

Get arms for self-defence, Zamfara govt urges citizens

Zamfara's Government has implored indigenes of the state to be ready to defend themselves against terrorists.

- Bauchi gov wants new strategy against banditry, kidnapping
- Gunmen kill vigilante commander, others in Niger

A Ministry of Information special announcement signed by the commissioner, Alhaji Ibrahim Magaji Dosara, said:

"Following increase in the activities of bandits in various parts of the
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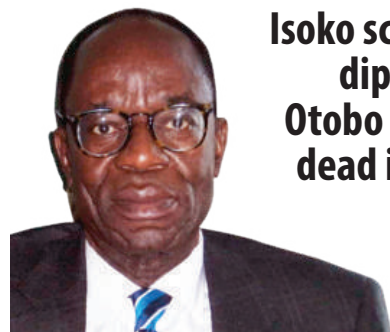
The Trumpet

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Bola Tinubu



Atiku Abubakar



Doyin Okupe



Kabiru Masari



Ifeanyi Okowa

Obi, Tinubu under fire over interim running mates, Atiku gets kudos

By **TUNDE JOSHUA**,
Abuja and SURU
CHARLES (Jalingo)

Presidential candidates of the All Progressives Congress (APC) and Labour Party (LP), Asiwaju Bola Tinubu and Mr. Peter Obi, have been lambasted by some Nigerians for naming interim running mates.

The critics said Tinubu's and Obi's delays in choosing substantive running mates indicated unpreparedness to govern unlike Peoples Democratic Party's (PDP's) Alhaji Atiku Abubakar who has named Delta State Governor, Dr. Ifeanyi Okowa, as his substantive vice presidential candidate.

But some other political analysts as well as the camps of Obi and Tinubu disagreed.

A political activist and former governorship

candidate in Delta State, Comrade Igbini Odafe Emmanuel, said that neither APC nor the LP erred in submitting names of persons as 'placeholders' for their vice presidential slots.

He also said all names submitted so far to the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) as candidates for the 2023 elections are 'placeholders'.

Igbini, an engineer and former oil industry unionist, who was the Governorship Candidate of Peoples Redemption Party (PRP), Delta State in 2007 and 2011, made this assertion in a statement, in an apparent reaction to a claim by INEC that there is no constitutional provisions for a 'placeholder'.

In the statement, Igbini said "as a political activist and a former three-time governorship candidate, I am compelled to react to the recent claim by Independent



Atiku

National Electoral Commission (INEC) through its National Commissioner Barr. Festus Okoye, that there exist no place in Nigerian Constitution and Legal Framework for what is now

described as 'placeholders' in Nigeria electoral process specifically as it concerns submission, change or substitution of names of candidates for general elections by registered

political parties.

"This claim by INEC is a fundamental falsehood deliberately made by it to mislead Nigerian voters and to cast aspersion on some political parties like APC and Labour Party which publicly disclosed that the names they submitted to INEC as their Vice Presidential Candidates were meant only to beat the June 17, 2022 date set by INEC but which they may change or substitute within the window provided by the sections 31 and 33 of the Electoral Act 2021, as amended to do so.

"Contrary to INEC's claim, I wish to state unequivocally that actions taken by APC and LP are constitutional and in line with sections 29, 31 and 33 of the Electoral Act 2021, as amended. The use of the word, "Placeholder" is merely misinterpreted by INEC. "Placeholder" simply means that it is not

substantive but temporarily standing in for something or someone else. The word is used in solving Algebraic Expression and Equations in Mathematics.

"Let me also inform Nigerians that this idea of changing or substituting candidates for general elections have been in our electoral laws of 2006, 2010 and now 2021, as amended."

He affirmed that changing or substituting candidates for elections is not limited to only Vice Presidential candidates as we now seem to focus on.

"In fact, all names so far submitted by political parties to INEC as Presidential, Vice Presidential, Senatorial, House of Representatives and House of Assembly Candidates are all 'placeholders' and can be changed or substituted before the 90 days to date of election, after which, no change or substitution is allowed except case of death of a candidate.

"For avoidance of doubt, I here reproduce verbatim, sections 29, 31 and 33 of the Electoral Act 2021 as amended:

"Section 29(1) states that: "Every political party shall not later than 180 days before the date appointed for a general election under the provisions of this Act, submit to the Commission in the prescribed forms the list of the candidates the party proposes to sponsor at the elections who must have emerged from a valid primaries conducted by the political party.

"(2) the List or Information submitted by each candidate shall be accompanied by an Affidavit sworn to by each candidate at the Federal High Court, High Court of a State, or Federal Capital Territory High Court indicating that he or she has fulfilled all the constitutional requirements for election into that office

"Section 31 states that: "A candidate may withdraw his or her candidature by notice in writing signed by him and delivered personally by the candidate to the political party that nominated him for the election and the political party shall convey such withdrawal to the Commission not later than 90 days to the election.

"Section 33 states that: "A political party shall not be allowed to change or substitute its candidate whose name has been submitted under section 29 of this Act, except in the case of death or withdrawal by the candidate: provided that in the case of such withdrawal or death of a candidate, the political party affected shall, within 14 days of the occurrence of the event, hold a fresh primary election to produce and submit a fresh

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state and the government commitment to ensure adequate security and protection of lives and property of the citizenry in the state, particularly during this rainy season, government has resolved to take further measures to deal with the recent escalating attacks, kidnapping and the criminal levies being enforced on our innocent communities.

"This act of terrorism has been a source of worry and concern to the people and government of the state. Therefore, in order to deal decisively with the situation in our respective communities, government has no option than to take the following measures:

"A. Government has henceforth, directed individuals to prepare and obtain guns to defend themselves against the bandits, as government has directed the state commissioner of police to issue license to all those who qualify and are wishing to obtain such guns to defend themselves. Government is ready to facilitate people, especially our farmers to secure basic weapons for defending themselves. Government has already concluded arrangement to distribute 500 forms to each of the 19 Emirates in the state for those willing to obtain guns to defend themselves.

"B. People must apply

from the Commissioner of Police, license to own guns and such other basic weapons to be used in defending themselves.

" C. A secretariat or centre will be established for the collection of intelligence on the activities of informants.

" D. people are strictly warned and advised to make sure that any information or intelligence about an informant must be true and nothing but the truth, as all information on such informants must carry correct data on the suspects, including their pictures, correct names, address, occupation and witness to testify the genuity of the information given, as government is taking punitive measures against any one found as informant. Any person who give wrong information against anybody, will be served the same punishment with an informant and will be treated as such.

"E. Government has requested the state House of Assembly to pass, as matter of urgency, the informants bill before it, to enable government take the drastic measures on informants as contained in the bill.

" F. Government has ordered for the recruitment of 200 additional Community Protection Guards in each of the 19 emirates of the state, making it 500 per emirate, to increase their manpower

and strengthen its force and capacity to deal with the bandits.

To further ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of these measures, as well the proper implementation of these measures, government has also decided as follows:

"1. Formation of a special committee to receive intelligence on the activities of informants.

" This committee has the following composition:

1. Alhaji Kabiru Balarabe Sardau(Lamidon Kaura) - SSG as Chairman

2. Alh Ibrahim Sulaiman - Chief of Staff to the Governor - Member

3. DIG Mamman Ibrahim Tsafe - Commissioner Security - Member

4. Ibrahim Magaji Dosara - Commissioner Information - Member

5. Hon Nasiru Masama - Commissioner Youth - Member

6. Sani Abdullahi Wamban Shinkafi - Honorary Adviser to the Gov - Member

7. Hon Abubakar Mohammed Dauran - Specie Adviser Security - Member

8. Hon Sanusi Wanzammai - Commissioner, State INEC - Member

9. Captain Mai Riga T/ Mafara - Member

10. Sani Gwamna Mayanchi - Member

11. Bello Bakyasuwa Soja to serve as the secretary to the committee and their

terms of reference will be given to them by the office of the SSG on Monday.

2. Formation of additional paramilitary unit to support control and command to properly and effectively reinforce the operations of our community protection guards CPG.

This newly established unit has the following structures and appointments:

1. Retired Commissioner of Police Mamman Anka as Commandant - General

2. Capt Aminu Mada rtd - Deputy Commandant General Operations

3. Sulaiman Lawali Zurmi - Commandant Operations

4. Bashir Nafiu Gusau - Commandant Mobilization.

5. Alh Aliyu Na'ibi Karakkai - Commandant Surveillance and Intelligence.

Other members of the control and command centre of the Community Protection Guards are:

6. Shi'itu Makera T/ Mafara

7. Bello Dankurmi

8. Dogo Na Bukkuyum

3. Re - constituting the state committee on prosecution of banditry related offences.

Government has also reconstituted the state committee on prosecution of bandits related offences as follows:

1. Dr Sani Abdullahi Wanban Shinkafi as

Chairman

2. Ibrahim Sulaiman - Chief of Staff to the Governor - Member

3. Rtd Justice Nasiru Umar Gummi - Member

4. CP Mamman Anka rtd - Member

5. Engr Mamuda Aliyu Maradun - Member

6. Rep of the Nigerian Army - Member

7. Rep of the Nigeria Police - Member

8. Rep of the DSS - Member

9. Rep of the Civil Defence Corps - Member

10. Rep of Hunters - Member, while

11. Barr Aminu Junaidu Kaura - Hon Attorney General and Commissioner for justice - Secretary to the committee."

The statement added: "Furthermore, in view of the deteriorating security situation in Mada, Wonaka, and Ruwan Bore Districts of Gusau local government, as well as Yansoto emirate in Tsafe local government, His Excellency, Governor Mohammed Matawalle

MON, Barden Hausa and Shatiman Sokoto, has approved the immediate closure of all markets and Kara in these districts and Yandoto emirate indefinitely.

"In addition this, government has equally banned riding of motorbikes and selling of petroleum products in Mada, Wonaka and Ruwan Bore districts, as well as

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Obi, Tinubu under fire over interim running mates, Atiku gets kudos

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2 candidate to the Commission for the election concerned."

In conclusion, he said "APC and LP have not acted against the Constitution and Electoral Act of Nigeria."

Atiku, in a statement at the weekend, said he is not contesting by playing to the gallery. He stated:

"Now that the formalities about candidates' emergence are concluded with the electoral umpire coming up with public presentation of candidates in all federal elections, it is safe to say that from this moment onwards, the warm-up to the race can only get more intense.

"But we must be clear about one thing: this is a race

like none before. It will be a marathon and it will require all of the energies that we can muster.

"Dear compatriot, my promise to you as we run this race together is that as your candidate, I shall ensure that we remain focused and disciplined. And I shall expect the same spirit of sportsmanship from you.

"The 2023 election is neither about me nor any of the other candidates we are contesting with - or their agents. It is about the pathway that our dear country, Nigeria, must chart into a brighter and more prosperous future.

"Our assets in this campaign are my track

records of performance when I served as Vice President between 1999 - 2007. The second asset is the policy document that details the work plan of what we shall do to rescue Nigeria back to her glorious heights. Above all, my attributes as a Unifier and Bridge-builder bar none will stand us in good stead in this era characterised by disunity and absence of inclusion.

"Our opponents will want to confuse you with alternative facts as we progress and when the campaign starts in full. But I will urge you to always remain focused and remember that that is not why we are in the race. The urgency of the job

to get Nigeria back on her feet as ONE People, with One Future and ONE Country cannot give us the luxury of playing to the gallery.

"I thank you most sincerely for your continued support and please have assurances of my best regards.

"I wish you a happy Sunday. "Atiku Abubakar"

However, the Obi and Tinubu camps have defended the use of surrogate running mates on the ground that consultations are ongoing on the choice of their parties' substantive vice presidential candidates.

Tinubu's spokesman, Tunde Rahman, however, said whom (Masari) people are regarding as his



Tinubu

principal's running mate pro tempore could well be or double as the substantive one if INEC does not allow a substitution.

If electoral umpire toes this line, LP will be stuck with a Christian-Christian ticket of Obi and Dr. Doyin Olupe.

Relatedly, Tinubu has been urged to substitute the name of his fellow Muslim temporary running mate Kabir Masari that he submitted to the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) with a Christian from the North.

The call was made the leadership of the Christian Reformed Church-Nigeria (CRC-N) at the weekend. It came via a communique issued in Jalingo shortly after its 154th General Church Council meeting. It also kicked against any plan by the APC for a Muslim/Muslim presidential ticket.

It was jointly signed by the President of CRC-N, Rev. (Dr.) Isaiah Magaji Jirapye, who also doubles as the state chairman, Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) and the church's General Secretary, Rev. Sagara Nuvalga Gargea.

The church believed that "there are thousands of competent and God-fearing Christians in the north who can deliver if trusted with the mandate."

It described Nigeria as a secular state, stressing that a Muslim-Muslim ticket "is a calculated arrangement aimed at pushing Christians out of Political leadership of the country, a move perceived as Islamization agenda."

Consequently, the need for their leaders and believers to formulate a clear-cut vision, template and strategy for Christians to get involved in politics and aspire for national leadership, the church believed, has become necessary.

Failure to adhere to the above suggestion, they said, will amount to "enthroning mediocrity and ungodly policies as well as furthering persecution of the church."

It wondered why Christians have continued to shy away from participating actively in politics which

"is instituted by God and is never a dirty game as perceived by many, but a clean one played by wrong people."

The church also expressed sadness at the growing security situation in the country, urging the federal government to rise up to its responsibility by frustrating the activities of terrorists.

The communique said "there must be convincing commitment on the side of government to address the challenges of terrorism, banditry and kidnapping ravaging the country."

The church also condemned the "unfortunate killings of innocent Nigerians in Churches in Owo, Ondo and Kaduna States respectively."

It observed that churches "are now soft targets of the terrorists" and underlined the need for Christians "not only to be security-conscious but be prepared to defend themselves in the midst of the deteriorating security situation."

It stated that "most of the ethno-communal crises in the State are cases of brothers against each other in the name of tribe and sections."

To curb this, they charged believers in Ussa, Takum, Wukari, Donga, Yangtu and Bissaula communities to strive to promote true sense of brotherhood as taught in the Holy Scriptures and downplay tribalism, sectionalism and other factors that cause disharmony and unwarranted disputes leading to bloodshed and destruction of properties.

