

FCMB Records N177bn profit, Pays N23bn Dividend

Shareholders of FCMB Group Plc have approved a total dividend payout of N23.08bn for the 2025 financial year following strong profit growth and improved earnings across the group's businesses.

The approval was granted at the company's 13th Annual General Meeting held in Lagos recently, where shareholders also endorsed all resolutions presented by the board, including the re-election of Mr Ladi Jadesimi and the ratification of Mrs Adepeju Adebajo as directors. They also elected members of the Audit Committee and authorised the directors to determine the remuneration of the external auditors.

The approval followed a year in which the financial services group recorded higher earnings despite a challenging operating environment.

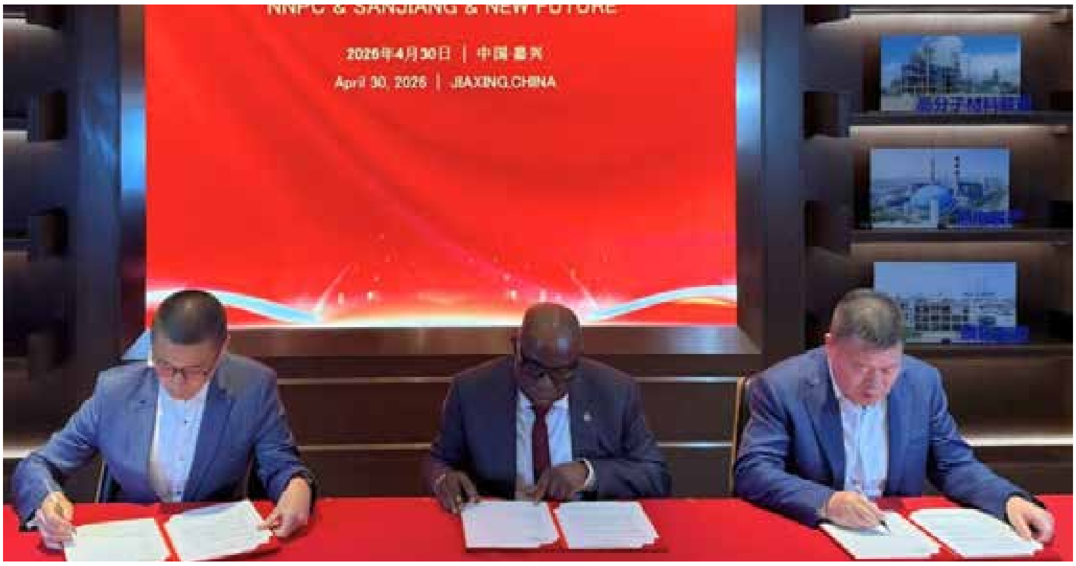
FCMB Group reported a profit before tax of N202.1bn for the year ended December 31, 2025, representing an 81 per cent increase from N111.9bn recorded in the previous year. Profit after tax rose by 142 per cent to N177.3bn, while gross revenue increased by 42.5 per cent to N1.13tn. Return on equity improved to 23.2 per cent.

The group also reported growth across its major business divisions. Profit before tax in the Banking Group rose by 110 per cent, while Consumer Finance, Investment Banking and Investment Management recorded growth of 107 per cent, 90 per cent and 29 per cent, respectively. According to the company, the momentum continued into the first quarter of 2026.

Chairman of FCMB Group, Ladi Jadesimi, said the results reflected the resilience of the group's diversified business model.

"We remain steadfast in our objective of balancing immediate shareholder returns with the need to retain sufficient capital to support long-term expansion, strengthen our competitive positioning and optimise value creation for all stakeholders," Jadesimi said.

NNPC Evaluates Refinery Partnership Deal With Chinese



The Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited has said the recently signed Memorandum of Understanding with Chinese firms for the rehabilitation and operation of the Port Harcourt and Warri refineries has entered a rigorous evaluation phase, insisting that the arrangement is aimed at creating profitable and self-sustaining refining assets.

The Group Chief Executive Officer of NNPC Ltd, Bayo Ojulari, disclosed this in a post on his official X handle on Friday, amid growing calls from petroleum marketers and operators for the Federal Government to fast-track discussions to finally restore the country's troubled state-owned refineries to full operation.

Ojulari said reviving Nigeria's refineries required more than simply replacing equipment and carrying out repairs. "Fixing a refinery takes more than pipes and pumps. It takes the right partners. That's the thinking behind the MoU recently signed for the Port Harcourt and Warri refineries, now moving into a rigorous evaluation phase," he stated.

The NNPC boss said the company was pursuing a strategic shift towards a performance-based business partnership model that would guarantee long-term sustainability rather than temporary fixes.

According to him, the new approach is "built for profitable and self-sustaining refineries."

He clarified that the memorandum signed with the prospective partners should not be mistaken for a final agreement.

"A strategic shift towards lasting results. Introducing a performance-based business partnership model, built for profitable and self-sustaining refineries. Evaluation, not commitment. The MoU is an agreement to explore working together, not a binding contract," Ojulari said.

He explained that the prospective partners would bear the cost of carrying out the due diligence process, a move that would ensure decisions are based on commercial realities and technical assessments. "Prospective partners are covering the full cost, which keeps the process data-driven," he added.

Beyond refining, Ojulari said the partnership discussions were also expected to unlock investments across the broader energy value chain. "The vision includes expanding the petrochemicals value chain and investing in gas-based industries, including new methanol plants. Real change isn't announced once. It's built through discipline applied consistently, at every stage, until it becomes how things are done," he stated.

The comments came weeks after NNPC signed a memorandum of understanding with a consortium of Chinese companies to explore the rehabilitation and potential co-management of the Port Harcourt and Warri refineries under a new business model.

On April 30, 2026, NNPC Ltd signed a Memorandum of Understanding with two Chinese firms—Sanjiang Chemical Company Limited and Xinganchen (Fuzhou) Industrial Park Operation and Management Co. Ltd.

The arrangement is expected to bring in technical expertise, financing support, and operational efficiency in a bid to halt years of losses and repeated shutdowns at the facilities.

The Port Harcourt Refining Company consists of two plants with a combined installed capacity of 210,000 barrels per day, while the Warri Refining and Petrochemical Company has a nameplate capacity of 125,000 barrels per day.

The facilities, alongside the 110,000-barrels-per-day Kaduna refinery, have consumed billions of dollars in rehabilitation expenses over the years but have struggled to operate sustainably.

SEC Expands Crypto Oversight With Seven New Firms

The Securities and Exchange Commission has admitted seven digital asset companies into its Accelerated Regulatory Incubation Programme, a framework designed to bring crypto and blockchain operators under formal oversight without immediately granting full operating licences.

The incubation model allows Nigeria's capital market regulator to test these operators in real market conditions before deciding on full authorisation, the digital asset watchdog said on its website on Friday.

The commission revealed that the firms had been granted approval in principle, enabling them to operate within defined limits while undergoing assessment for compliance with regulatory, governance and risk management standards.

The companies admitted into the programme are Bitbarter Technologies Limited, Luno Fintech Nigeria Limited, GetEquity Limited, Koinkoin Global Network Limited, Wrapped CBDC Ltd, Trovotech Ltd and Blockvault Custodian Ltd.