It called on the organ responsible for conducting the forthcoming general elections to ensure a hitch-free exercise. The church

re-emphasized the need for Christians of voting age without Permanent Voters Card (PVC) to take advantage of the ongoing voters registration to obtain it. It also enjoined churches to commence operation show your PVCs and members without it to obtain it to enable them play effective role in determining the leadership of the country in 2023.

Get arms for self-defence, Zamfara govt urges citizens

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2 Yandoto emirate.

Henceforth, all filling stations on the affected areas are hereby closed with immediate effect. Anybody found riding motorbike within the areas is considered as bandits and security agencies are thereby directed to shoot such persons at sight. Security agencies are by this announcement directed to ensure strict compliance.

"Anybody found violating this order should be dealt with according to the rule of law. Government would not condone any act where innocent people are being killed.

Government is also using this medium to thank all those who honoured and respect the peace dialogue in what ever form. In the same vein, those who refused to honour and respect the peace dialogue are here by warned to allow peace within our respective communities.

"Government is hereby directing the military, police, civil defence and other security agencies to mobilise their operatives and take fight to the enclaves of the criminals with immediate effect."

Meanwhile, Governor Bala Mohammed at the weekend tasked security agencies to evolve proactive security strategy to protect rural communities against the activities of bandits and kidnappers in Bauchi State.

The governor gave the charge during a condolence visit to Sabon Gari Narabi community in Toro Local Government Area of the state where a five-year-old girl, Khadija Abdullahi was allegedly kidnapped and murdered by her neighbour.

He urged the Commissioner of Police in the state, Mr Umar Sanda to reshuffle Divisional Police Officers (DPOs) across the 20 local government areas for more effective response to issues of banditry and kidnapping.

Mohammed, who lauded the police and other security operatives for their dedication to duties,

stressed the need for concerted effort in deployment of more personnel to areas considered to be the hideout of criminals.

He said the government was concerned about the safety of the citizens by providing all the needed support to secure towns and villages.

"We are here to also commiserate with the people of Toro over incessant activities of bandits where about eight incidents happened in Narabi community. It is becoming unacceptable.

"The person who perpetrated this mayhem has been arrested and he is facing the law. We are going to follow the case with keen interest.

"Our community leaders should be more vigilant because compromises are everywhere. We have people coming into Toro and Alkaleri because of the size of the LGAs and the terrains.

"We are going to make sure we put our eyes and legs on the ground. We are going to listen and our contacts are with you, so please, collaborate with us.

"Nobody will give you security unless you give yourselves. You should be bold and not be afraid.

"We are not a set of cowards. As the Kauran Bauchi, as the commander of the chivalry in all the emirates, I am ready to lead you.

"So please, whatever you have in store, bring it out. We have to face these hoodlums, criminals and charlatans and we have to deal with them," he said.

On his part, Sanda confirmed the arrest of some of the perpetrators including the alleged murderer of the girl, Khadija Abdullahi.

He said the police were working round the clock to protect lives and property, and urged the people to provide them with credible information that would lead to arrest and prosecution of criminals in the state.

Also at the weekend, a vigilance group commander, Mallam Danladi

Dobbo, and two others were killed in Kpade community in Lapai Local Government Area of Niger State in a renewed onslaught by gunmen.

Several villagers were also injured in the attack, while the gunmen who stormed a farm in the community abducted an unspecified number of locals.

Sources close to the community said the incident occurred on Friday around 3:30pm when the people were busy in their farms.

A tractor belonging to the farmers was set ablaze by the rampaging gunmen who came in large numbers.

According to a source, gunmen ambushed the vigilance commander and his men who had gone into the forest to rescue the abducted victims; they killed him and two others.

The bodies of those killed were yet to be recovered by the villagers, who appealed to the state government to deploy security agents to the area to help recover them.

The recent attack was coming barely three weeks after gunmen killed a Divisional Crime Officer (DCO) of Lapai division, and a vigilante in a similar circumstance, though there was no official statement from the state police command to that effect.

It was reliably gathered that three different helicopters were in the last one month seen hovering over Kpada community, which shares border with FCT and Kogi State before the attack on Friday.

Attempt to reach the Police Public Relations Officer of the state command, DSP Wasiu Abiodun was not successful as of the time of filing in the report as his mobile phone was switched off.

However, the Commissioner for Internal Security in the state, Mr. Emmanuel Umar, confirmed the attack, but appealed to the affected community to remain calm, as the government had mobilised security agents to the area to recover the bodies of the victims and rescue those abducted.

22 youngsters die in nightclub

By **OROWO VICTORIA OJIEH**

Tragedy hit South Africa at the weekend when no fewer than 22 people were found dead at a nightclub under mysterious circumstances in a township of the southern city of East London.

Eastern Cape police spokesperson Brigadier Tembinkosi Kinana on Sunday said police were alerted by members of the public to the incident at Scenery Park.

"The circumstances under which they died are under investigation," Kinana said, adding it was too early to determine

the cause of death of the young adults aged between 18 and 20 years.

The bodies will be transported to state mortuaries where relatives are expected to help identify the victims, said Siyanda Manana, a spokesperson for the Eastern Cape provincial health department.

"We are going to im-

mediately be embarking on autopsies so we can know the probable cause of death," he said. "We are talking 22 bodies right now."

South Africa's President Cyril Ramaphosa has expressed his condolences to the families of the 22 people who died at a tavern in East London.

Ramaphosa said the victims were teenagers.

"While the President awaits more information on the incident, his thoughts are with the families who have lost children as well as families who are awaiting confirmation of how their children may have been affected," a statement from the presidency said.

Many people gathered at the scene trying to find loved ones. National police minister Bheki Cel traveled to the scene in Scenery Park, where he told a large crowd: "The call is on the parents to see that their kids are kept well, the call is on the community to say we can't allow our kids to die."

NCDC, LUTH partner against infectious diseases

Lagos University Teaching Hospital (LUTH) and the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) have pledged to strengthen institutional collaboration in fighting infectious diseases after successfully managing COVID-19.

Part of the collaboration is the building of a 40-bed isolation centre at LUTH jointly financed by the NCDC and the World Bank, the Chief Medical Director of LUTH, Prof Chris Bode said while welcoming the Director General of NCDC, Dr Ifedayo Adetifa to the hospital at the weekend.

He said since Adetifa came on board as the D-G of NCDC, he had brought his vast skills on vaccine impact and monitoring to bear while also expanding the frontiers of managing not only the COVID-19 pandemic but also other emergent diseases as Ebola and Monkeypox.

Bode said Adetifa, who had his residency training at LUTH, was returning to a familiar turf as he expressed confidence that the visit would provide an opportunity to further cement the cooperation between LUTH and NCDC.

He recalled the "wonderful working relationship and collaboration with LUTH", especially since the onset of the COVID-19

pandemic outbreak.

"Many institutions closed up and shut down in the raging days of the pandemic. We cannot blame them, the fear was high as apocalyptic predictions were made for African landscape.

"We in LUTH, however, stepped up to the plate and did our own heavy lifting in contribution to the national efforts to contain the disease," he said.

The CMD disclosed that LUTH's department of community medicine was closely involved in contact tracing and was part of the policy making at the emergency operation centre.

He said its clinicians admitted and treated over 1000 cases, most with multiple co-morbidities requiring multi-disciplinary management.

He said psychiatrists at the hospital established the emotional and psychosocial support group that was later adopted by Lagos State to render invaluable psychosocial support for patients and relations of COVID-19.

Bode said that LUTH trained other hospitals and care givers from many states on management of COVID-19 isolation centres while acknowledging top class collaborative research efforts with the NCDC on the pandemic.

Makinde approves more recruitments for Amotekun Corps

Governor Seyi Makinde has approved the recruitment of additional 500 men for the Western Nigeria Security Network (WNSN), codenamed Amotekun, in Oyo State as part of his administration's efforts to enhance security of lives and properties.

He stated this at a monthly security meeting with local government Chairmen, Vice Chairmen, heads of security agencies, traditional rulers and stakeholders at House of Chiefs, Secretariat, in Ibadan at the weekend.

Engineer Makinde told the gathering that the security issue is a collective responsibility therefore all hands must be on deck in order to curtail insecurity facing the country, in which Oyo State was not exempted.

"Security is everyone's business and if we all play our parts well, we will have a safer and more secured environment, although security of lives and properties is paramount responsibility of government, but govern-

ment cannot do it alone except with cooperation of the entire citizenry and as we can see from the report gotten all over the country, Oyo State is relatively peaceful, this was not achieved by the effort of government alone but with the efforts of the all stakeholders, most especially the security commanders.

"This meeting is aimed at getting the situation report from various quarters on security as well as to dialogue on what to do as stakeholders and fine tune necessary steps, this will help government to put necessary machinery in place for people in the state to sleep with their two eyes closed and as the operation of the Amotekun corps is concerned, we have perfected the process of employing 500 more hands to enhance their performance and further deepen the security architecture of our State."

While discussing the consideration on whether to incorporate local vigilante members into the existing security team for the en-



Gov. Seyi Makinde

hancement of security in the state, Makinde urged all stakeholders and the general public to join hands with the present administration in the effort in ensuring peaceful environment.

He used the occasion to appreciate the security agencies in the State for their unrelenting support towards making peaceful co-existence among the people of the State possible, urging them to keep the pace up in

order to allow for more influx of investments and commercial growth.

In his remark, the former Governor of Oyo State, Senator Rasheed Ladoja who was also present at the meeting, commended Governor Seyi Makinde for being proactive in the area of security which has greatly helped the State, when compared to neighboring States, especially in the media reports of cases of insurgency and urged all stakeholders and members of the public to be vigilant an ensure safety of their lives.

In his welcome address, the State Commissioner for Local Government and Chieftaincy Matters, Chief Bayo Lawal assured that the meeting would provide solutions and necessary moves on the need to ensure security of lives and properties are sustained in the State and commended Governor Makinde on his continued efforts at ensuring people of the state sleep with peace of mind despite the security challenges facing the country.

HURIWA decries killing of Christian clerics

Civil advocacy group, Human Rights Writers Association of Nigeria, (HURIWA) has said that Nigeria would have been boiling should Imams be kidnapped or murdered the way the marauders are terrorising and annihilating Christian leaders in the country.

HURIWA's National Coordinator, Comrade Emmanuel Onwubiko, in a statement, categorically stressed that "President Muhammadu Buhari, the service chiefs and all the heads of security agencies who are Muslims would have swung into action" and taken more decisive actions "should kidnappers start feasting on Imams."

The group emphasised that "the spate of kidnapping and gruesome killing of Christian leaders and their followers was pure persecution." It asked "why Imams have not

fallen victim to abductions and killings if the problem is a general one and not targeted at Christians as seen in the last few years."

At the weekend, terrorists murdered another Christian cleric, 50-year-old Catholic priest, Rev Fr. Vitus Borogo, in Kaduna State, at Prison Farm, Kujama, along Kaduna-Kachia Road.

This followed the abduction and killing of Reverend Father Joseph Bako of St. John Catholic Church, Kudenda in Chikun Local Government Area of Kaduna State recently..

"About 20 Christian clerics have either been kidnapped or killed just in 2022 and there has not been one report of the kidnap or the killing of an Imam. This is not in any way inciting the kidnap of Imams but the unending attacks on Christian clerics is suspicious, that clandestine forces are after Christian

clerics," Onwubiko said.

"The Prelate of the Methodist Church Nigeria, His Eminence, Samuel Kanu Uche; the Methodist Bishop of Owerri, Rt. Rev. Dennis Mark; Founder of Solid Rock Kingdom Church, Apostle John Okoriko; Rev. Fr. Alphonsus Uboh of St. Pius X Parish IkotAbasi in the Mkpate Enin Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State; amongst others have been kidnapped just this year.

"Now, the bloodthirsty marauders, buoyed by the nonchalance and inaction of security agencies led by Muslims, have the audacity to murder Rev Fr. Vitus Borogo. This is totally unacceptable and must stop forthwith.

"The hot and sizzling Jihad against Christians allegedly supported by Islamists is alarming and condemnable.

The fact that all the

internal security institutions are led by Muslims in the last seven years and Christian are being killed and kidnapped in targeted and coordinated manner shows a pattern.

HURIWA urged the President to rejig the headships of the internal security institutions like the police, the Army, the Department of State Services, Customs, Immigration, Prison, Civil defence, NIA, amongst others to "inject representatives of Christians."

It added: "HURIWA alerts the whole world, the United Nations, the European Union, the United Kingdom, the United States, Pope Francis, and other international powers to take notice of the genocide of Christians in Kaduna, Owo in Ondo, Plateau, amongst others and pressure the Buhari government to end the carnage."



Prof. Chris Bode

Ondo orders compulsory installation of CCTV in public, private institutions

By **OROWO VICTORIA OJIEH** and **FRIDAY OMO-SOLA**

An Executive Order for compulsory installation of close circuit television (CCTV) devices in all public and private institutions in Ondo State has been signed by Governor Rotimi Akeredolu.

This order came weeks after the attack on worshippers at St Francis Catholic

Church, Owo area of Ondo killing not less than 40 people and many others sustaining injuries.

A statement at the weekend by the Chief Press Secretary to the Governor, Richard Olatunde, said it was a measure to prevent insecurity due to the increased rate of insecurity in the country and the need to protect the lives and property in all public and private institutions throughout

the state.

He stressed that the executive order shall be enforced at all religious places of worship, financial institutions (of all kinds), event centres, supermarkets, educational institutions (schools), hotels or motels, guest houses, inns, restaurants, clinics and health centres, eateries, recreation or vehicular parks and other places regularly used by the public.

"This becomes imperative in the light of the increased spate of insecurity in the country and the need to ensure security of lives and properties in all public and private institutions and centres throughout the state," the statement said.

"The executive order shall be enforced at all religious places of worship, financial institutions (of all kinds), event centres, supermarkets, educational



Gov Rotimi Akeredolu

institutions (Schools), Hotels/Motels, Guest House, Inns, Restaurants, Clinics and Health Centres, eateries (of all kinds), recreation or vehicular parks and other places regularly used by the public."

He said the order is pursuant to Section 176 (2) of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of

Nigeria, which vests such power in the governors, as the chief executives of their states.

According to him, the order expects, "That the owners, occupiers, managers and operators of public/private institutions within Ondo State shall mandatorily install, use and maintain CCTV devices and other secret cameras to monitor and keep surveillance on the daily activities in their premises and especially monitor the ingress and egress of people/vehicles at the said places, venues and centres.