The SEC said the incubation scheme forms part of its broader effort to formalise Nigeria's fast-growing digital asset sector, which

has expanded despite periods of regulatory uncertainty and previous restrictions on financial institutions' exposure to cryptocurrencies.

Under ARIP, participating firms are allowed to operate in a supervised environment while the regulator evaluates their operations, including asset custody practices and safeguards against fraud, market abuse and operational failures.

"These entities would receive the Commission's approval-in-principle, permitting them to operate within the defined scope of the Programme and subject to conditions stipulated by the Commission. An approval-in-principle confirms that an entity has satisfied the Commission's admission requirements for the Programme," the regulator said.

African Startups Raise $3.9bn As Funding Rebounds

African startups raised $3.9bn across 506 deals in 2025, signalling a recovery in fundraising activity after earlier market challenges, according to a new report by Bloomwit Africa.

The report stated that technology funding exceeded $4bn through a combination of equity and debt financing, representing an estimated 25 per cent year-on-year increase, with venture debt emerging as a significant source of capital.

Bloomwit Africa, a foremost PR and communications firm, stated in its report that the positive trend extended into 2026, with startup funding reaching $705m in the first quarter, up 26.5 per cent year-on-year, as investment activity spread across key markets, including Egypt, South Africa, Kenya and Nigeria.

According to the report, "the improvement in funding reflects growing investor interest in Africa's technology ecosystem despite global funding pressures that have affected venture capital markets in recent years."

The report noted that the increasing use of venture

debt alongside equity financing is providing startups with additional funding options, while investment activity continues to broaden beyond a few traditional markets.

It added that the wider geographical spread of funding across leading African economies suggests a more diversified investment landscape as investors seek opportunities across the continent.

The report stated that sustained capital inflows into technology startups could support innovation, business expansion, and job creation, while strengthening Africa's position as an emerging destination for venture investment.

FG Pays N358bn Electricity Subsidy Despite Blackouts

The Federal Government is to pay N358.32bn on electricity subsidies in the first quarter of 2026 despite persistent blackouts and operational challenges in the power sector, with the subsidy bill averaging over N119bn monthly as the government continues to freeze end-user tariffs.

The Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission disclosed this in its First Quarter 2026 report, stating that the subsidy arose from the Federal Government's decision to retain electricity tariffs at the July 2024 rates instead of implementing cost-reflective tariffs.

According to the report, the tariff shortfall stood at N126.48bn in January, N116.34bn in February and N115.50bn in March, bringing the total subsidy for the quarter to N358.32bn.

NERC explained that although the subsidy declined by N60.46bn or 14.44 per cent from the N418.79bn recorded in the fourth quarter of 2025, the government will still finance more than half of the industry's generation costs.

"It is important to note that due to the absence of cost-reflective tariffs across all DisCos, the government incurred a subsidy obligation of N358.32bn; this represents a N60.46bn (-14.44 per cent) reduction in FGN subsidies compared to 2025/Q4 (N418.79bn).

"The government subsidy accounted for 51.95 per cent of the total GenCo invoice, which is a 0.08pp decrease compared to 2025/Q4, when the subsidy accounted for 52.03 per cent of the total GenCo invoice. The key driver of this reduction in FGN subsidy obligation is the decrease in energy offtake of the DisCos by -8.56 per cent between 2025/Q4 and 2026/Q1."

The commission clarified that the lower subsidy payment did not result from the introduction of cost-reflective tariffs but rather from a decline in electricity purchased by the distribution companies during the quarter.

According to NERC, electricity generated during the quarter attracted invoices worth N689.72bn. However, because the Federal Government continued to subsidise tariffs, the Nigerian Bulk Electricity Trading Plc invoiced the distribution companies only N331.40bn, while the balance of N358.32bn was borne by the government.

"The NBET invoice payable by the DisCos for 2026/Q1 was only N331.40bn because the FGN has taken responsibility for approximately 52 per cent (N358.32bn) of the total generation costs in the form of subsidies arising from the freezing of end-use customer tariffs at the rates payable in July 2024," the report said.

It explained that under the current market arrangement, electricity subsidies are applied at source through the DisCos' remittance obligation, with the unpaid portion of generation costs to be settled directly by the Federal Government.

"In the absence of cost-reflective tariffs, the government undertakes to cover the resultant gap (between the cost-reflective and allowed tariff) in the form of tariff subsidies.

"For ease of administration, the subsidy is only applied to the generation cost payable by DisCos to NBET at source in the form of a DisCo's Remittance Obligation. NBET directly invoices the portion of GenCo costs not covered by DRO (tariff subsidy) to the Federal Ministry of Finance for immediate settlement," it stated.

NERC further warned that the current subsidy regime leaves the Federal Government exposed to uncertain and potentially rising financial obligations, saying, "The open-ended nature of the subsidy exposes the FGN to indeterminate subsidy obligations due to volumetric risk and changes in generation costs arising from changes in the generation mix, particularly with an increase in thermal generation."

Shell, Banks Setup $3bn Financing For Oil Contractors

Shell Nigeria Exploration and Production Company Limited has partnered with nine Nigerian banks to launch a $3bn contract finance facility aimed at improving access to credit for indigenous oil and gas contractors executing projects for the company.

According to a statement, the financing scheme, unveiled on Thursday, is designed to provide credit support to local contractors handling projects for SNEPCo and will be available in both naira and United States dollars.

The participating banks are First Bank, Guaranty Trust Bank, Zenith Bank, Access Bank, United Bank for Africa, Stanbic IBTC, Standard Chartered Bank, First City Monument Bank, and Fidelity Bank.

Speaking at the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding in Lagos, the Managing Director of SNEPCo, Ronald Adams, said the initiative aligns with the objectives of the Nigerian Oil and Gas Industry Content Development Act by promoting greater in-country value retention.

"The initiative reflects the spirit of the Nigerian Oil and Gas Industry Content Development Act, which is aimed at in-country value retention. Our partner banks offer capital and discipline.

"SNEPCo brings contracts and domiciliation of payments that de-risk lending.

On their part, the

contractors provide performance. Each is accountable to the others, and the mutual accountability gives the arrangement its strength," he said.

The Vice President, Finance, Shell Nigeria, CJ Akwaeze, said the financing scheme demonstrates Shell's commitment to supporting the growth of oil and gas operations in Nigeria.

The Chairman of the Petroleum Technology Association of Nigeria, Wole Ogunsanya, who was represented by Dr Joan Faluyi, described the facility as a major boost for indigenous contractors.

Ogunsanya lauded the initiative as a "gateway to unlocking contractor financing issues, which will also drive efficiency in contract execution."

Representatives of the participating banks also commended SNEPCo for introducing the financing arrangement, saying the partnership would strengthen local contractors.

Beta Glass Reports N37.5bn Revenue, Reconstitutes Board

Beta Glass Plc has reconstituted its board and outlined plans to expand investment in manufacturing technology after reporting first-quarter revenue of N37.54bn.

The company announced this at its 52nd Annual General Meeting held in Lagos, where shareholders reviewed its financial performance and approved key governance decisions.

According to the company, the unaudited interim financial statements for the quarter ended March 31, 2026, showed revenue of N37.54bn, which it attributed to operational performance and asset utilisation.

The company also cited findings from an independent socio-economic impact report by Deloitte, which estimated that Beta Glass contributed more than N1tn to Nigeria's economy over the past decade, accounting for nearly one per cent of the country's manufacturing output and 14 per cent of the non-metallic products sub-sector.

A major outcome of the meeting was the

reconstitution of the Board of Directors with the appointment of four non-executive directors. The new appointees are Nitin Kaul, Olusola Carrena, Bolaji Olatunbosun Osunsanya, and Boye Olusanya.

Speaking at the meeting, the Chairman of the Board, Dr Vitus Ezinwa, said the new board composition would support the company's long-term strategy. "The newly reconstituted Board positions Beta Glass to accelerate sustainable growth, strengthen shareholder value, and enhance the resilience of its regional supply chains amid an evolving global business landscape," Ezinwa said.

Electricity Debt: Benin, Togo, Niger To Pay Nigeria N17.45bn

Electricity customers in Togo, Benin and the Niger Republic owed Nigeria about N17.45bn for power supplied in the first quarter of 2026 after remitting only 27.57 per cent of the $17.48m billed to them during the period, findings by The PUNCH from the latest report of the Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission have shown.

The report showed that the three international bilateral customers collectively paid $4.82m out of the $17.48m invoiced by the Market Operator, leaving an outstanding debt of $12.66m, equivalent to about N17.45bn at an exchange rate of N1,378 to the dollar.

The development came despite Nigeria's continued electricity exports to neighbouring West African countries under bilateral power supply agreements with generation companies operating in the Nigerian Electricity Supply Industry.

The debts recur every quarter, contributing to the liquidity crisis in the power sector. According to the commission, the international customers recorded significantly weaker payment performance than domestic bilateral customers, who remitted 95 per cent of their invoices during the same period.

"The three international bilateral customers being supplied by GenCos in the NESI made a payment of $4.82m against the cumulative invoice of $17.48m issued by the Market Operator for services rendered in 2026/Q1, translating to a remittance performance of 27.57 per cent," the NERC quarterly report stated.

A breakdown of the payments showed that Paras-SBEE, which supplies electricity to the Benin Republic, failed to make any payment against its $1.94m invoice, recording a zero per cent remittance performance.

Another bilateral customer, Paras-CEET, supplying electricity to Togo, also paid nothing despite receiving an invoice of $1.67m for electricity supplied during the quarter. Transcorp-SBEE (Ughelli), another supplier to the Benin Republic, remitted only $0.90m out of its $4.20m invoice, representing a payment performance of 21.43 per cent.

Similarly, Transcorp-SBEE (Afam 3) paid $1.13m against its invoice of $2.90m, translating to a remittance performance of 38.97 per cent.

Mainstream-NIGELEC, which exports electricity to the Niger Republic, emerged as the best-performing international customer, remitting $2.79m out of its $4.45m invoice, representing a payment performance of 62.70 per cent.

However, Odukpani-CEET, another supplier to Togo, did not remit any payment against its $2.29m invoice, maintaining a zero per cent remittance record for the period.

Although the remittance performance for current invoices remained poor, the commission disclosed that some international customers made payments towards debts accumulated in previous quarters.

"It is noteworthy that, during Q1 2026, three international and nine domestic bilateral customers made payments of $6.64m and N2.59bn, respectively, towards outstanding MO invoices from previous quarters.

"Specifically, the MO received a total of $4.05m from Société Béninoise d'Energie Electrique, comprising payments for Ughelli ($3.28m) and Paras ($0.77m). In addition, $1.87m was received from Mainstream-Société Nigérienne d'Électricité (NIGELEC) and $0.72m from Paras-Compagnie Energie Electrique du Togo (CEET)," the report stated.

In contrast, domestic bilateral customers posted stronger payment performance during the review period. According to the commission, they paid N5.82bn out of the N6.12bn invoiced by the Market Operator, representing a remittance performance of 95 per cent.

Transcorp Hotels Graduates 64 Women Entrepreneurs

Transcorp Hotels Plc has graduated the 16th cohort of its Business Empowerment Programme for Women, reaffirming its commitment to promoting economic inclusion through skills acquisition and entrepreneurship.

The hospitality company said the programme, launched in 2016 in partnership with ACE Charity, has so far empowered 64 young women with tailoring, business management, financial management, marketing and customer service skills to help them build sustainable livelihoods.

According to a statement by the company, beneficiaries undergo six months of practical training before receiving sewing machines and other tools to enable them to establish their businesses immediately after graduation.

It added that the initiative forms part of its flagship sustainability programmes aimed at creating long-term social, economic and environmental impact.

Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer of Transcorp Hotels Plc, Mrs Uzoamaka Oshogwe, said the company remained committed to investing in women and supporting entrepreneurship.

Oshogwe said, "We believe hospitality goes beyond the experiences we create within our hotels. Through this programme, we are investing in young women, supporting entrepreneurship, creating social and economic impact, and promoting sustainability. We are proud of the 16th cohort graduands and look forward to the businesses they will build, the jobs they will create, and the positive impact they will have on their communities and Nigeria's economy."

The company also said the programme promotes circular fashion by repurposing pre-used hotel bedding for practical tailoring training, reducing waste while encouraging sustainable practices.

LFTZ Customs Records N408.8bn Revenue

The Nigeria Customs Service, Lagos Free Trade Zone Command, has disclosed that it collected a total revenue of N408.8bn between January and June 2026.

In a statement on Thursday, the Customs Area Controller in charge of the command, Hauwa Abubakar, disclosed this at the command in Lekki while speaking during the 2026 Half-Year Media Briefing.

The CAC stated that the figure represented an increase of N91.54bn when compared to the N317.3bn collected within the same period in 2025, "amounting to an impressive 28.85 per cent increase in revenue performance."

"Between January and June 2026, the command generated a total revenue of N408.8bn. This represents an increase of N91.54bn when compared to the N317.3bn collected during the corresponding period in 2025, amounting to an impressive 28.85 per cent increase in revenue performance," Abubakar said.

Abubakar stated that the unprecedented growth is not accidental, adding that it is the product of deliberate strategies aimed at strengthening compliance, improving operational efficiency, and fostering constructive engagement with all stakeholders operating within the Free Trade Zones and Lekki Port.

She maintained that the command's sustained stakeholder engagement programmes have continued to build mutual trust and encourage voluntary compliance with extant customs laws and regulations.

"Through continuous dialogue, education, and collaboration, we have created an environment where legitimate trade can flourish while ensuring that government revenue is adequately protected. Equally important have been the professionalism, integrity, and unwavering commitment demonstrated by the officers and men of this command. Their diligence, discipline, and dedication to duty have contributed significantly to these outstanding achievements.