"That the installed CCTV devices apart from capturing all activities at the public/private institutions must also have data storage hardware and data stored therein should be made available to security agencies whenever it is required.

"That public/private

institutions shall employ and maintain well-trained security personnel who shall man the entry and exit points to their various facilities/premises.

"That where necessary, the owners and occupiers of public/private institutions shall erect a well fortified perimeter fence with a security post at the entry and exit points.

"That this Executive Order shall be enforced by all security agencies particularly the Nigeria Police, Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), Ondo State Security Network Agency (Amotekun) and the Department of State Security Services (DSS).

"That violators of this Executive Order shall be prosecuted in accordance with Section 203 of the Criminal Code (Cap. 37) Laws of Ondo State of Nigeria."

NECO begins SSCE for school-based candidates

By **OROWO VICTORIA OJIEH**

National Examinations Council (NECO) says the 2022 Senior School Certificate Examination (SSCE) for school-based candidates commenced on Monday, 27th June 2022.

A statement by NECO's Head, Information and Public Relations Division, Azeez Sani, said state

Ministries of Education, principals, commandants and all stakeholders are urged to disregard any speculation on the alleged postponement of the examination.

It assured that the Council has put all necessary measures in place to ensure the seamless conduct of the SSCE which would run till Friday, August 12, 2022, with candidates examined in 76 subjects.

Nigeria relying on improved security to boost OPEC's oil output, says Sylva

Minister of State for Petroleum Resources, Chief Timipre Sylva, at the weekend, declared that after meeting with oil companies, he expects to see some improvement of security in the sector to enable Africa's top producer to meet its Organisation of Oil Exporting Countries (OPEC) production quota by the end of August 2022.

It would be recalled that Nigeria loses millions of barrel of crude oil yearly to theft and vandalism, which underscores how insecurity causes financial losses for the country.

Sylva said President Muhammadu Buhari had pledged to ensure that oil theft was nipped in the bud and had set up dedicated courts to combat the problem, saying: "This year the Federal Government projected 1.8 million

barrels per day, in the first quarter, but blamed the shortfall on attacks on oil infrastructure and crude oil theft.

"For us in Nigeria, we are at a low point and we are not able to meet our OPEC quota. We have given ourselves just about a month to ensure that we can. We believe that by August we would see some improvement in security.

"At this moment, I think prices are firm enough, I don't think there will be any surprises in August. We believe that the market is well supplied. And of course some people consider price to be on the high side and expected us to pump more, but currently, there is little capacity that can be brought to the market."

The minister also disclosed that Nigeria had started the construction of 614 kilometers (382) miles pipeline, which will reach Europe through Algeria, adding that Algeria, Nigeria and Niger held talks on the revival of the project to pipe gas to Europe to diversify its gas sources.

"Nigeria was embarking on the construction of its portion of the gas pipeline. The revival comes at strategic time as the European Union (EU) seeks to wean itself of Russian gas following its invasion of Ukraine and is seeking alternative sources," he added.



Chief Timipre Sylva

International Breweries, FBNH lift NGX, naira appreciates to N429.013 per dollar

Nigerian Equity Market closed on a positive note as of Thursday last week. It was lifted by gains recorded in International Breweries and First Bank of Nigeria Holding (FBNH) stocks, while the All Share Index (ASI) increased by 0.17 per cent to close 51.705 per cent from 51.618.73 points the previous day.

Market capitalisation

of equities listed in the Nigeria Exchange (NGX) increased to N27.875 trillion from N27.828 trillion as of the previous day, while the total volume traded closed with exchange of 156,087 million units valued at N1.83 billion traded in 4,312 deals.

However, the market breadth was negative with 12 gainers against 18 losers, just as the NGX

index marginally increased by 0.4 per cent to close at 1,879,05 points against 1,878,23 points at the previous close of trading.

However, market turnover closed with traded volume of 74.39 million units. International Breweries and FBNH were key gainers, while First City Monument Bank (FCMB) and Nigeria Breweries Plc were key losers.

Moreover, International Breweries shares rose by 5.0 per cent, FBN Holdings claimed 4.46 per cent,

United Capital increased by 3.67 per cent, while Sterling Bank rose by 0.66 per cent.

Nigeria bourse sustained gains with index of 1.75 per cent, while naira fell by 0.15 per cent in the Import and Export (I&E) window.

NGX, GRI, others to host webinar on responsible investments

Nigeria Exchange Limited (NGX), in collaboration with Global Reporting Initiative (GRI), Africa and Principles for Responsible Investment (APRI) are set to host a webinar on the role of metrics and data in enabling responsible investing on Wednesday, 29 June 29, 2022 at 11:00am.

The webinar with the theme: Empowering Responsible Investing Through Data Metrics and Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) Integration is aimed at encourag-

ing investors, companies, market regulators and practitioners, who are interested in understanding ESG metrics and data required to make better investment decisions.

Speaking on the event, Divisional Head, Business Support Services of NGX, Mrs. Irene Robinson-Ayanwale, said: "The increase in sustainable and responsible investment has put ESG metrics higher up on the list of performance considerations, as many investors now prefer to

use their money to create change in the world.

According to her, investors are increasingly relying on a wide range of ESG data when making decisions about where to invest their money, stressing: "The Webinar, which is in line with the Exchanges commitment to foster the growth of long-term sustainable finance in the Nigeria capital market will drive conversation on how decisions useful ESG data plays key role in investment decisions.

Confirmed speakers expected at the event are, Chief Executive Officer of Nigeria Exchange Limited, Temi Popoola; Chief Executive Officer Infracredit, Chinna Azubike; Director, Capital Market, Dave Reubzaeti; Head of Africa Signatory Relations, Daron Scogie; Head, Investor Relations, Dangote Cement Plc, Temilade Aduroja and Divisional Head, Capital Market, Nigeria Exchange Limited, Jude Chiemeka, among other notable speakers.

NLNG restates commitment to production of LPG to meet local demand

Nigeria Liquefied Natural Gas (NLNG) has restated its commitment to 100 per cent production of its Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) to demands of the domestic market and support the growth of LPG use in the country.

It maintained that the move was also aimed at helping to reduce the health, safety and environmental risks associated with the use of other domestic fuel sources.

Deputy Managing Director of Nigeria LNG Limited, Olalekan Ogunleye, said

this during his speech at the second West Africa LPG exposition and NLPGA summit held in Lagos.

Ogunleye stated that NLGA remained committed to collaborating with regulators, partners, and industry players to grow the domestic LPG market and bring cleaner energy to Nigerians.

He added that through the supply of LPG, NLNG prioritised the supply of cleaner energy in Nigeria while working in collaboration actively with the federal government to grow LPG

consumption in Nigeria as part of the national journey to a cleaner energy future.

Ogunleye said domestic consumption of LPG in the country had increased by 300 per cent from about 60,000 metric tons in 2007 to over one million metric tons in 2020.

The NLNG helmsman pointed out that the increase indicated that the domestic market was one of the fastest growing LPG markets in the world, adding that the development would boost the viability of LPG, as a business and its adoption

by Nigerians.

He said a significant stimulus to the domestic LPG market was the Federal Government's declaration of the Decade of Gas, as well as regulators and industry stakeholders' support.

Ogunleye maintained that the declaration had created an enabling environment for investment and deliberate actions designed to ensure that Nigeria takes advantage of the global energy transition, while monetising the country's massive gas reserves.

Diri laments upsurge in drug-related crime

By **AHERHOKE OKIOMA**,
Yenagoa

Bayelsa State Governor Douye Diri has said there is a direct relationship between drug addiction and increase in crime and criminality. He stated this on Saturday at Peace Park in Yenagoa during a sensitisation walk/campaign to mark this year's International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking.

The governor, in a statement by his Chief Press Secretary, Daniel Alabrah, said in a bid to address the menace associated with drug abuse, his government constituted a Drug Abuse Prevention and Rehabilitation Committee with well qualified personnel in the

field. He noted that crime and criminality were intertwined with drug abuse, and that for this reason the committee was set up to prevent lives of the young ones from wasting away.

He emphasised that his government was determined to rescue those caught in the drug addiction web by building a rehabilitation centre in the state. He appealed to youths and the enlightened on the dangers of drug addiction to join the campaign against the illicit act.

He said: "I have always said that crime and criminality have an inverse relationship. If you look at the statistics of criminal and gang activities across our country, you will discover that most of those involved

in crime and criminality are drug addicts. We cannot afford to waste the lives of the underprivileged. Our youths are golden to us.

"As a government, we have come to that realisation and that was why we set up this committee made up of professional and committed members that have continued to sensitise the populace and our youths to move away from drug, crime and criminality and embrace the good life.

"We are doing everything possible to ensure that even those that are addicted will soon have a place of rehabilitation. Your state government is building a rehabilitation centre in Ogbia Local Government Area."

Diri also cautioned politicians against influencing the youths



Gov. Douye Diri

negatively on illicit drug use, urging them to desist from the inhumane act or be ready to face the circumstances that come with it. He thanked the Drug Abuse Prevention and Rehabilitation Committee for always being proactive in the

fight against drug abuse and addiction.

In her opening remarks, chairperson of the committee, Dr. Faith Zibs-Godwin, noted that the UN General Assembly in 1987 decided to observe every June 26 as international day against drug abuse and illicit trafficking as an expression of its determination to achieve its goal of a society free from drug abuse.

Mrs. Zibs-Godwin stressed that the motive of this year's theme, which is "Addressing Drug Challenges in Health and Humanitarian Crisis" was to raise role models that will help others live a normal life and empower them to deal with life's challenges. Also, the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Health, Dr. Tonye Azebi, said drug abuse was gradually finding its way into every home through self-medication and use of unapproved drugs.



Olu of Warri hosts unity ceremony

Warri monarch, Ogiame Atuwatse III at the weekend hosted the third edition of "Ghigo Aghofen" ceremony for Omadino. It is a community in Warri South Local Government Area of Delta State.

The ceremony was hosted at the Olu of Warri's palace, amidst cultural display from various ethnic nationalities residing in the oil-rich kingdom

Ghigo Aghofen, meaning "Palace Watch," is a ceremony ushering in one of the indigenous Itsekiri communities to keep watch over the Warri Kingdom.

It was initiated by the king in 2021, shortly after ascending the royal stool. The aim is to

promote robust relationship between the king and other communities that could not have access to the palace due to one reason or the other.

Addressing the congregation on Saturday, Ogiame urged Omadina community to resolve their differences and forge ahead as one and indivisible community.

"I thank Omadino community for coming in large numbers. I want to use this opportunity to preach peace and unity because there is a lot that is being spoken about the community.

"Let me remind you that you have a unique opportunity to start again in your community.

So a line must be drawn. Many people may feel a sense of indictment and frustration.

"I appeal to all of you to put those sentiments away and start doing things right. Omadino is a too important community for there to be division and fight.

"You are on duty till Sept. 24. You will also be on duty when we mark our first coronation anniversary. Hopefully, before the time lapses, we will come to Omadino. We want to see that the factions are dissolved and embrace peace," he said.

Ogiame said that there was much to achieve in unity, with special reference to Itsekiri Trust Fund.

Military attacks suspected oil thieves, militants

By **AHERHOKE OKIOMA**, Yenagoa

Operatives of the Nigerian Army stationed at the weekend launched a raid on the camps of suspected oil thieves and militants at Igbomoto and Azuzuama Communities of Southern Ijaw Local Government Area of Bayelsa State.

It was gathered that the raid, which was conducted by men of 5 Battalion of the Nigerian Army, also combed the crude oil pipeline route along the Obama flow station, Kolo Creeks and Brass areas of the State.

While a senior military source said that the operation was also targeted at tackling the operations of some known militants involved in setting up illegal bunkering camps in communities of Southern Ijaw and some other illegal activities. Another claimed the operation was targeted at arresting a known militant leader over his alleged shady activities, but he escaped with his boys through the creeks when he was alerted about the impending military raid.

It was also however gathered

that the shrine allegedly being used to administer oaths on youths during recruitment into the illegal bunkering activities by the suspected militant leader was destroyed and many other items including military camouflage, mobile phones and military boots were seized.

Indigenes of the Igbomoto Community however cried out over alleged military occupation of the area thereby causing panic and desertion by indigenes over fear of indiscriminate arrest.

An indigene of Igbomoto, who pleaded anonymity, however told The Trumpet on Sunday that the area is calm as the military men have retreated from the community as at Sunday morning, "the situation is calm now. We are a peace loving community and would not want soldiers to occupy our area."

Attempts to get the spokesman of the 16 Brigade of the Nigerian Army and the Joint Military Task Force to speak on the development proved abortive as no one showed signs of denying or confirming the development.

Man arrested for allegedly beheading son for rituals

By **KELVIN OHOROR**

A 33-year-old man, Gabriel Volts, has been arrested in Delta State for allegedly beheading his son for ritual purposes.

According to the spokesperson of the state Police Command, DSP Bright Edefe, the suspect took his son from his wife, went to Etinabobo bush in Edo State where he used a hand saw to cut

off the head of the little boy and buried him by a palm tree.

"The suspect was arrested after the child went missing, and the suspect lied to the wife that the son is with his sister in Warri, which turned out to be false.

"This prompted the wife to be suspicious. So, she reported to the Police. Suspect has confessed to the alleged crime," DSP Bright confirmed to *The Trumpet*.

My 100 days in office hellish, says Soludo

•Vows to end IPOB sit-at-home order

Stories by **CHARLES ONYEKWERE**,
South-East Correspondent

Governor Charles Soludo of Anambra State says his last 100 days in office have been 'bumpy' and challenging due to the rising 'insecurity and red treasury' that he inherited from his predecessor, Mr Willie Obiano.

Soludo, who disclosed this at the weekend during a ceremony to mark his 100 days in office, vowed to end the Monday sit-at-home order declared by outlawed Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB).

"To be sure, the last 100 days have been bumpy and challenging as expected, with insecurity and a red treasury being the most portent, as clearly identified in

our inaugural address," he said.

"Thus, with declining revenue in the context of insecurity and a mountain of debt including over N20 billion in arrears of gratuity to pensioners since 2018 vis-à-vis the sky-high expectations from you, some fundamental disruptive changes are inevitable."

The governor, however, asked people who were pitying him for the situation to withdraw their pity, explaining that he "consciously applied for this job, and there will be no excuses."

"The Monday sit-at-home order by IPOB, which has wrecked the Anambra economy and disrupt the people's social life, will soon be history," the governor said.