Family Bids Farewell to a Distinguished Matriarch, Chief (Mrs.) Folashade Ajayi in Osun

By Ruth Akpan *Photos: Tunde Bolarinwa*

Some lives leave footprints that time can never erase. They are remembered not merely for the years they spent on earth, but for the countless lives they touched, the values they upheld, the institutions they built, and the love they so generously shared. Such was the remarkable life of Chief (Mrs.) Folasade Omolara Ajayi, an accomplished entrepreneur, devoted Christian, loving wife, caring mother, compassionate mentor and respected community figure whose final rites became a beautiful celebration of an extraordinary legacy.

For two memorable days, the serene town of Ada in Osun State became the focal point of solemn reflection, heartfelt tributes, fervent worship, and dignified celebration as loved ones gathered to pay their last respects to a woman whose remarkable journey was characterised by integrity, compassion, entrepreneurship, and an unshakable devotion to God.

The funeral rites commenced with an emotional and well-coordinated procession as the remains of the highly respected matriarch were conveyed in an elegant motorcade by TOS Funerals from Lagos to her beloved residence, Derilar Villa, Ada, Osun State. Residents lined portions of the route while family members and sympathisers received the cortege with deep emotions, acknowledging the final homecoming of a woman who had devoted her life to serving both God and humanity.

The Christian Wake Service, held within the peaceful surroundings of Derilar Villa, created an atmosphere of reverence, hope, and thanksgiving. The beautifully decorated venue reflected both dignity and simplicity, providing a fitting setting for an evening dedicated to celebrating a life exceptionally well lived.

The service featured soul-lifting hymns rendered by the church choir, stirring scriptural readings, heartfelt prayers, and moving tributes from family members, close

friends, and associates who recounted unforgettable memories of Chief (Mrs.) Ajayi's generosity, motherly affection, humility, wisdom, and unwavering commitment to uplifting others. Speaker after speaker described her as a dependable confidante, a compassionate mentor, an accomplished entrepreneur, and above all, a devoted Christian whose life consistently reflected her faith.

The evening was filled with moments of reflection as guests drew comfort from the assurance of eternal rest for the departed while offering prayers for divine strength, peace, and consolation for the Ajayi family during this period of bereavement.

The following day witnessed another remarkable gathering at the First Baptist Church, Ada, Osun State, where the funeral service attracted an impressive congregation of worshippers, dignitaries, business associates, religious leaders, traditional rulers, community stakeholders, and loved ones who assembled to celebrate an extraordinary woman whose influence transcended family and community boundaries.

The solemn service began with uplifting worship sessions and inspiring hymn renditions that prepared hearts for an atmosphere of thanksgiving and reflection.

One of the most touching moments of the service was the reading of the life history and biography of the deceased by Dipo Ajayi. His eloquent narration vividly chronicled the inspiring journey of Chief (Mrs.) Folasade Omolara Ajayi—from her humble beginnings to her remarkable accomplishments as a devoted wife, caring mother, successful entrepreneur, committed

church worker, and respected community leader. The biography painted the portrait of a woman whose resilience, discipline, compassion, and unwavering faith remained constant throughout her lifetime.

The congregation listened attentively as the inspiring milestones of her life unfolded, reminding everyone present that true greatness is measured not merely by material accomplishments but by the positive impact one leaves in the lives of others.

The spiritual highlight of the service was the exhortation delivered by Pastor Sambi Alawode, who encouraged the congregation to emulate the exemplary virtues demonstrated by the deceased. Drawing profound lessons from the Scriptures, he reminded worshippers of the certainty of eternal life for believers and challenged everyone present to live lives worthy of remembrance through steadfast faith, selfless service, and unwavering commitment to God.

Following the exhortation, members of the congregation joined together in an atmosphere of joyful thanksgiving, offering songs of gratitude to God for the beautiful and impactful life of Chief (Mrs.) Ajayi. Special prayers were thereafter offered for every member of the Ajayi family, asking God to comfort them, strengthen them, and preserve the enduring legacy left behind by their beloved matriarch.

The service concluded with a moving closing hymn, after which Jide Ajayi delivered the vote of thanks on behalf of the family, expressing profound appreciation to everyone who travelled from far and near to honour the memory of

their dearly departed wife, mother, grandmother, relative, and friend.

Thereafter, the remains of Chief (Mrs.) Folasade Omolara Ajayi were laid to rest in a private interment ceremony within the serene surroundings of her beloved residence, Derilar Villa, Ada, Osun State. Amid solemn prayers, tears, and heartfelt farewells, family members committed her body to mother earth while drawing comfort from the enduring hope of resurrection and eternal rest.

Although emotions ran high during the burial, the atmosphere soon transformed into one of gratitude and celebration as guests proceeded to the elegant Park and Palace Event Centre, Ada, Osun State, for the grand reception held in honour of the departed matriarch.

The reception reflected the grace and elegance that characterised Chief (Mrs.) Ajayi throughout her lifetime. The venue was beautifully adorned with tasteful decorations, while guests enjoyed warm hospitality in an atmosphere filled with fellowship, remembrance, and celebration.

Attendees were lavishly entertained with an array of sumptuous local and continental delicacies accompanied by an impressive selection of premium beverages and refreshing drinks, ensuring that every guest was treated to a memorable dining experience.

Adding glamour and excitement to the occasion, the highly talented Like Mind Band delivered captivating live performances, treating guests to an extensive repertoire of evergreen highlife, gospel, and contemporary classics that kept the atmosphere vibrant throughout the celebration.

The excitement reached even greater heights with the electrifying

performance of renowned Fuji music icon Adewale Ayuba, whose energetic stage presence, timeless musical artistry, and crowd-pleasing performance had guests dancing, singing, and celebrating well into the evening, creating unforgettable memories worthy of the remarkable woman whose life they had gathered to honour.

The seamless planning, impeccable coordination, and flawless execution of the entire funeral programme bore the unmistakable signature of Eventsby603, whose meticulous attention to detail ensured that every aspect of the ceremonies reflected dignity, excellence, and sophistication.

Chief (Mrs.) Folasade Omolara Ajayi's remarkable life remains an enduring testimony to purposeful living. Born on 14 April 1947 in Abeokuta, Ogun State, into the distinguished family of Alhaji Rauf and Alhaja Ayoka of the renowned Okedara family of Oke Ago Owu, she was nurtured on enduring principles of discipline, integrity, hard work, and unwavering faith—qualities that shaped her life's extraordinary journey.

Her educational pursuit began at Abeokuta Girls' Grammar School, where she distinguished herself through diligence and academic excellence before proceeding to Moore Plantation, Ibadan, where she studied Agriculture, laying the foundation for her future entrepreneurial achievements.

In 1970, she entered into a blissful marriage with her beloved husband, Prince Dele Ajayi, and together they built a loving home blessed with five wonderful children, whom she nurtured with

wisdom, compassion, discipline, and enduring Christian values.

Her walk with God remained central throughout her lifetime. She worshipped faithfully in the Baptist Church following her marriage before later becoming a devoted member of the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG). Her exceptional commitment to God's work earned her ordination as a Deaconess in the year 2000. She remained steadfast in ministry, serving with humility, generosity, compassion, and unwavering dedication until the very end.