"Our children will have their full week of studies and our



Gov. Charles Soludo

businesses will be in full charge again. We have declared zero tolerance for touting which has endeared the government to transport owners, operators and stakeholders. More programmes

and projects will be unveiled in due course, particularly to retrain and empower the former touts."

He said the major part of the 100 days have been devoted to making key appointments into the government and fighting insecurity in the state. The governor said his administration would work hard towards implementing his manifesto, which he said, centres on five driving pillars of security, law and order, economic transformation agenda; social agenda; governance, rule of law and value system, noting that he has begun work in those areas.

"We have maintained the policy of the past administration on 'Community Choose Your Project' in which communities receive grants from the state government to execute a project or projects of priority to the community.

"Our administration has launched a new phase and increased the grant from N20 million to N25 million per community. We have also launched a policy that no retiree from the

state civil service will be owed gratuity under our administration and have paid retirees from March to date. We have also begun, albeit gradually, to pay gratuity to pensioners who retired since 2018 and there is hope and joy in the land. We have also approved the same policy for local governments," the governor said.

Prof. Soludo said his administration has successfully screened over 40,000 candidates who applied for teaching jobs in the primary and secondary schools in the state. He said additional 6,000 candidates would soon be screened for recruitment in the state. The governor said, in the face of dwindling state resources, his administration would begin to collect taxes from Anambra residents and indigenes of the state in the diaspora, assuring that such taxes must be put to good use.

He added: "More programmes and projects will be unveiled in due course, particularly to retrain and empower the former touts."

Ohanaeze youths write UK Embassy on Ekweremadu, warn blackmailers

Ohanaeze Ndigbo Youth Council Worldwide (OYC) has again waded into the raging controversy over the detention of former Deputy Senate President, Ike Ekweremadu and his wife, Beatrice.

The youth wing of the apex Igbo socio-cultural organization had earlier urged caution and an end to the social media trial of the Senator. The group has now written an open letter to the UK Embassy, begging that at least the Senator's wife be freed to enable her attend to their ailing daughter, Sonia.

In the appeal letter, the Ohanaeze youths said it was now clear that the Ekweremadus did not involve themselves in any untoward deal but had followed an established process to save the life of their daughter. The letter of appeal was signed by Ohanaeze Youths President-General, Mazi Okwu Nnabuike and the Secretary-General, Comrade Obinna Achionye.

The letter read in part: "Following more emerging revelations

in the case involving the former Deputy Senate President, Senator Ike Ekweremadu and his wife, both true son and daughter of Igbo land, we find it expedient to make this open appeal to the UK Embassy in Nigeria.

"Contrary to earlier reports which flooded the media, it has become clear that the couple had no bad intention in mind. Having seen that they had no other intention rather than to save the life of their daughter, as nobody will sit by and watch their child die without making efforts, we deemed it necessary to make this appeal. We plead with the United Kingdom, through its Embassy here in Nigeria, to look into the implication of detaining the husband and the wife. We appeal for the release of one of them so the person can take care of the sick child who needs medical help urgently.

They alleged that fifth columnists have created pseudo accounts with the name of the alleged victim of organ harvesting, David Nwamini.

OYC said, "we observed that within the last 48 hours, no less than five fake Facebook accounts have been created with the profile of the alleged victim.

"This is no doubt the work of blackmailers as they have gone ahead to be making posts with the said unverified accounts. The posts contain spurious claims and allegations which are clearly the handiwork of political enemies, all aimed at bringing the Senator down. It is a matter of time and the identity of those behind this shall be unveiled if they fail to desist from their evil antics.

"They had earlier claimed that the boy in question is 15 years, but current revelations have proved otherwise. This is why we call for a thorough investigation. We urge the general public to discountenance those

posts as the truth will surely prevail and Ekweremadu and his wife will come out of these allegations with their reputation unscathed."

Meanwhile, hope of survival may have risen for the daughter of the former Deputy Senate President, as a Nigerian lady, Martha Uche, has offered to donate her kidney to save Sonia's life.

While mixed reactions have continued to trail the report of the arrest, detention and arraignment of the two prominent Nigerians, Ike Ekweremadu and his wife, Beatrice, by the London Metropolitan Police over alleged conspiracy to transport a 15 year old boy Ukpo Nwamini David to the UK in order to harvest his organs for their child.

Ekweremadu and his wife facilitated David's entry into the UK to transplant his kidney into their daughter who is suffering from kidney failure. The couple were charged with alleged conspiracy to harvest the organs of a child in the United Kingdom.

However, Martha has offered to donate her kidney to save the daughter of Ekweremadu. In a video interview that went viral on social media, Martha said she needs to save the life of Sonia.

"I want to do that because I need to help the girl. She is dying. They have already showed me in my dream that I should help the girl. I've already seen her long time ago. Even this morning I still had the same dream so I need to do it fast," Uche added.

When asked if she has any demands to help the daughter of the former Deputy Senate President, Martha said she has no demands for now, but she only needs to save the girl's life which is more important.

EEDC, MOJEC partner to extend MAP metering to Enugu residents doorsteps

Enugu Electricity Distribution Company (EEDC) and MOJEC International Limited have started to extend mobile Meter Asset Provider (MAP) metering programme to doorsteps of Enugu residents. The mobile MAP metering programme ensures meters are installed same day once a reimbursable payment is made after customer's provision of means of identification and electricity bill.

Flagging off the programme on Sunday in Jubilee Estate, Enugu, the Managing Director of EEDC, Mr Praveen Chorghade, said that MAP is a metering intervention initiative introduced by the Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission (NERC). Chorghade said that the MAP metering allows meter manufacturers and meter vendors to meter customers while they pay for the meters.

According to him, it is however designed in a way that customers will be reimbursed with the cost of the meter through energy credit, over a 36-installment period.

"The need to close the existing metering gap in our network has necessitated our partnering MOJEC International Limited in our quest to ramp up our metering efforts and move away from the estimated billing and direct connection.

"The introduction of this Mobile MAP Metering is a clear innovative improvement on the usual MAP meter process which takes up to 10 working days to meter a customer and cut down the process to an 'Instant Meter Programme', to enable EEDC to serve the customers with 'meter at your door step'. We have therefore selected two locations in Enugu for the pilot of this Mobile MAP Metering exercise, and we intend to extend the same to other locations within our coverage area, as a conscious way of migrating more of our customers from the

estimated billing to the metered platform.

"Today, we are at the Jubilee Estate to meter our customers residing at Upper Chime Avenue, New Haven and Premier Layout, and it will last till June 29. Similarly, from June 30 to July 2, we shall be at the Trade Fair Complex Gate to meter customers of GRA Onitsha Road Feeder and Golf Estate.

"All that the customers need to do to initiate the metering process is to simply present a copy of their bill and a valid means of identification, pay for the meter and once payment is confirmed, the meters will be installed for them the same day. The single-phase meter goes for N63, 061.27; while the Three-phase meter is N117, 910.69. These prices are all-inclusive of VAT," he said.

Speaking, the Group Managing Director of MOJEC International Ltd, Ms Chantelle Abdul, said that the company produces three million meters annually and was ready to close the metering gap in the South-East.

Abdul said: "We are committed technically and financially to make this happen through the innovative Mobile MAP Metering programme that have started in Enugu and will be spreading in the entire South-East.

"EEDC remains a leading DisCo in provision of meters to its customers in the country and we commend the board and management of EEDC for being committed in ensuring Nigerians especially people of South-East are metered."

Chairman of Electricity Committee of Jubilee Estate, Chief Dubem Okoye, thanked EEDC and MOJEC for making access to prepaid meters stress-free, protocol-free and time for residents of the estate and its environs.



Sen. Ike Ekweremadu

Falana canvasses association to defend Judiciary

BY PAUL MICHAEL, ABUJA

Rights lawyer, Femi Falana (SAN), has implored judges to form a national association of judicial officers to protect the interest of the judiciary.

He said establishment such association would in line with section 40 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (as amended).

Falana, a former President of the West African Bar Association (WABA), explained that floating such association is imperative to prevent the executive arm from compromising and sabotaging the judiciary.

He made the recommendation following a letter recently written by 14 Justices of the Supreme Court to the Chief Justice of Nigeria (CJN), Justice Tanko Muhammad, about their poor condition of services despite an annual allocation of N110 billion.

According to Falana, the executive "cannot stand a judiciary that is independent to the extent of ruling against the subversion of the rule of law, constitutional breaches, human rights abuse and official impunity."

Consequently, he added that judges "are deliberately poorly paid to compel them to depend wholly on the executive organ of the state. Even though the Constitution provides for financial autonomy for the judiciary, the executive arm has sabotaged it."

In spite of the independence of the judiciary, according to the senior lawyer, the salaries and allowances of judges are withheld while houses and cars are supplied to judges by state governors.

On these grounds, Falana said: "Notwithstanding that judges are conservative,



Femi Falana (SAN)

it is high time that Nigerian judges form an association to defend and protect the interests of the judiciary.

"This demand is justified by section 40 of the Constitution which guarantees the fundamental right to freedom of association."

He drew the attention of the judges to similar bodies across the world, citing the Commonwealth Magistrates and Judges

Association, Judicial Officers Association of South Africa, South African Chief Justice Forum, International Association of Judges and National Associations of European Administrative Judges, among others.

Falana also cited similar bodies already functioning in the federation to include the National Association of Women Judges and the Magistrates'

Association of Nigeria.

The learned silk further emphasised the need to set up the Nigerian Judicial Officers Association "to defend the interests of judges and promote judicial independence, human rights and rule of law in the country."

He noted that the letter signed by the 14 Justices of the Supreme Court had confirmed that judges had been suffering in silence, and called for a holistic review of the conditions of service of judges in the country.

He added that the federal and state governments should be compelled "to actualise the financial autonomy for the judiciary in line with the relevant provisions of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999."

Falana, however, pointed out that it had been difficult to join the struggle for the improvement of the working conditions of judges on the ground that the budget of the Supreme Court "is shrouded in secrecy."

He said the details of the expenditure of the N110 billion budgeted for the judiciary are not set out contrary to the provision of section 81 of the Constitution, making it difficult to demand an increase in the budget of the judiciary.

On the part of judges, Falana asked the judiciary "to stop giving undue attention to political cases to the detriment of other more pressing matters relating to the liberty of citizens.

"How can election cases or pre-election matters be more important than the cases of citizens who are languishing in prison custody? Judges should ensure that equal time is allotted to all cases," he emphasised.

ICPC urges public servants to be dedicated

BY PAUL MICHAEL, ABUJA

Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) has charged public servants to be dedicated in the discharge of their duties.

Representative of the ICPC Acting Resident Anti-Corruption Commissioner of Katsina State, Sani Tukur Tarauni, gave the charge at a sensitisation programme organised for 105 officers of the Katsina State Safety and Road Traffic Authority (KASSAROTA).

The one-day enlightenment event with the theme "War Against Corruption: The ICPC Perspective", was aimed at

sensitising the officers on the need to shun corruption and imbibe the spirit of honesty and integrity in discharging their official duties.

Turauni urged the officers to be mindful of the fact that KASSAROTA is a new establishment and an integrity organisation which demands that its officials must display a high level of transparency while on the field.

He further reiterated that the Commission's approach to the fight against corruption has led to the realisation that the only way to stem the tide of the hydra headed monster is through collective responsibility and public involvement.

In his response, the Director-General of KASSAROTA, Alhaji Danlami Yar'adua, noted that the Authority was established by the state government for traffic intervention in order to sanitize the roads by ensuring road users do the right thing in Katsina State.

Yar'adua appreciated the efforts of ICPC in educating the public towards reducing the level of corruption particularly in Katsina State and the nation at large.

He added that the current initiative and sensitisation of Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) by the Commission would go a long way in checkmating corruption and other related offences in our communities for a purposeful development.



ICPC Boss, Prof. Owasanoye

EFCC tasks anti-graft agencies on implementation of NACS

BY PAUL MICHAEL, ABUJA

Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) has tasked other government anti-graft agencies to key into the implementation of the National Anti-Corruption Strategy (NACS).

Executive Chairman of the EFCC, Abdulrasheed Bawa, gave the charge at the Public Presentation of the 2021 Chartered Institute of Forensics and Certified Fraud Examiners of Nigeria (CIFCFEN) Country Report at the EFCC Academy, Karu, Abuja.

According to the EFCC boss, NACS represents one of the agenda of the President Muhammadu Buhari administration.

Bawa, represented by his Chief of Staff, Hadiza Gamawa, noted that every anti-corruption agency needs to develop its own institutional strategic plan that will be anchored on the NACS

He said, "Since the NACS represents one of the cardinal points of President Muhammadu Buhari administration's resolve to combat corruption in Nigeria, there is need for frequent reviews to identify and tackle any gap in the fight against corruption."

The EFCC Chairman re-iterated the commitment of the Commission to the full implementation of NACS.

"It's gladdening to note that the EFCC has launched its own strategic plan as an institution that is anchored on the five

pillars of the National Anti-Corruption Strategy. Every anti-corruption agency is supposed to key into this project. Every agency needs to develop its own institutional strategic plan that will be anchored on the NACS, in order to achieve the national goal and that is what we have done," he added.



Abdulrasheed Bawa

Isoko scholar, diplomat Otobo found dead in USA

By **OROWO VICTORIA OJIEH**, FOREIGN AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT

Top-drawer Nigerian intellectual and diplomat, Ambassador Ejeviome Eloho Otobo has been found dead in the United States after being reported missing.

According to reports, the widely-read scholar and diplomat suddenly went missing on June 15, 2022. In the USA where he lived with his family, the Tuckahoe Police Department on June 19 had announced in a Facebook post that Otobo was missing and requested information from the public. They had posted the image below:

Sadly, On June 24, the police announced that Otobo had been found dead and sent condolences to his family.

The post read: "The Tuckahoe Police Department regrets to inform members of the community that Mr. Ejeviome Otobo was located yesterday afternoon and is deceased. We would like to thank those of you who offered tips and tried to assist with the investigation. Our thoughts go out to the Otobo Family during this difficult time."

Until his death, he was a Non-Resident Senior Fellow in Peacebuilding and Global Economic Policy at the Global Governance Institute in Brussels, Belgium. Importantly, Otobo was on the Board of Newstide Publications Limited, publishers of Prime Business Africa, PBA.k

His profile on EverybodyWiki says: Ejeviome Eloho Otobo (born 1951) in Otibio-Owhe (Otor Igho), Isoko North LGA, Delta State of Nigeria. He is residing in New York, USA and he is currently a Non-Resident Senior Fellow in Peacebuilding and Global Economic Policy at the Global Governance Institute, Brussels, Belgium.

Mr. Otobo had previously held the position of Director and Deputy Head, United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) of the Peacebuilding Commission at the United Nations Headquarters, New York City, (Dec. 1st, 2006 – Oct. 31st, 2013), He was succeeded by Mr. Kenny Gluck.

Otobo served as Acting Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support, United Nations Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) (Feb. 2nd, 2009 – Aug. 31st, 2009), between the departure of Dr. Jane Holl Lute and the appointment of Ms. Judy Cheng-Hopkins. At this position, he assisted in developing peacebuilding strategies, which included issues of governance reforms and economic reforms for countries on the agenda of the PBC (Burundi, Central African Republic, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia and Sierra Leone); and supervised the work related to the follow-up, monitoring and periodic reporting on the implementation of the peacebuilding strategies.

Before joining PBSO, he served in various departments of the United Nations, including the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa (OSAA) in New York City; UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) in New York; and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. At ECA,

DESA and OSAA, Mr. Otobo worked on economic policy issues, encompassing economic reforms, international and regional trade, foreign direct investment and corporate governance. He served as the ex-officio Secretary to the UN Secretary-General's Advisory Panel on International Support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD)-2004-2006. Mr. Otobo contributed to African Development Bank's African Development Report 2001 on fostering good governance in Africa. African Development Bank's African Development Report, 2007 on Natural Resource for Sustainable development in Africa. His commentaries on Africa and international issues have been published by The Guardian (of Nigeria), ThisDay, Premium Times, Financial Times and Jeune Afrique.

Otobo joined the United Nations after a distinguished career in the diplomatic service of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. During the course of his diplomatic career, he served on the Policy Planning Staff of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the Office of The Minister of Foreign Affairs (Nigeria), represented Nigeria in several countries, and participated in various bilateral political and multilateral economic negotiations. In recognition of his contribution to Nigeria's diplomacy and foreign policy, he was appointed

ambassador-in-situ.

Mr. Otobo served as an Honorary Member of Advisory Board for the World Conflict Report 2012 and, from 2014 to 2016, served as a member of the External Experts Advisory Board of the Informing Conflict Prevention, Resolution and Response: The Role of Media in Violent Conflict (IN-FOCORE) Project called the Seventh Framework Programmes for Research and Technological Development which was funded by the European Union.

Works

Non-Resident Senior Fellow: Peacebuilding & Global Policy (Global Governance Institute, Brussels, Belgium).

Director & Deputy Head: United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO), 2009.

Deputy Director, Office of Special Adviser on Africa in United Nations Department of Economic and Social Commission for Africa (DESA), 2008.

Ex-Officio Secretary, to the United Nations Secretary-General's Advisory Panel: on International Support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), 2004-2006.

Honorary Member, World Conflict Report Advisory Board, 2012.

Member, External Experts Advisory Board of the Informing Conflict Prevention, Resolution & Response



Missing Person
Village of Tuckahoe Police Department

EJEVIOME OTOBO
Age: 70
Height: 5'7
Weight: 155lbs

EJEVIOME WAS LAST SEEN IN THE AREA OF DANTE AVE ON JUNE 15TH, 2022, WEARING A BLUE LONG SLEEVE SWEATSHIRT

Call with any information
914 - 961 - 4800

Advisory Board, 2014-2016.

Board Director, Prime Business, 2021.[31]

Awards and honors

Nominated for the Grand Prix of Literary Associations Award (Research Category, Ambassador-in-situ.

Published Books

Otobo, Ejeviome Eloho; Ejeviome, Eloho (May 2017). Africa In Transition: A New Way of Looking at Progress in the Region. ISBN 978-0998479620. Search this book on Amazon.com Logo.png[33]

Otobo, Ejeviome Eloho (June 2015). Consolidating Peace in Africa: The Role of the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission. Search this book on Amazon.com Logo.png

Sawyer, Amos; Jerome, Afeikhena; Otobo, Ejeviome Eloho (2015). African Development in the 21st Century: Adebayo Adedeji's Theories and Contributions. ISBN 978-1592219773. Search this book on Amazon.com Logo.png co-edited with Amos Sawyer and Afeikhana Jerome.

Public Enterprise Performance in Africa: Lessons from Country Case Studies. ISBN 9290380535. Search this book on Amazon.com Logo.png co-edited with Sadig Rasheed.

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The current PVC revolution: fact or fiction

In terms of Permanent Voter's Card (PVC) registration, there seems to be a revolution going on in the country. Registration centres are swarmed daily by thousands of youths who want to possess that document which will give them access to voting in 2023. Nigeria has never witnessed this level of awareness before. On social media, different skits have been created by artistes to promote voter registration. What is the cause of this upsurge? Will this translate into a radical increase in the number of voters next year?

Hitherto, most Nigerians had seemed indifferent or showed apathy towards the political process in the country. Nigerians seem to believe that our political system is not transparent given that it keeps recycling the same people every four years. There is also the widespread belief that the votes of the electorate do not count due to rigging, manipulation, and ballot box snatching around the country during elections.

Three odd years ago, Muhammadu Buhari won the election with a paltry 15.2 million votes, a far cry from the 73 million registered voters. Of the total number of people registered to vote, 35.6% voted during the last election. In a country of over 200 million people and 120 million people of voting age, 15.2 million does not represent a healthy percentage of Nigerians. In various states, governors emerged with as low as 200,000 votes out of a possible 2 to 4 million registered voters. This does not speak well for Nigeria's political participation.

In the current dispensation, there is a general desire and clamour by millions of people especially the youths to obtain the PVC required to vote in next year's election. The upsurge in the desire to obtain the PVC started with the emergence of the Labour Party candidate Mr Peter Obi. Before his emergence, many youths virtually shunned activities leading to the 2023 general elections. This is because they were

confronted with the same old politicians and political parties who, as far as the youths are concerned, cannot be exonerated from the socio-economic anguish and malaise in the country. The emergence of Peter Obi of the Labour Party has led to an upsurge among youths to acquire the PVC.

INEC offices around the country are besieged and inundated by thousands of youths across the ethnic divide wishing to collect their PVC. Currently, according to INEC, there are more than 85 million registered voters in Nigeria. This has never happened in the history of the country. Now, INEC is under pressure to extend the deadline for millions of potential voters to obtain their PVCs. It is a fact therefore that Nigerians are responding positively

to the 2023 general elections. It remains to be seen if these facts will translate into something tangible in 2023.

Prior to the 2014 general elections, Nigerians were disenchanted with the PDP administration at the centre. They were united in their resolve to change the leadership in Aso Rock. They were disappointed with PDP's sixteen years of governance which left the country in tatters. But the current APC government has dragged the country backwards making the PDP years look like a bliss. So, it is understandable that the people are fed up and tired with both political parties. They want something fresh, even if it is an experiment. This has accounted for the PVC revolution in the country.

It will amount to fiction if all the efforts to acquire PVC do not count next year during the elections. If the election results will be transmitted electronically, the incidence of cheating will be reduced drastically. However, it has also been pointed out that transmitting election results electronically will not foreclose cheating and manipulation of the process. Nigerians fear that if presidential aspirants, in their desperation to rule Nigeria, will dole out millions of dollars to buy delegates, they would stop at nothing to compromise the electoral process.

The PVC revolution in the country will be mere fiction, without substance or immediate impact on our political culture if votes do not count next year. President Muhammadu Buhari as the Commander-in-Chief has the onerous responsibility to ensure that the 2023 general elections are free and fair. Also, the youths and everyone should be allowed to vote in any area where voting is taking place. The process must be transparent. INEC chairman and all the officials have a responsibility toward Nigerians to ensure that the will and choice of the people prevail. The aspirants should also sheath their swords. Everyone has a responsibility to ensure that the general elections next year succeed.



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On Father's Day

The whole world said June Sunday the 19th was Father's Day, and different emojis flew into my social media space from biological and non-biological wards, from students I taught twenty, thirty years ago, from social media 'off-springs'. Thanks for all that you have been to me', one wrote. There was sour grape too. One father observed: which one is this again, bringing me more expenses? *It's Father's Day I will still be the one to take them out, just as I did on Mother's Day and Children's Day! Hahahaha!*

I didn't grow up with the tradition of observing Father's or Mother's Day. Father was father, papa really. And Mother was mama, you know. Duty. Social responsibility. Provision of everything. Meeting all our needs from a modest civil servant's income. It was a given. It was part of me, of us. The man in the house called the shots in a firm way, but also ensured that we were comfortable within his means. What he could not afford now, he promised to get us later. And he did. Somehow, we knew our limits. We never asked for the moon. From deed and action, Papa taught us how to be a father, a dad, a friend. Friend? That came later, that is, after A'Levels success and he bought me a beer at 18! I was dizzy after a glass. But a beer from Papa would not harm me, the same man who never spared the rod if I as much broke any of the rules of engagement like going to play football without permission! But all of this prepared me for fatherhood! To be a father by example...

I was 27 when I became a father. And a dad. That early morning in the hospital when I bore my tall thin baby girl in my arms, I stared at her for hours, wondering about the beauty of a human being that had come out of my loins, my very first, (beginning of my

strength', the bible says) how the experience would change my life, how I would always have to reckon with three persons thenceforth, how I would have to ensure that she was fed regularly no matter how expensive baby formula was and how I would care for her no matter the circumstances. I had always wanted a girl, having come from an immediate family of seven boys and two girls, one five years older and the other six years younger, and how that deprived me of a close relationship with a girl at home. Odd, isn't it? But that was it.

I also peered into the future, what I would do, what I wouldn't do, what direction I would give, religious, philosophical, spiritual, moral, and perhaps political. Sound education was a given. To pay fees for her through school without seeking support from my wife a given. But I did not foresee the world which she came into later as things began to tumble, as salaries were delayed, or withheld when ASUU was on strike, when our Take Home Pay could Not Take us Home, when inflation hit the roof, when the purchasing power of the naira took a terrible nose dive, or when herdsmen came into the narrative, when I ordered her to return home to Nigeria from the UK after an MSc to be able to meet a spouse and marry, how I changed my mind and asked my children to live anywhere in the world after my abductors threatened to kidnap my kids so I would be released from their custody to look for ransom money to free myself! That was not part of my vision!

Fatherhood was trying. Stressful sometimes. Did you worry about school fees sometimes? About what they would wear? About taking them to and bring them back from school, supervising homework, organizing private coaching,

preparing them for entrance into secondary school and later JAMB examinations? And they passed the examinations. There was happiness. Sense of achievement. Accomplishment. So, fatherhood was joyful too. How could, how should a father from a conservative home handle 'tabooed sexuality subjects' with a child of the modern age? It was a tough question! Push some to the mother? Allow her to discover some?

So, it was that as I journeyed through the walls of education as a teacher, I encountered many students who made me a father, boys and girls who said daddy was absent in their lives, they didn't know what it was like to have a father, how to bring a child into the world was not everything, how to provide material things was not fatherhood, how being an aggressive male in the house destroyed anything about fatherhood. And in a Creative Writing class, I asked my students to describe their relationship with their father and one of them broke down inconsolably as others wrote, and how she said the only thing about her father she knew was his photograph because he died when she was two or three. Or was it before she was born? I don't remember now. But there were no dry eyes in the class of twenty-five that day when her experience of a no-dad hit the class, especially those who had taken presence of fatherhood for granted.

There were others too who said once a second wife came into the picture, they 'lost' their father to the charms of Mrs. New Wife! How he didn't bother anymore about the details of their lives. Children of 'Baby mamas', who grew up with dad never visiting the child's school. Love child with no open love for the child. What about the one who grew up in Yorubaland with a Yoruba mother, and who



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thought his dad was Yoruba, who spoke Yoruba, who was told that his father died when he was a baby, how he once attended a party with his mom and a cousin to his mom cornered and told him his father was from Imo State, and he was alive somewhere in Port Harcourt and before she could complete the story, his mother burst in on them and almost had a fight with the woman, how she warned him never to go to that woman in his life. Pained, as a final year student, what would he say was his home state when he went into politics, what would he tell his children, why did his mother blank out his father, why the bitterness? Questions. Questions! Questions!

Fatherhood and Father's Day. Much later all the other kids came, and I learnt how to deal with each of them individually, separately, and together. They all came in their different ways, character, brilliance, attitude, food choices, choice of academic career, even marriage choices. So, as I was fathering kids, having eat-outs, having family dinner to encourage bonding, I was also a student of parenting too, learning things Papa never taught me, making mistakes even while correcting them, learning lessons which no book or teacher or guardian taught me. Leant that it was better to allow them blossom while you guided them into self-discovery and if

they trusted you enough, everyday will be FATHER'S DAY in their lives, they would remember you positively and reciprocate proper fatherhood with good 'childhood! And of course, we soon moved to another level- that of a grandfather, welcoming a second generation of my own brood, male and female, a blessing which money cannot buy! Lessons learnt while grooming their parents may no longer be applicable while relating with your children's children. It's a new world, where a five-year old could put me through the intricacies of an android phone! Marveling about it all is part of the pride of being a father and a grandfather.

So, let everyday be a day for fathers, for mothers, and for the children. So, when your son writes: *I've never really been a fan of Father's and Mother's Day because for me I believe my parents are special and I thank God for having you every day. I thank God because I was blessed to be able to grow up, stroll to the sitting room and have someone sitting there who I could ask any questions and from whom I could get wise answers, one feels fulfilled.* And let the spirit of love, parental, sibling, filial, govern the world. Perhaps if we had that consciousness, there would be less tension in the world!

**Professor Eghagha is a member of The Trumpet's Editorial Board*

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When Russia invaded Ukraine on February 24, 2022, it was officially reported there were about 8000 Nigerians in the war-troubled state. Most of this number was students. Many Nigerian students were undertaking courses that are in the medical, engineering and technical or pure sciences. Recently, and sadly, Medical and Dental Council of Nigeria (MDCN) issued a policy statement that "medical and dental degree certificates issued by medical schools from Ukraine from 2022 will NOT be honoured" by the body. It went on to justify her rejection of the certificates from Ukraine that "for the avoidance of doubt, Council categorically states that online medical training done in any part of the world is short of acceptable standard and is not recognised by the MDCN."