An accomplished entrepreneur with uncommon vision, Chief (Mrs.) Ajayi founded the Molly T Group of Companies, a thriving business conglomerate with interests in haulage, party rentals, and travel agency services. Through resilience, diligence, sound leadership, and an uncompromising commitment to excellence, she built a respected enterprise that provided opportunities for many and earned admiration across business circles.

Chief (Mrs.) Folasade Omolara Ajayi will be remembered not merely for her business accomplishments or social standing, but for the countless lives she touched through kindness, generosity, encouragement, and sincere love. She was a woman of immense grace, quiet strength, uncommon dignity, and unwavering faith—a devoted wife, an exceptional mother, a doting grandmother, a compassionate mentor, a respected community leader, and a faithful servant of God whose legacy will continue to inspire generations.


FOLASADE OMOLARA AJAYI

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I Don't Need to Please Anyone Anymore — Toyin Abraham

Award-winning Nollywood actress and filmmaker Toyin Abraham has opened up about how years of hard work, consistency and divine favour have transformed her career, saying she no longer feels the need to seek anyone's approval or compromise her dignity to remain relevant in the movie industry.

Speaking in a recent interview, Abraham said she has reached a stage where she can confidently choose the projects she wants to be associated with and the people she wants to work with.

"I can't kiss anybody's ass anymore because God has blessed me with a platform where I can decide who I want to work with," she said.

The actress explained that her statement was not borne out of pride but from gratitude, noting that the success she enjoys today has given her the independence many actors aspire to attain after years of building their careers.

According to her, she no longer believes in forcing relationships or chasing opportunities at the expense of her self-worth, insisting that she is content working with people who appreciate her craft and share her vision.

Abraham also spoke about the support she enjoys from her husband and fellow actor, Kolawole Ajeyemi, describing him as someone who may not be overly romantic but has consistently encouraged her to pursue excellence.

"My husband is not romantic. But he allows me to be the best version of myself. He allows me to do what brings my acting career to life," she said.

I No Longer Love Yvonne Jegede, But I'll Always Protect Her' — Kunle 'Abounce' Fawole

Nollywood actor Kunle Abounce Fawole has revealed that although he no longer has romantic feelings for his ex-wife, actress Yvonne Jegede, he would still go to great lengths to protect her because of the bond they share through their son.

Speaking during an interview on With Chude, Fawole reflected on their failed relationship, saying he prefers to let go of bitterness rather than hold on to grudges.

Recalling the breakup, he said, "I had a girlfriend once, but it didn't work." Asked why, he replied, "I think we're just, on different planes. I'd rather just be the one to say, 'Oh, everything was my fault,' so to speak, I don't like the enmity of things."

The actor explained that he has no interest in avoiding people he once loved.

"I don't want to see somebody that I used to be with down the street and I turn my face away," he said, adding that he would gladly greet his ex if they met.

When asked if he still loves Jegede, Fawole responded with a straightforward "No."

However, he stressed that his respect and sense of responsibility towards her remain unchanged because she is the mother of their son.

Don't Kill Yourself Trying to Please a Woman — FFA

Bishop Funke Felix-Adejumo has advised married men against exhausting themselves in a bid to satisfy their wives, stressing that no one can ever completely please a woman.
Speaking during a sermon, the cleric urged men to remain responsible but warned against sacrificing their health and lives in the process.
"Listen to me very, very carefully. Do everything, but don't kill yourself. Married men, hear me, I'm a woman speaking to you now. There is nobody that can please a woman," she said, drawing loud reactions from the congregation.
Explaining her point, Felix-Adejumo said women are naturally inclined to seek improvements, using beauty enhancements as an example."The Almighty God gave us nails, we will cut the nails and attach another one. God gave us eyebrows, we will shave it off and put another one. God gave us hair, we will remove it. The Almighty God cannot please us, who are you that you want to please us?" she added.

I Left Islam for Christianity After My Miraculous Healing — Halima Abubakar

Nollywood actress Halima Abubakar has opened up about why she left Islam and embraced Christianity, saying the decision came after what she described as a miraculous healing from a mysterious illness that left her bedridden for almost nine years.
The actress explained that after spending years battling the illness and surviving what she described as several near-death experiences, she became convinced that God had given her another chance at life. She said this inspired her to dedicate her life to serving Jesus Christ.
According to Halima, her recovery was more than just regaining her health. She described it as a spiritual transformation that led her to publicly declare her Christian faith and share her testimony with others.
"I'm a brand new person now. I have given my life to Christ. I want to serve God because He has helped me. I almost d+ed. They almost killed me. This is not about movies; this is about restoration and testimony. Halima Abubakar is back, big and better.
"Right now, I'm ready to serve God because He wants me to. He has delivered me, so I need to serve Him and preach His gospel.

Having Multiple Income Streams Doesn't Mean Everyone Should Be An Entrepreneur — Vee Iye

Nigerian media personality and former reality TV star Vee has weighed in on the growing conversation surrounding entrepreneurship in the country.
Taking to her X account, Vee expressed her opinion on the challenges of running a business, stressing that entrepreneurship is not a path suited for everyone, especially amid the nation's current economic realities.
According to her, her remarks were not intended to discourage people from seeking additional streams of income. Instead, she emphasized the importance of understanding one's strengths, limitations, and the demands that come with building and managing a business.
Vee urged individuals to be realistic about the expectations of entrepreneurship, noting that self-awareness is crucial when deciding whether to pursue that route.

Actress Obasuyi Best Celebrates Her Birthday In A Stylish Exotic Red Dress


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Tip To Getting Over breakup Fast

You won't get over it overnight, but you'll get through it if you know how to handle the situation correctly. Breakups often come with a sting that leaves us feeling pained even after several months. Whether it ended with a quiet goodbye or a screaming match, it usually feels like a piece of your world just cracked open. The person you once imagined life with is no longer part of your plan, and now, you're left wondering: **What next?**

The truth is, starting afresh after a major breakup can be tough. But it's also an opportunity - a chance to rebuild you - stronger, clearer, more whole. Yes, you won't get over it overnight, but you'll get through it if you know how to handle the situation correctly.

Here, let's offer useful tips that can help you start afresh after a breakup.

Give Yourself Permission to Feel

Let's start with this: You're allowed to hurt. Don't let anyone make you feel otherwise. You don't have to "snap out of it" or pretend like you're fine when your chest is heavy and your pillow is soaked. Breakups are like grief - you're mourning the loss of something real. Someone you've shared a major part of your life with. So cry if you want to. Journal. Listen to sad songs if you must. Let your emotions breathe instead of bottling them up. You'll be surprised by how soon releasing your feelings helps you heal.

Cut Contacts

We understand how it hurts to suddenly stop communicating with someone you're so used to being around. But it'll do more harm to try to communicate with them or even to stalk them. Whatever you had with them is gone, so why check in to see how they're doing? Constant contact (or cyber-snooping) is like picking at a wound that's trying to heal.

Mute them. Unfollow. Block if you need to. Healing needs space—no closure via WhatsApp at 1 a.m.

Reconnect With the You That Got Lost

Sometimes in relationships, we slowly morph into "us" and forget what it felt like to be you. What hobbies did you drop? What routines did you love before you had to compromise on them?

Reclaim that version of you. Take yourself out. Learn something new. Rebuild your identity - not as someone's ex, but as a person full of untapped potential.

Surround Yourself With the Right People

You don't need an audience for your pain, but you do need a tribe. Good friends will remind you who you are when you forget. They'll show up with laughs, food, and tough love when needed. Lean into your support system. And don't be afraid to let new people in when you're ready. Healing is easier when you're not doing it alone.

Don't Rush the Next Chapter

Being single again can feel awkward, especially if you were used to constant companionship. But don't jump into a rebound just to fill a void. Give yourself time to fall in love with your own life before trying to merge it with someone else's.

A healed you will attract better - not just someone new, but someone right.

Jorts Pant:
The 90's Yet Stylish Piece

By Ajibade Morakinyo

Once the uniform of 90s dads and off-duty teens, jorts — a clever blend of jeans and shorts — have officially made their way back into the fashion spotlight. These denim staples, often dismissed as outdated or "too casual," are being reimagined by stylists, designers, and fashion enthusiasts as both nostalgic and refreshingly modern.

What makes jorts unique is their effortless balance between comfort and statement. Cut just above the knee or slightly longer, jorts offer more coverage than your typical denim shorts while still keeping you cool and confident. Whether frayed at the hem for a rugged look or tailored with clean lines for a polished twist, jorts come with styling freedom that transcends seasons.

In 2025, jorts are being paired with everything from oversized blazers and sleek crop tops to vintage band tees and chunky sneakers. For both men and women, they've become the unexpected hero of laid-back, city-casual dressing — especially when styled with intention.

The resurgence of jorts isn't just about fashion—it's about embracing individuality. It's proof that what once seemed like a fashion faux pas can, with the right touch, become a timeless piece. The 90s called—and this time, we're answering in style. Here are some inspo for styling yours...








Rhapsody of Corruption: Eleven Years of 'Change' Revisited

O mankind! Do your duty to your Lord, and fear (the coming of) a Day when no father can avail aught for his son, nor a son avail aught for his father. Verily, the promise of Allah is true: Let not then this present life deceive you, nor let the Chief Deceiver deceive you about Allah. (Quran 31:33)

After eleven years of supposedly relentless APC war against corruption and waste in government, one is saddened to come to the realization that nothing has changed.

There are many culprits for this pandemic of rabid puppies that is about to swamp the entire nation and infect the international community in the process. They include a dysfunctional and kleptocratic political class, a thieving bureaucracy, a disoriented traditional institution, a disordered military profession, a paralyzed police force, an alienated and enfeebled citizenry and a corrupt and corrupting spiritual merchant class that preaches the virtue of prosperity without commensurate hard work. – Tatalo Alamu

Corruption and crime are endemic sociological occurrences which appear with regular frequency in virtually all countries on a global scale in varying degree and proportion. Individual nations each allocate domestic resources for the control and regulation of corruption and crime.

Strategies to counter corruption are often summarized under the umbrella term anti-corruption. Corruption is a form of dishonesty or criminal offense undertaken by a person or organization entrusted with a position of authority, to acquire illicit benefit or abuse power for one's private gain. Political corruption occurs when an office-holder or other governmental employee acts in an official capacity for personal gain. Corruption is most commonplace in kleptocracies, oligarchies, narco-states and mafia states.

A cursory glance at recent corruption scandals will give us a glimpse into the sordid matter.

The case against former Attorney-General of the Federation and Minister of Justice, Abubakar Malami, involves multiple charges of money laundering, conspiracy, and unlawful acquisition of assets. The EFCC has filed 16 counts against Malami, his son, and an associate, Hajia Bashir Asabe, over alleged illicit financial transactions spanning several years. The charges allege that no fewer than 30 high-value properties worth about ₦212.8 billion were acquired through proceeds of unlawful activities. The case has garnered significant media attention and is being prosecuted by the EFCC.

The Betta Edu scandal involves allegations of corruption and financial misconduct by the Minister of Humanitarian Affairs and Poverty Alleviation, Dr. Betta Edu. She was suspended by President Bola Ahmed Tinubu in January 2024 after being accused of diverting ₦585 million into a private account. The

Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) is investigating the case. The case remains inconclusive as nothing has been heard of it since her suspension, reinstatement and final replacement.

The case against former CBN Governor Godwin Emefiele involves allegations of $4.5 billion fraud. Emefiele has denied any wrongdoing, asserting that his actions were in line with the law and national interest. The case is still inconclusive.

The case against Sambo Dasuki involves allegations of criminal breach of trust and fraud amounting to N33.2 billion. Dasuki, along with Aminu Baba-Kusa and two companies, faced a 32-count charge. The case has been ongoing since 2015, with Dasuki first arraigned on December 14, 2015, and re-arraigned on May 11, 2018. As of the latest updates in late 2025, Sambo Dasuki remains in Nigeria, attending his ongoing trial, and has not been reported as incarcerated. His legal proceedings are still active, with the court allowing the EFCC to finalize its witness list and evidence before he opens his defense. The case continues to attract attention due to its long duration and the high-profile nature of the allegations.

Yahaya Bello, the former Kogi State Governor, is facing multiple legal challenges due to allegations of fraud and corruption. The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) has filed charges against him, accusing him of misappropriating state funds and committing financial misconduct during his tenure. Bello has been granted bail in both the Federal Capital Territory High Court and the Federal High Court cases, with bail amounts set at N500 million. The trial is ongoing, with the court's jurisdiction upheld in dismissing applications to quash the charges. Bello remains an active political player that belies his corruption travails. This is Nigeria.

Former Kaduna state governor Nasir El-Rufai is facing 10 charges of

corruption and money laundering in the Federal High Court. The Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) accused him of inflating severance pay by N579.7 million and fraudulent dollar deposits. El-Rufai allegedly received $817,900 through various unlawful bank deposits over the years while in office as governor. He is also facing criminal charges of wire-tapping.

There are more high profile cases too numerous to be listed in this short account. However, suffice to ask whether these crooked elite can make the kingdom. Yet, our anti corruption outfits continue to fight corruption but with modest success:

The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) has reported significant achievements in the fight against corruption and financial crimes in Nigeria. In 2025, the EFCC has secured over 7,000 convictions, with 4,111 of those reported in 2024 alone. The agency has also recovered over 365 billion naira in asset recoveries in 2024 and 500 billion naira cumulatively by 2025.

The increasing number of prosecutions and convictions, with associated refunds of large sums of money, is still ongoing."

But that is as the story goes. Corruption was not forced into hibernation or retreat.

The late sage, Obafemi Awolowo said "The pursuit of wealth is not a bad thing in itself because without the food and comforts which wealth provides, life will be penurious and drab. But always remember that any wealth accumulated on a selfish basis, at the expense of the State in defiance of social justice, helps to create a disorganized society in which everybody will eat everybody and no one person can be safe".

It is becoming increasingly clear that it is a sin and unpatriotic for anyone to remain honest under this condition! How do you want to explain your condition of poverty and impoverishment to your children and children's children? What would you tell them you were doing or where you were when their friend's parents were looting the commonwealth? Where were you when the Police and the staff of the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) shared N3.14 billion as palliatives for the COVID-19 pandemic? Were they resurrecting their dead colleagues who had died of Coronavirus?