When the war commenced in Ukraine, the authorities made

commendable efforts to repatriate stranded citizens from Ukraine. It was done at the wake of racial discrimination against Africans by the authorities in Ukraine. As at March 2022, the fifth batch of 123 evacuees were airlifted from Ukraine to Nigeria. Each evacuee got a free SIM card and \$100 for transport. President Muhammadu Buhari approved \$8.5 million to bring back 5000 citizens from Ukraine. The import of our analysis is to establish a fact that the authorities are aware that we have among us victims of war. These persons ought to be further supported and properly settled in Nigeria.

No one would encourage a professional body to lower her standard for those aspiring to get enlisted in the profession. However, it is a thing of worry that our government could spend scare resources to secure the safety of citizens from Ukraine and turn its face the other way.

Securing the certificates of returnee students from Ukraine

The current plight being experienced by Nigeria citizens from Ukraine is similar to throwing them under the bus when it mattered most. Consequently, one intends to make a plea for the students and youth returned to Nigeria.

They constitute the most desperate population of Nigerians. One can only imagine their psychological and mental state. They will be traumatised in the face of their parents who may be confused on the next step they could take. It is the duty of government to rescue these Nigerians from their state of forlornness. The Minister of Education should act fast to save us any foreseen disaster and waste of humans and other resources this neglect may amount to. During the Nigerian Civil War, many students caught in the web of the war were distributed to other Nigerian Universities to enable them complete their programmes. One should appeal that a similar programme can be put in place for the returnees.

If this plea is well-received, efforts should be made to ascertain the number of evacuated students from Ukraine, the courses they were studying and the Universities government could possible place them. I believe that most of the affected parents will welcome such a programme even at their personal cost. This is a purely humanitarian gesture borne out the ethics of social responsibility on the part of government. There are many ways to achieving this.

Our Universities may be directed to collaborate with relevant professional bodies, secure and scrutinise the students' transcripts and place them at the most appropriate levels of studies to enable them continue and complete their course of study.

Education is primarily a social responsibility of government. In other words, we argue that it is the duty of government to ensure that citizens are given good education. The students who travelled out of Nigeria to further their life-desire should not be treated as some common criminals. They had a noble and praiseworthy desire. Their being in Nigeria today was due to no fault of their own. Even the Universities they were attending are aware of their plights. This may have informed why the Universities in Ukraine went the extra mile to offer them further online training that has now fallen short of the requirement of various professional bodies in Nigeria. Given this, we must rise up to mitigate their plight and save them from falling into some other dangerous desperation.

One also expects the parents/guardians as well as the returnee students to be more organised and united in their plight. They ought to have collectively met with the Minister of Education in order to discuss their situation and resolve the entire impasse their educational processes have suffered. The war in Ukraine may not be the last of wars that would displace our

citizens. Other natural disasters such as earthquakes and flood may happen elsewhere in future with dire consequences on Nigerians. We should therefore take the Ukraine case as a learning curve for us as a people. Bringing evacuees back safely to Nigeria is a commendable thing to do. But it is necessary that they are well-settled. Settling these youth implies protecting some them from becoming criminal and drug addicts. It implies protecting them from unwonted social and peer influences. It amounts to freeing them from depression and mental health challenges.

The parents of these student returnees are watching their resources and future wasting. They may be confused and desperate people. It is duty of government to make citizens happy and be comforted. We should be moved to extend societal kindness to these Nigerians who may be thinking they have "wasted" their resources on their wards. Collectively, we can make our society a better place. Since the Nigerian Medical and Dental Council is the first corporate body to cast aspersions on the educative process of the Ukraine returnees, one is calling on this body to go the extra length towards making Ukraine's 2022 certificates authentic and worthwhile.

Dr Karo Ogbinaka lectures at the Department of Philosophy, University of Lagos. He is member of the Editorial Board of The Trumpet.

Dear Prof. Soludo

BY VAL OBIENYEM

Let me once again congratulate you on emerging as the Governor. As I have always reminded you, going by your pedigree, we are hopeful that you will repair the wrongs in the State. When the state works, it is for the benefit of all.

On the day you were sworn-in, our joy was near complete on the attendance of Mr. Peter Obi, only to be completed when you allowed him the use of Government House Hall to meet Traditional Rulers. For everybody, that is the way to go. The banter by traditional rulers on that day revealed their hidden joy at the development. Watching them intently, I noticed many of them gazing at Obi with eyes dripping with admiration and devotion as they took him as the redeeming angel of the bastardised country. As far as I was concerned, two illustrious and experienced Anambra sons were united together in maturity and wisdom.

When the news of the multiplication of Obi's investment in SABMiller was published, I knew it did not come from



Chukwuma Soludo

you. I personally made it clear that it was not circulated by Obi's Media, but probably by one of the youths, not under our control, but eager to throw in anything that glorified their hero – Obi. Do not judge Obi's supporters based on these people's cathartic reactions. It was saddening when one of the people



Peter Obi

you later appointed an aide, in a bashful, pugilistic manner, said I was the one that published it. When your Media Aide rebutted it, I said he did what he was supposed to do. My argument was simple: Even if the news was true, it is wrong to put into your mouth what you did not say.

I read the recent rebuttal by your Commissioner on the subject, what do I say about it? I only want to assure you that the Obi's camp is supporting you. We want you to succeed and cannot be part of any plot against you. Some people are angry because we have chosen to identify with you; it is about time they realised that our only interest is recovering the eight years of retrogression. Anybody supporting Obi that fights you is on his own. I say this with all sincerity, especially knowing the brief I personally received from Mr. Peter Obi on this. Obi is ready to offer any support that will redeem our state and set it on the path of progress again.

The way things are, anybody fighting you at the January of your tenure is simply being inconsiderate and insensitive. Please always sieve everyday reactions by people from the reaction from Mr. Obi's official camp.

As for Soludo's supporters, take us as friends. We are one with you in the belief that Prof. Soludo should succeed for the good of our state.

Your Obedient Subject,

• Obienyem is Peter Media adviser

Can aspirant who participated in primary election of a party defect to another and seek nomination therefrom?

BY GODFREY OKONKWO AGBO

INTRODUCTION

The last one month has been a beehive of activities for all the registered political parties in Nigeria ahead of the 2023 general elections. Following the conclusion of nomination of candidates by the ruling APC, the opposition PDP, and the emerging 'third force', there have been insinuations from political discourses suggesting that the new Electoral Act 2022 prohibits the practice of shopping for another party platform by aspirants who failed, for one reason or the other, to clinch party ticket in a previous attempt in their first choice of party. In fact, in the last few days, I have been inundated by genuine requests from friends and associates for my legal opinion on this subject. Again, there is palpable apprehension amongst politicians who participated but failed to secure party tickets in their various parties to try their luck in another party; the same foreboding is the reason some aspirants like Senators Ekweremadu and Abaribe decided at the dying minutes of the primaries of PDP to withdraw from the contest and thereby not be seen as having participated at all in the first instance. What follows hereunder is my considered view on the subject, having studied the Electoral Act, the Constitution and relevant case law(s) on the topic.

THE ELECTORAL ACT 2022.

The new Electoral Act 2022 became operative on 2nd March 2022, effectively repealing the Electoral Act No.6, 2010. From my personal study of the new Electoral Act, the only aspect that touches on the subject of nomination of candidates of political parties is Section 35 thereof (formerly Section 37 in the repealed Act). It provides:

"35. Where a candidate knowingly allows himself to be nominated by more than one political party or in more than one constituency, his nomination shall be void"

Some analysts have erroneously argued that the above cited provision of the Electoral Act has effectively stopped any aspirant who has participated in the primaries of party A from defecting to party B to seek nomination. In support of this line of argument, they rely on the decision of the Supreme Court in *UGWUMBA UCHE NWOSU V. ACTION PEOPLES PARTY & 3 OTHERS (2020) 16 NWLR PART 1749, p.28*

Permit me to take us through the facts of this case as doing so will enable a holistic grasp and appreciation of the matter as well as the ratio decidendi (the reason for the decision).

UCHE NWOSU (Son-in-law of former Governor of Imo State, Owelle Rochas Okorocho) contested and won the primaries conducted by the APC on 6/10/2018; and his name was forwarded to INEC (4th Respondent in appeal) as governorship candidate of the APC in the general elections slated for 9/3/2019. Uche Nwosu (the Appellant) also contested and won the governorship primaries conducted by another political party, the Action Alliance, and on 2/11/2018, he was issued with a 'certificate of return and confirmation as the duly elected governorship candidate' of AA. In February 2019, ACTION PEOPLES PARTY, MR UCHE NNADI AND THE PEOPLES DEMOCRATIC PARTY (1st - 3rd Respondents, respectively) sued UCHE NWOSU and therein challenged his nomination by the two political parties at the Federal High Court, Abuja, seeking, among other reliefs, a declaration of court that the nomination of Uche Nwosu as

the governorship candidate of the AA was invalid, null and void having been made at the pendency of similar nomination of the APC for the same position.

The Supreme Court interpreted Section 37 of the Electoral Act 2010 (now Section 35 of the Electoral Act 2022) and held that the conduct of the Appellant (Uche Nwosu) in knowingly presenting himself for nomination in another political party, the Action Alliance during the pendency of nomination by the APC, was illegal. In the lead judgment read by AUGIE, J.S.C, the Court declared as an illegality the subsequent nomination by the Action Alliance as its gubernatorial candidate. In the words of JUSTICE AUGIE, the court held, "By allowing himself to be nominated by two political parties, the Appellant, not only did an act that is not authorized by law, which is illegal, the Electoral Act clearly says in its section 37 that such a nomination 'shall be void'. It's instructive to note that the decision of the court (constituted by 5 learned justices) was unanimous as none of the justices in the panel that heard the appeal dissented. It needs to be added also that the decision was an affirmation of the concurrent findings of the two lower courts in the judicial rung, that is, the Federal High Court, Abuja and the Court of Appeal had decided the matter against the Appellant before it proceeded to the apex court. In his concurring judgment, EJEMBI EKO, J.S.C deprecated the conduct of the Appellant in the following words:

"The purpose of the section 37 of the Electoral Act is to forestall a situation where the rich and powerful will impose on the nation the culture, or the dictatorship, of single party "democracy". That is, the prohibition of a situation where the high and the mighty will impose himself on all the political parties by

buying up the candidature by whatever means, howbeit nefarious, in order that he would be the Abacha style sole candidate "on whom the cap fits". And that would be prelude to fascism. The court will not aid any party in the direction of the Golgotha for crucifixion of the nation's multi-party democracy. Such madness will be nipped at the bud".

He further held:

"An individual who 'knowingly allows himself to be nominated by more than one political party' commits an illegality under section 37 of the Electoral Act".

CONCLUSION

The extant revised Electoral Act 2022 makes no provision prohibiting a person who has previously participated in the primary election process of one political party but failed to secure its nomination for one reason or the other from cross-carpeting to another party platform to seek nomination. Neither is the judicial authority discussed in the foregoing premises supportive of such perceived prohibition. Indeed, a person who, aspiring for a public office, participated in the primary election of one political party but failed to get nomination of that party, can move to another political party to seek that other party's nomination. What the law forbids is double or multiple nomination, and not double or multiple participation. I will conclude this opinion by submitting further that it will be tantamount to a gross violation of, and great disservice to all known canons of statutory interpretation for anyone to ascribe a strangely narrow meaning to the clear provision of section 35 or any other part of the Electoral Act 2022.

• Mr Agbo, a legal practitioner, writes from Port Harcourt.

INEC okays Agbodo for House of Reps election

Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has certified Reverend Esanerovo Trinity Agbodo, a former independent presidential aspirant, as eligible to run for a House of Representatives seat in 2023.

He has been cleared by the election management body to run for Isoko North/Isoko South Federal Constituency as the candidate of National Rescue Movement (NRM).

Agbodo, also an engineer, joined the 2023 presidential race as an independent candidate but later withdrew.

In line with INEC's timetable of displaying the names of eligible candidates for the 2023 elections, Agbodo's is on the list of National Assembly contestants displayed at the INEC State Headquarters, Asaba, Delta State at the weekend.

Speaking on his bid for the National Assembly seat, Rev. Agbodo said that he is in the race "to give Isoko people a befitting representation at

Abuja as well as ensuring that Isoko youths and elders get their worth from the Federal Government."

He promised to sponsor bills that will be of immense benefit to the Isoko people as well as influence the siting and effective execution of federal government projects in the oil area..

He pledged to publish all constituency projects as approved by the budget annually and their execution will also be enforced to guarantee transparency.

Agbodo also promised to pursue his pet project unveiled in his presidential bid, 'Nigeria By Shareholding' through sponsoring a bill as soon as he is sworn into office when elected. The bill is to ensure that all Nigerians including Isoko people benefit directly from the income earned by the country through a Nigeria Company Plc.

"The income earned from the company will serve as a guarantee for every Nigerian willing to access funds for self development, educa-

tional pursuits and in other areas," he explained.

He said he will through another special project in Isoko land which he will launch as soon as elected, guarantee that all indigenes seeking employment are either employed in public and private sectors across Nigeria or supported through free skills acquisition, empowerment and supervision. They will be managed directly from his two constituency offices in both Isoko North and Isoko South Local Government Areas.

He therefore called on Isoko people to be united and support his candidacy in the 2023 election, adding that details of his projects would be revealed when official campaigns fully commences as approved by INEC.

Rev. Agbodo with other Isoko patriots, through the Isoko Action Group hosted the first Isoko Economic Summit Consultative Forum in 2014 at Noble Hotel, Oleh.



Reverend Esanerovo Trinity Agbodo

Malami ill- advised Buhari on Electoral Act, says Senate spokesman

● Says S'Court verdict vindicates N'Assembly ● Adeyemi hails apex judgement

By TUNDE JOSHUA, ABUJA

Lawmakers have hailed Friday's judgement by the Supreme Court dismissing the suit initiated by the Attorney General of the Federation and Minister of Justice, Abubakar Malami on behalf of President Muhammadu Buhari. However, they accused Malami of wrongly advising the President on the case.

Senate spokesperson/chairman, Committee on Media and Publicity, Senator Ajibola Basiru, described the judgement dismissing the suit brought against section 84(12) of the Electoral act 2022 as a vindication of the National Assembly.