No wonder someone said we are 'fantastically corrupt'. Islam enjoins Muslims to play a proactive role in the anti-corruption campaign. It is seen as a veritable amal (right moral action); an act of great social benefit that elevates the standing of the ummah and the country.

Fighting bribery (rashwah)

and corruption (fasad) is an integral part of the teachings of the Quran and Hadith. The Quran prohibits "devouring/ misappropriation of the property of others" see Quran 4:29 and 2:188, which is a broad concept that subsumes such other offences as fraud, hoarding, theft, and gambling. The text also condemns those in authority who spread corruption and mischief among people, bestowing favors on some and oppressing others (Quran 28:4 and 89:10-12).

Overwhelmingly, institutional weakness enables most politically exposed persons to walk free. In 2022, Buhari granted pardon to two convicted politically exposed persons. The NNPC, the Nigerian Ports Authority, the Nigerian Police Force, Customs and other graft-prone agencies have not been thoroughly cleansed.

A suspended Accountant-General of the Federation allegedly was able to steal N109 billion out of which he has returned N30 billion, according to the EFCC. What happened to the huge balance from the heist? And he is not yet in jail!

Many of the corruption cases, particularly the high-profile ones, remained pending before the courts due to administrative or procedural delays.

During the last administration, cases of budget padding were rampant. The ICPC revealed that MDAs 'padded' the 2021 budget to the tune of N300 billion. They allegedly 'padded' the 2022 budget with duplicated projects worth N100 billion. Yet there were no publicly known consequences for the complicit lawmakers and civil servants.

In 2021, an NGO compiled a list of 25 top corruption cases linked with stolen or mismanaged funds worth N900 billion, which the government was investigating but were left dormant.

A classic case is the story of how the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), spent the approved $8.5 million budget for the immediate evacuation of about 5,000 Nigerians stranded in Poland, Romania and Hungary when the Russia-Ukraine war started.

According to a copy of its response to a FOI request, NEMA spent $3,546,912.48, €84,952 and N36,480.

The total amount spent to evacuate 1,500 persons from three European countries to Nigeria in 10 days in March 2022, when converted into naira, is N1,543,513,266.944 (approximately N1.5 billion).

The document shows that the agency paid $2,224,000.00 to three airlines – Air Peace Limited received $1,224,000.00; Azman Air Limited received $500,000.00 and Max Air Limited also received $500,000.00.

NEMA also said 1497 returnees were paid $100 each, totaling $149,700.00 to empower them to their various destination after they landed safely in Nigeria.

Other payments for logistics and other items include payment to the Refugees Commission (Logistics) – $82,737.34, which is equivalent to N33,770,900.00, payment to the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs Ministry (Logistics) – $14,318.51(USD) (equivalent to N5,925,000.00), payment to Foreign Affairs Ministry (Foreign Mission) – $1,076,156.63, another payment of Foreign Affairs Ministry (Foreign Mission) – €84,952.00 and payment to the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) for (Logistics) – N36,480,000.00.

This indicates that the agency did not exhaust the government-approved $8.5 million budgeted for the evacuation mission during the Russian-Ukraine war, leaving a balance of $4,793,504 (N1,983,551,999.256) left. We were not told what happened to the balance, but you are free to let your imagination run wild!

Evacuation of Nigerians from Sudan, created another avenue for 'chop chop'. The government voted $1.4 million for the exercise. While most nations sent in their Air Force planes to evacuate their nationals, our people resorted to hiring buses to transport people from Khartoum to Aswan in Egypt where aircrafts would then fly them back to Nigeria.

That was not the scandal, imagine hiring buses from Khartoum to Aswan for the sum of $30,000 per bus. Wow!

Continue reading on... https://thebossnewspapers.com/2026/07/03/friday-sermon-rhapsody-of-corruption-eleven-years-of-change-revisited/

The Power of One Man: How Erling Haaland's Norway Ended Brazil's World Cup Dream

Erling Haaland scored two late goals to send Norway through to their first World Cup quarterfinal with a stunning 2-1 win over Brazil, which condemned the five-time champions to their earliest exit since 1990.

Norway goalkeeper Orjan Nyland produced a sensational display on Sunday and saved a first-half penalty from Bruno Guimaraes before Haaland struck twice in the last 11 minutes to stun Brazil at New York New Jersey Stadium.

Neymar pulled a goal back deep into stoppage time with Brazil's second spot kick of the match.

Haaland's brace took him level with Lionel Messi on seven goals for the tournament as Norway booked a showdown against England in Miami on July 11.

For Brazil, who hired Carlo Ancelotti in a bid to end a 24-year World Cup drought, it is the sixth straight tournament they have been knocked out by European opposition.

The last time Brazil failed to reach at least the quarterfinals came 36 years ago, when they lost 1-0 to archrivals Argentina in the last 16.

Gabriel Martinelli was rewarded for scoring the stoppage-time winner against Japan in the previous round, as the Arsenal winger replaced the injured Lucas Paqueta in the lone change to Brazil's lineup.

Norway were boosted by the return of Julian Ryerson, the Borussia Dortmund defender fit again after missing the past two games with a thigh injury.

Patrick Berg thought he had given Norway the lead inside three minutes, but his effort was ruled out for offside in the build-up.

After a rocky start, Brazil won a penalty when Kristoffer Ajer clattered into Matheus Cunha in the box.

The Brazilians were left furious as referee Ismail Elfath initially waved away their appeals, but VAR intervened, and the decision was overturned.

Guimaraes stepped up, but Nyland guessed correctly, diving low to his left to push away the Newcastle midfielder's tame penalty.

Nyland again came to Norway's rescue, getting a crucial touch to Martinelli's low drive as it flashed across goal, denying Guimaraes a simple tap-in.

When Martin Odegaard lost possession on the edge of his own box, Nyland once more saved Norway as he stuck out a leg to thwart Vinicius Junior.

Haaland had struggled to make a significant impact,

but his strength created a glorious opening for Norway before half-time.

The striker caused problems for Gabriel Magalhaes and Marquinhos in the Brazil defence before the ball broke kindly for Odegaard, whose effort was well saved by Alisson.

Norway coach Stale Solbakken brought on Oscar Bobb and Andreas Schjelderup at the break for Antonio Nusa and Alexander Sorloth, but it was the introduction of Endrick that almost changed the game immediately.

Vinicius Junior slipped Endrick through on goal with a delightful outside-of-the-foot pass, only for the teenager to dink wide as Nyland came out to close him down.

Nyland continued to frustrate Brazil, producing a good save to claw away Rayan's fierce strike before making another outstanding stop to deny Guimaraes, although the offside flag went up.

The arrival of Neymar in the 67th minute drew huge roars from the largely pro-Brazil crowd.

It was Norway who eventually broke the deadlock, though, and it came through an inevitable source.

Schjelderup whipped in a cross from the left and soared above Gabriel to power a header into the corner.

As Brazil desperately chased an equaliser, an incredible fingertip save from a back-pedalling Nyland prevented Ajer from looping the ball into his own net.

Haaland gave Norway breathing space as he hammered low into the corner from the edge of the box in the 90th minute.

It proved vital when Neymar converted a penalty in the 10th minute of stoppage time, preceded by an unseemly spat with Nyland, following an elbow on Casemiro.

Neymar Announces Retirement From International Football After Brazil's World Cup Exit

Neymar has announced his retirement from international football following Brazil's 2-1 loss to Norway in the round of 16 of the FIFA World Cup 2026 on Monday.

The former Barcelona star made his final appearance for Brazil after coming on in the defeat to Norway, scoring a stoppage time penalty which was not enough to cancel out Erling Haaland's double.

The 34-year-old forward finishes his career as the top goalscorer in the history of the Brazilian men's national team with 80 goals in 129 appearances.

"I tried. I tried. It started here at Met Life stadium and I finished here. It is now over," Neymar said after the game.

Neymar made his senior international debut in 2010 and appeared in four World Cup tournaments. He also competed in two Olympic tournaments, winning a silver medal in 2012 and leading Brazil to a gold medal in 2016, Fox Sports reports.

The Brazilian forward made two appearances, both as a substitute, at the 2026 World Cup. He made a cameo appearance in the second half against Scotland during the group stage before he scored his lone goal.

UEFA Slams FIFA's Decision To Rescind Balogun's Red Card

UEFA has slammed FIFA for an incomprehensible and unjustifiable decision to suspend USMNT striker Folarin Balogun's one-match ban.

Following an intervention from U.S. President Donald Trump, FIFA controversially lifted the suspension, allowing Balogun to play in the World Cup 2026 Round of 16 match against Belgium.

Citing Article 27 of its Disciplinary Code, FIFA opted to suspend the one-match ban for a one-year probationary period, effectively clearing Balogun to face Belgium.

However, in a statement issued on Monday via their X handle, European football's governing body furiously hit back, stating that by making middle-of-tournament exceptions for automatic suspensions, FIFA is compromising the integrity, credibility, and fairness of the World Cup.

"Football, like any other sports, relies on rules, which are the basis for fair, honest and transparent competition. Sometimes rules are open to interpretation. In this case not. A minimum automatic suspension of one match following a red card is not a discretionary option.

D'Tigers Outclass Rwanda In Final World Cup Qualifyers

Nigeria's D'Tigers hammered Rwanda 106-62 in their final Group C fixture, at the FIBA Basketball 2027 World Cup African Qualifiers.

The dominant win ensured D'Tigers ended the three-game window with a perfect record, having earlier defeated Tunisia and Guinea.

Point guard Uche Iroegbu had an outstanding performance, finishing with 17 points and seven assists, while Caleb Agada, Ikechukwu Mekowulu and Stan Okoye each contributed 13 points.

D'Tigers had opened the campaign with a hard-fought 84-81 victory over Tunisia and followed that with a dramatic 80-79 comeback victory against Guinea.

Caleb Agada starred with 22 points, Uche Iroegbu added 14, and Kaodirichi Akobundu-Ehiogu chipped in 10 as Nigeria overturned a late deficit to claim their second consecutive win.

The triumph over Rwanda completed a clean sweep of the qualifying window, with the team demonstrating resilience.

Luka Modric's World Cup Story Ends, Cristiano Ronaldo Gets Lifeline

By Eric Elezuo

It was an emotional encounter as two of world's best footballers; Luca Modric and Cristiano Ronaldo squared against each other in a bid to lay their hands on the coveted World Cup trophy when Portugal met Croatia in the round of 32. But after about 97minutes of play time, the World Cup story of Modric came to am abrupt end while Ronaldo gets a lifeline, proceeding to the Round of 16.

Both Ronaldo and Modric are not likely to feature in another World Cup tournament.

Portugal battled into the last 16 of the World Cup with a drama-filled 2-1 victory over Croatia on Thursday to set up a titanic showdown with European champions Spain.

In another nerve-shredding World Cup classic, Goncalo Ramos headed Portugal into the lead in the fourth minute of stoppage time before Croatia saw a last-gasp equaliser agonisingly ruled out for offside in Toronto.

Portugal's 41-year-old superstar captain Cristiano Ronaldo had helped haul his team back into the contest, burying a 68th-minute penalty to cancel out Croatia's 53rd-minute opener from Ivan Perisic.

Ronaldo later joined frenzied celebrations after Ramos glanced home a sensational header deep into injury time to give Portugal the lead.

But Ronaldo and his Portugal team-mates were left stunned when Josko Gvardiol prodded home an apparent equaliser in stoppage time.

Yet there was one final twist when the goal was chalked off for offside after a lengthy VAR review to the disbelief of Croatia's players and their large contingent of fans at Toronto's BMO Field.

After the final whistle, an emotional Ronaldo held up and pulled on a Portugal shirt bearing the number 21, a tribute to late team-mate Diogo Jota, the Liverpool star who tragically died in a car crash almost a year to the day from Thursday's win, on July 3 last year.

"We knew it before the game. It was a so special moment. We speak today, our group, about that, the coincidence of life, it's unbelievable," Ronaldo said afterwards of the tribute to Jota.

"I was amazed because the situation of today. It means a lot to us, not only because we won the game, but the also the way we won the game. It was a difficult game, we knew it."

The result ensures that Ronaldo's incredible World Cup career will be extended for at least one more match when the Portuguese face Iberian rivals Spain in the last 16 in Dallas on Monday.

Ronaldo's second-half penalty made him the oldest man to score in a World Cup knockout match.

Spain romp past Austria

Spain had advanced to that meeting with a scintillating 3-0 win over Austria in Los Angeles earlier Friday that confirmed their status as one of the favourites for the title.

Two goals from Mikel Oyarzabal and a Pedro Porro header sealed victory for the Spaniards, who produced their most complete performance of the tournament to advance to the next round.

Spain opened their World Cup campaign with a faltering 0-0 draw against Cape Verde, but have subsequently built momentum with each match.

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 unlived. He was Brigadier General Oseni Omo Braimah, Commander of 29 Task Force Brigade Operation Hadin Kai, Maiduguri Borno State.

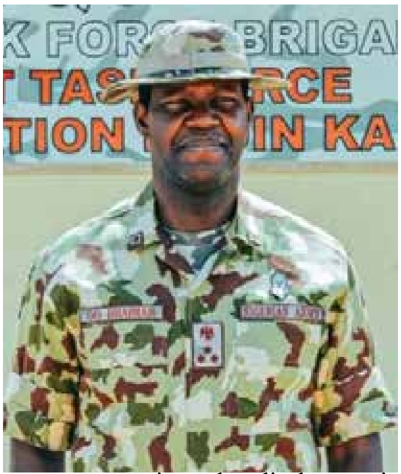
The sadness that followed the brutal killing of the Brigade Commander, can almost be touched, dear Nigerians, with special reference to the National Security Adviser, Mallam Nuhu Ribadu, and his counterpart, the Chief of Defense Staff, General Olufemi Oluyede. These men, have at separate fora concassed for the kid gloves handling of terrorism activities, and terrorists. Ribadu, it was, that asked that they be rehabilitated as they are 'our brothers. Oluyede 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 muat 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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