Buhari and the Attorney-General of the Federation and Malami had filed a suit at the Supreme Court, seeking an interpretation of the controversial clause in the Electoral Amendment Act 2022.

In the suit filed on April 29, the plaintiffs listed the National Assembly as the sole defendant.

Section 84 (12) has been a subject of intense litigation and political debate in Nigeria since President Buhari signed the amended Electoral Act 2022 into law in February this year.

Shortly after signing it into law, Buhari had urged the parliament to delete the controversial clause in the Electoral Act, but the National Assembly declined the president's request.

According to Section 84 (12) of the legislation, "No political appointee at any level shall be a voting delegate or be voted for at the convention or congress of any political party for the purpose of the nomination of candidates for any election."

The suit came weeks after the Federal High Court in Umuahia, Abia State, struck out Section 84 (12) on the ground that it was in conflict with some sections of the Nigerian constitution.

The Supreme Court on Friday expunged the case on the grounds that it lacked the jurisdiction to entertain the suit and is an abuse of court process.



President Muhammadu Buhari

Basiru had blamed the Attorney general for always giving the President legal advise that cannot stand the test of judgement.

"The judgement of the Supreme Court just validate some of our opinions that the President is not receiving very sound legal advise from the office of the attorney general.

"Like he was also misled over the issue of grazing roots in the past, the same thing, having assented to a bill, the same President cannot go ahead to seek to delete an aspect of the bill.

"So we hope the President will be alive to getting second opinion on legal matters so that the Federal Government would not be embarrassed on plain legal matters that are very elementary.

When asked on the position of the National Assembly over the judgement he said, it shows that the judgement did not consider the constitutionality or otherwise of section 84(12) and so the court declined to invalidate the law that means that the law still stands as at today.



Abubakar Malami

"Section 84(12) still stand as part of the extant laws of the country and that any political party that does not comply with the provision does so at his own peril. "I also know that for instance notwithstanding the case filed by the Attorney General even the President complied with the law by asking his appointees to resign and they resign and those of them that resigned were not even reappointed.

"So in terms of the implementation of the law the President and the political parties implemented the law so one would not know what was the interest of the Attorney General litigating the provision that had been complied with by even his President and the political party.

In the same vein, the senator representing Kogi West, Smart Adeyemi applauded the apex court for throwing out the suit.

Adeyemi at the weekend in a telephone chat said the judgement has affirmed the doctrine of the separation of powers. President Muhammadu Buhari and

the Attorney-General of the Federation and Minister of Justice, Abubakar Malami, had filed a suit at the Supreme Court, seeking an interpretation of the controversial clause in the Electoral Amendment Act 2022.

Adeyemi said, "everyone now knows the limit of his powers, that is what the supreme Court has just done. To tell the executive that this is the limit of their own powers so they should not delve in to the powers of the legislature just like the judiciary must be respected. "So this is a far reaching judgements. It would allow every arm of Government to know the limit of its powers so that you don't infringe on another person's constitutional responsibility as it is entrenched in the constitution the powers of each arm of Government

"I think this will guide the executive now and forever in the way and manner people use their position.

"The clause was meant to safeguard and ensure that nobody will have any advantage over others in a democratic setting that is just what we wanted to achieve by that clause and I think this judgement has affirmed our position and it shows we have done the right thing.

"I was one of those who actually contributed to the debate on that section at the committee level and at the floor of the senate. I have been filling the development with keen interest.

"The section was inserted based on people taking advantage of their position as members of the executive to contest election. Those were what informed our position and I think it is better that way.

"We thank the judiciary for doing what is right for the country.

"It is not for the executive to make laws, it is for legislators to make laws, that is why they were elected in the first place where we have 360 house of Representatives and 109 senators can we all be wrong. It is very clear for me I am delighted with the judgement by the supreme Court."

Buhari approves Fasanya's appointment as DG of SMEDAN

President Muhammadu Buhari has approved the appointment of Olawale Tunde Fasanya as Director General and Chief Executive Officer of the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN).

The appointment, which took effect from June 6, 2022, was contained in a letter dated June 23, 2022 and signed by the Minister of Industry, Trade and Investment, Otunba Niya Adebayo.

A statement issued by Deputy Director and Head, Corporate Affairs unit of the agency, Ibrahim Kaula Mohammed, described Fasanya as "a seasoned technocrat and a certified business development advisor" with a proven track record of landmark accomplishments of 35 years in the Micro Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) ecosystem in Nigeria.

Born on June 3, 1962 in Ogbomoso, Oyo State, Fasanya holds a Bachelor of Arts degree

in English and Literary Studies from the University of Ife, now Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU), Ile-Ife in 1985.

Fasanya, who is due for the award of PhD in Public Policy Analysis and Management from the University of America, also holds an Advanced Certificate in Public Relations from the Nigerian Institute of Journalism (NIJ), Lagos and a Masters in Public Administration from the Lagos State University in 1994, among other qualifications.



President Buhari

Another Catholic priest kidnapped, killed in Edo

Reverend Father Christopher Odi, abducted Sunday morning by suspected herders has been found dead.

The Catholic priest was kidnapped in Ikabigbo community, Etsako West Local Government

Area of Edo State and was later found dead by members of Jattu Vigilance group.

The herdsmen had reportedly invaded the residence of the priest while he was getting ready for Sunday Mass, taking

him away

They had also shot three of the community boys searching for the clergyman, one of the whom died immediately. The other two were rushed to the hospital for treatment.

Ekweremadu's saga: Ebonyi Govt summons alleged victim's family

By CHARLES ONYEKWERE,
South-East Correspondent

Ebonyi State Government has summoned the family of Mr. David Ukpo Nwamini, the alleged victim in the middle of the Senator Ike Ekweremadu United Kingdom (UK) controversy, to a meeting. It will hold at Government House, Abakaliki.

In a statement signed by the Secretary to the Government, SSG, Dr. Kenneth Ugbala, the Umahi administration said it deemed it necessary to wade into the issue of Ekweremadu.

In a letter which was copied to the British High Commission Abuja, the Ebonyi Government described Ekweremadu as an illustrious son of Igboland and Mr. David Ukpo Nwamini as a worthy son of the State.

It said: "Ebonyi State Government has noted a lot of distortion of information in the Social Media and has stepped into the matter to unravel all the facts.

"From preliminary investigation, Mr. David Ukpo Nwamini hails from Izzi Local Government Area of Ebonyi State and was

living with his junior brother in Ikotun, Lagos State and was engaged in selling of phone accessories with his brother before he left for London.

"From the information available to us, it appears that the said David Ukpo Nwamini is not a MINOR as his junior brother, he was living with is said to be above 20 years of age and if that is the case, then David Ukpo Nwamini might have misinformed the London Police or the London Police was very hasty in reaching a conclusion in declaring Mr. David Ukpo Nwamini a MINOR.

"From the records of David's passport and testimony of Ebonyians in Lagos, preliminary investigation suggests that David is an adult who has a fundamental right to take decisions concerning himself.

"From the account on Social Media, we observe that Senator Ike Ekweremadu did full disclosure in his letter to the British High Commission in Nigeria in support of David Ukpo's London Visa application with the sole aim of donating kidney to Senator Ike

Ekweremadu's daughter and so the issue of donation of kidney was never hidden by the Senator.

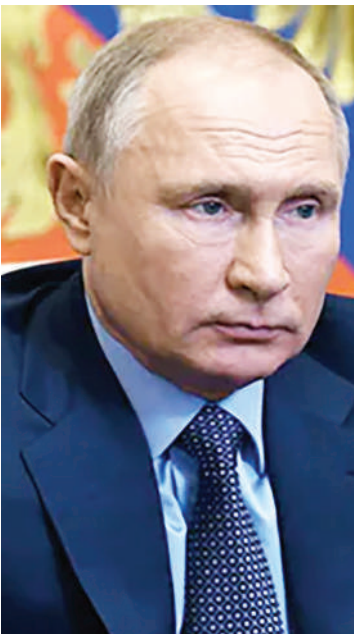
"We, therefore, request the family members of Mr. David Ukpo Nwamini to please come forward for a meeting with Ebonyi State Government on Tuesday, June 28, 2022 in Abakaliki, Government House, to give us useful information to resolve this problem.

"Without prejudice to justice being served on the matter and whatever may be the outcome, Ebonyi State Government stands with Senator Ike Ekweremadu and their own son, David Ukpo Nwamini and will do everything possible to assist both, while the case lasts and after the case.

"Ekweremadu has not been found guilty as investigation is not yet concluded and do request Social Media to be fair in their reporting and to wait for the outcome of the investigation by the London Police.

"We have confidence in the ability of the London Police to dig into the matter and to serve justice to all parties and nothing but justice."

Putin to make first foreign trip since Ukraine invasion



Vladimir Putin

By OROWO VICTORIA OJIEH
with agency report

Visits to two small former Soviet states in central Asia will be made by President Vladimir Putin this week in what would be the Russian leader's first known trip abroad since ordering the invasion of Ukraine.

Pavel Zarubin, the Kremlin correspondent of the Rossiya 1 state television station, said Putin would visit Tajikistan and Turkmenistan. He will also meet Indonesian President Joko Widodo for talks in Moscow.

In Dushanbe, Putin will meet Tajik President Imomali Rakhmon, a close Russian ally and the longest-serving ruler

of a former Soviet state. In Ashgabat, he will attend a summit of Caspian nations including the leaders of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Iran, and Turkmenistan, Zarubin said.

Putin's last known trip outside Russia was a visit to the Beijing in early February, where he and Chinese President Xi Jinping unveiled a "no limits" friendship treaty hours before both attended the opening ceremony of the Olympic Winter Games.

Russia's February 24th invasion has killed thousands of people and displaced millions more. He said the main aim of the invasion was to defend "our" people in the largely Russian-speaking Donbas region of eastern Ukraine.

Why S'East should support Tinubu'

By CHARLES ONYEKWERE,
South-East Correspondent

Federal Character Commissioner representing Enugu State, Hon. Amb. Ginika Tor, has urged the people of the South-East not to vote for the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in the 2023 presidential election.

Tor, who spoke to journalists in Enugu weekend during a birthday celebration packaged on her behalf by her friends and political associates, said, instead, Bola Ahmed Tinubu, the candidate of the All Progressives Congress (APC), should sweep the polls in the zone.

She added: "We are also celebrating our presidential candidate today, Bola Ahmed Tinubu, of our great party, the APC. Our incoming President, Bola Ahmed Tinubu. I'm supporting him 100 percent; that is because, everywhere I have gone, statistics I have got, all you hear is that he is old. Nobody has said he has not achieved anything meaningful for the society.

"But there is something you cannot take away from Bola Ahmed Tinubu, impacting people, building people and I'm taking after him by empowering people, because God has made me a voice for the voiceless. When I had a close contact with Bola Ahmed Tinubu, I discovered that he may be old but what he has upstairs is not old, even at that, they say old wine tastes better.

"So for me, it is time to begin to look at antecedents, pedigree. Lagos is one of the best states in the country today because there is a foundation and that foundation is Bola Ahmed Tinubu. You know that before the primary elections, I was supporting the South-East Presidency. I came out bold because we need to balance

the imbalance.

"But look at it, the PDP, which is owing the South-East the ticket, took it all the way to the North. If you ask who is owing the South-East the presidential ticket, it is actually the PDP. We have been giving our votes to the PDP since 1999. So, they are indebted to the people of the South-East but they took that unfortunate step, what do you want the APC to do? The PDP owes the South-East first; there is a reason they took that step.

"So, I'm calling on our people not to waste their votes again on the PDP but to vote massively for Bola Ahmed Tinubu, we will not regret it. The position will surely come to the South-East in the future, but for now, it is Tinubu all the way," the Federal Commissioner added.

Urging support for Mrs. Jennifer Ndubuisi, the APC Awgu North State Constituency candidate, Tor said her emergence during the primary election was an act of God.

"Despite all the fights, even a rerun, but God gave us victory, we had additional two votes. Permit me, however, to say that women need more elective positions. We are not satisfied; we want more because women have the capacity to change the society," she said.

The immediate past Chairman of the APC in Enugu State, Barrister Ben Nwoye, described Tor as a compassionate woman who is interested in giving back to society.

"Within the few years she joined politics, she has made much more impact than those who have been there for so long. Some persons get appointments but they hold on to it and do nothing for the people; but in the case of Ambassador Ginika Tor, she has continued to give back to the people, so we are so proud of her," Nwoye stressed.

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How, why FG removed, redeployed Acting AGF 28 days after appointment

•Revelation that govt was borrowing to pay salaries earned Nwabuoku sack

Stories By **EDU ABADE**, Business Editor

Reason for the Federal Government sack of Acting Accountant-General of the Federation (AGF), Anamekwe Nwabuoku, and immediately inviting eligible candidates to apply for the position of the substantive one has emerged.

Findings by *The Trumpet* indicate that Nwabuoku, who was appointed through a letter

dated May 20, 2022 and signed by the Permanent Secretary in the Federal Ministry of Finance, Budget and National Planning, Aliyu Ahmed, was removed 28 days after his appointment.

Consequently, the Federal Government redeployed him to the Federal Civil Service Commission (FCSC) as Director of Finance without giving any official reasons.

It was also learnt that the processes to fill the vacant seat

of a substantive AGF commenced through a circular with referenced number: HCSF/PS/CMO/193/03 and titled: Commencement of the process of appointment of a substantive Accountant-General of the Federation" by the Head of the Civil Service of the Federation, Folasade Yemi-Esan, who requested eligible applicants to submit their applications on or before July 6, 2022.

The call for qualified applicants to fill the position became

necessary after the immediate past AGF, Idris Ahmed, was arrested by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) over an alleged N80 billion fraud.

Idris was subsequently suspended by the Minister for Finance Zainab Ahmed and appointed Nwabuoku in acting capacity.

In the circular dated June 21, 2022, Yemi-Esan noted that President Muhammadu Buhari approved the process, adding that the role was open to all directors and accountants in the service, who are not due for retirement before the end of 2024.

"Following the President's approval, the Office of the Head of Service of the Federation is commencing the process of appointing a substantive Accountant-General of the Federation from eligible directors and accountants in the pool of accountant general of the federation.

"Consequently, all accountants in the mainstream federal civil service in the pool of accountant general of the federation, who have attained the position of substantive directors from grade level 17 on or before January 1, 2020 and are not retiring from the service earlier than December 31 2024, are eligible to participate in the exercise. Officers undergoing disciplinary proceedings are, however, excluded from the exercise," the circular added.

It further directed permanent secretaries to forward the list of eligible directors on SGL17, confidential and personal files of all eligible directors, five copies of curriculum vitae of each of the eligible directors and a brief on each of them in the attached format to be produced in Microsoft Word and in five hard copies) and soft copies.

"The documents must reach the

office of the Permanent Secretary, Career Management Office (CMO), of the head of Service of the Federation at the federal secretariat complex on or before 4:00p.m. on Wednesday, July 6, 2022," the circular further stated.

A top management staff at the ministry of Finance, who confirmed the removal through redeployment of the Acting Accountant-General disclosed that he (Nwabuoku) was redeployed on June 21, 2022, the same day his position was declared vacant, adding that the redeployment was a demotion for an officer in acting capacity as AGF.

The source maintained that he was said to have been given a letter of redeployment to Federal Civil Service Commission as Director of Finance without any official reasons, saying: "The Federal Government action may have been informed by Nwabuoku's recent comment at a function in Abuja that the government has been borrowing to pay salaries."

Another source who also confirmed the removal, added that it was not unconnected with his purported case with the EFCC, just as a former aide to President Buhari, Bashir Ahmad, confirmed Nwabuoku's appointment via his Twitter handle on May 23, 2022.

"Anamekwe Chukwunyerere Nwabuoku has been appointed to oversee the Office of the Accountant-General of the Federation, pending the outcome of EFCC's investigation of the suspended AGF, Ahmad Idris," he said.

Nwabuoku was expected to carry out his duties in strict compliance with extant rules and observe a highest sense of professionalism. His appointment had followed the suspension of Idris, who is being investigated for allegedly stealing over N80 billion.



Executive Director, Linkage Assurance Plc, Okanlawon Adelagun (left); Managing Director/CEO, Daniel Braie; Chairman, Chief Joshua Fumudoh; Company Secretary, Moses Omorogbe; Non-Executive Director, Olakunle Agbebi and Tamunoye Alazigha during the company's 28th Annual General Meeting (AGM) in Lagos... at the weekend.

Linkage Assurance shareholders applaud growth despite tough operating environment

Shareholders of Linkage Assurance Plc have applauded the company's performance, which saw it grow its Gross Premium Written (GPW) by 34 per cent in the 2021 financial year in spite of the challenging business environment.

A cross section of the shareholders including Bisi Bakare, who spoke at Linkage Assurance Plc's 28th Annual General Meeting (AGM) in Lagos, said the operating environment had become increasingly competitive and commended board and management for making deeper inroads into oil and gas, aviation and agriculture businesses, among others.

Linkage Assurance Plc during the year under review grew its GPW to N11.16 billion from N8.33 billion in 2021 financial year, while the net underwriting income was N6.26 billion, as against N5.076 billion the previous year.

Chairman of the board, Joshua Fumudoh, who announced the performance, said growth in revenue could not translate to profitability because of huge claims that hit the company in 2021, including losses to the #EndSARS protests.

Fumudoh said: "The aftermath of the 2020 #EndSARS protests took a toll on the insurance industry and Linkage was not exempted. The total #EndSARS claims for the insurance industry was about N20 billion while Linkage Assurance Plc's exposure amounted to N1.1 billion."

He, however, noted that the company was proud to have met its obligations to her teaming customers by enabling them to return to their business despite the huge losses.

In addition to #EndSARS, other two major claims occurred in 2021 for which provision of N1.5 billion and N750 million has already been paid.

While assuring the shareholders of better performance in the current year given its first quarter and second quarter performance, he said: "We will continue to refine our strategy in line with the political, economic, sociological and technological changes in the industry.

"We will also continue to develop innovative products, alternative channels of distributions and strategic initiatives that will enable us to achieve our corporate goals and objectives. With a medium-to-long term perspective, we believe that we will benefit from growth in these initiatives, Fumudoh stated.

While responding to shareholders' questions, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Linkage Assurance Plc, Daniel Braie, pledged commitment to meeting its claims obligation despite the challenging business environment.

Informing that the company paid out whopping N3.99 billion claims in 2021 financial year, against N2.41 billion in 2020, Braie said its reinsurance capacity was strong to continue to

meet its obligations.

On outlook, Braie said management was looking at measures to cut operating expenses and portfolios divestment of unprofitable insurance businesses, while aligning operating costs of distribution channels with their revenue generation potential.

On new lines of business, he said: "In line with our strategic focus, we have developed a bouquet of Agricultural Insurance products as risk management initiatives for both small, medium, and large-scale farmers and agribusiness.

These include Livestock Insurance Solution, Multiperil Crop Insurance Solution, Fish Farm & Fisheries Insurance, Poultry Farm Insurance, Area Yield Index Insurance and Farm All Risk (Material Damage)."

"We have embarked on extensive digital transformation, this is expected to be one of the major drivers of operational efficiency as it will improve our business process, eliminate wastages, and positively impact our performances."

Consequently, we shall be executing our strategic initiatives in line with our 2022 strategic focus, which is hinged around four business pillars of growth including operational, financial, customer and people excellence.

To improve our business process and services, we will commence the first phase of our digital transformation plan during the year, the CEO assured.

Bread producers threaten strike over bakery materials' price hike

Bread producers and caterers, at the weekend, threatened to withdraw their services across the country due to the unprecedented increase in the price of bakery materials and Federal Government's purported neglect of the matter.

In a communiqué issued by the national leadership of the Association of Master Bakers and Caterers of Nigeria (AMBCN), the group stated that the cost of flour, sugar and other materials used in bakery business had increased beyond the reach of most bakers.

The communiqué, which was issued after the National Executive Council (NEC) meeting of the association in Abuja, and made available to *The Trumpet* on Friday, the bakers stated that they would down tools from July 13, 2022, if the situation persisted.

They also revealed that efforts to get the government's intervention in the matter had been unsuccessful, as there had been no positive response from the concerned ministries, departments

and agencies of government.

The communiqué, signed by the association's executives, led by its National President, Mansur Umar, stated that the council reviewed the "neglect of the Federal Government in addressing the challenges facing our sector as captured in our letters acknowledged by the Federal Ministry of Industry, Trade and Investment, Federal Ministry of Finance, Central Bank of Nigeria and unproductive intervention of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation.

"Increase in prices of bakery materials especially flour and sugar having reached unprecedented levels, for example, flour is now between N25,000 and N27,500, so also other ingredients.

The National Wheat Cultivation Committee already constituted is yet to be inaugurated after over one year. NAFDAC, SON, NESREA have turned the bakers into money making machines by charging our members outrageous levies even at this very challenging moment.

Firm pledges commitment to enhancing organisations welfare

By **EDU ABADE**, Business Editor

Stanbic IBTC Pension Managers, a subsidiary of Stanbic IBTC Holdings, has restated its commitment to the well-being of its customers.

Olumide Oyetan, Chief Executive, Stanbic IBTC Pension Managers stated this at the 2022 edition of the Stanbic IBTC Pension Managers Employers Forum. The virtual event which was themed 'Pension Smart: Equipping your Employees for a Better Future' dissected topical industry issues, exploring new and efficient ways to better serve customers.

The yearly Stanbic IBTC Pension Managers Employers Forum is a broad-based platform created by the Pension Fund Administrator to engage employers on current and long-term pension issues and to develop strategies that will

enable employers to continue to offer employees access to high quality pension services as an important part of the total staff benefits (compensation) package.

Acknowledging the role employees play in the efficient operation of any organisation, Oyetan noted that the survival of business enterprises depends on ensuring the general well-being of their staff and having a pension fund provides an avenue for employers to plan for the future of their employees.

"For employers, the importance of planning towards the well-being of their employees remains paramount to the survival of such organisations. Having a pension system in an organisation demonstrates the employer's commitment to the future of its employees," Oyetan said.

While appreciating employers for the confidence bestowed upon Stanbic IBTC Pension



Olumide Oyetan

Managers, Olumide Oyetan, noted that the organisation has

continued to demonstrate its ability to deliver value, being the largest pension fund administrator in Nigeria, both in volume of Retirement Savings Accounts (RSA) and value of Assets Under Management (AUM) based on the 2020 Annual report of the National Pension Commission (PenCom).

Highlighting the organisation's capabilities, Oyetan said: "We at Stanbic IBTC Pension Managers have continued to demonstrate excellent leadership in pension management in Nigeria. Through our technological offerings, we have continued to unbundle the challenges associated with pension administration as contributors can access their funds from any part of the

country.

"As an organisation, we remain committed to enabling dreams, expertly managing contributors' funds, and partnering with stakeholders to develop our industry and economy".

"While we continue to demonstrate this leadership role, we implore contributors who are dissatisfied with services offered by their PFA to take advantage of the ongoing Transfer Window in order to join the Stanbic IBTC Pension Managers family and enjoy the unique solutions and benefits we offer," Oyetan added.

Stanbic IBTC Pension Managers is committed to delivering optimal value to existing and intending clients with utmost professionalism and expertise.

NCS, SON disagree over influx of substandard goods at ports

Stories by **JOHNMARK UKOKO**

Standards Organisation of Nigeria (SON) and the Nigeria Custom Service (NCS) have disagreed over the influx of substandard and fake goods and products that have flooded the country's markets through the ports.

Recently, Director General of SON, Mallam Farouk Salim, who spoke during the destruction of some wholesome products at Amuwo Odofin in Lagos, blamed the influx of the products on the fact that officials of the agency were not at the nation's various ports.

He indicted the NCS for not carrying his officials along in its various cargoes' inspection.

While supervising the destruction of cable wires, stuffed tyres and gas cylinders worth billions of naira, Farouk said his officers are not given unfettered access to the port to partake in joint cargo examinations by the custom.

But in a swift response to Salim's allegation at the weekend, Public Relations Officer (PRO) of the Customs, Timi Bomadi, disagreed with the SON, saying

the statement ascribed to the SON Director General was not true.

Bomadi stated that there are existing open channels of communication between officials of SON and Customs Area Commands should the need arises for clarification or interventions, adding that NCS's usually partake in examination of goods.

"We want to state that the SON's allegations are untrue. The Nigeria Custom Service is fully cognisant that strategic cooperation among security and regulatory agencies is at the heart of national security and will willingly work in tandem with other security and regulatory agencies including the SON, to achieve national goals.

"Under the Nigeria Integrated Customs Information System (NICIS 11), SON and other regulatory agencies of government are linked directly and frequent make inputs in reference to their operations.

"At no time did the NCS refuse to oblige them with any request. Indeed the Nigeria Custom Service even without intervention from SON on its own directs suspicious items bordering on brand and intellectual property rights infringements to them," he said.

Speaking further, he explained that the SON has access to NCS systems and that its officials are informed and fully participate in examination of goods and accessing the Customs website.

"Therefore, the statement ascribed to the Director-General of SON creates a totally false negative light. It is questionable, raises serious concern and calls for scrutiny by discerning members of the public. It is also self-condemning.

"SON has access to our systems, the officers are informed and fully participate in examinations and even go as far as

collect product samples where necessary during examinations for their investigations. Even the field inspection process chart on the SON official website shows the involvement of SON at the ports and borders during examinations.

Bomadi stressed that if after issuing certificates, participating in examinations, taking samples for further investigations and authorising releases to the NCS, substandard goods find their way into the open market, the SON boss should look inwards.

"While success is said to breed opposition, the success of the NCS is not achieved by tarnishing the image of other agencies, just to look good or score cheap points," he added.

While fielding questions from journalists on why fake products are all over the country, Farouk said: "We are not always invited for joint inspection, it is rare and in-between, but I guarantee you that if our officers get opportunity to inspect these products, the moment they look at it from their experience, they would be able to detect substandard goods.

"Don't forget that our colleagues in the Customs service are only trained to charge duty payment, they have no idea what substandard goods look like. But our officers are trained on how to check these products and determine if they are substandard.

"We do not have unfettered access like the constitution said we should, the law 2015 Act says we must be allowed to be at the port, it is not a favour that we should be waiting on someone to call us into the port.

"As Nigerians, we are part of the government by law, unless the law is changed by the National Assembly and signed by the President, the law says that the SON must be present at the port and not at the discretion of other agencies," he stated.

Continuing volatility of the naira, in spite of foreign exchange intervention by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) is being compounded by the rising inflation, interest rate and slow economic growth, which pose great consequences for the low and middle income earners in the country if urgent steps are not taken to remedy the situation.

President of the Association of Bureau De Change Operators of Nigeria (ABCON), Alhaji Aminu Gwadabe, who stated this at the weekend in Lagos, maintained that the unfolding scenario raises the risk of stagflation with potentially harmful consequences for the poor in the economy.

He added that already, the global growth is expected to slump from 5.7 per cent in 2021, which is significantly lower than the 4.1 per cent predicted by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in January 2022.

Gwadabe stressed that to keep the country's economy going and strong in the face of these challenges, there was the need for improved local production and diversification of the economy from over-dependence on oil and gas.

He said the naira exchanged for N614 to one United States of America dollar at the parallel market during the weekend, adding that dollar bids continues to rise as inflation rose to 11-month high, maintaining that these occurrences were eroding the purchasing power of most households in the country.

"The biggest driver of inflation is the stubborn rise in food inflation. The average price level of the food basket rose by 1.13 per cent to 19.54 per in April 2022. This can be reversed by increased support for agriculture and government policies that support the sector," he stated.

The ABCON boss said Nigeria's huge population and the Diaspora market, which attracts an average of \$20 billion yearly into the country, could be explored to deepen dollar inflows to the country's economy maintaining that the dollar receipt points through over 5,000 Bureaux De Change Operators have the potential of deepening dollar inflows and significantly improve the economy.

He said globally BDCs remain one of the channels through which the Diaspora remittance funds come into countries.

Gwadabe, who pointed out

that BDCs remain at the center of economic development and have the capacity for the development of the Nigerian economy and deepening the foreign exchange (Forex) market, expressed the belief that the success of BDCs will be boosted by access to multiple streams of forex earnings to deepen the market, keep the naira stable and boost BDCs operations.

"Making BDCs one of the major channels through which \$20 billion Diaspora remittances enter the economy yearly will give dept to the forex market and boost BDCs operations in the country. Nigerian BDCs operators have also identified with the immense opportunities presented by Diaspora remittances and want to play greater role in attracting more foreign capital inflows into the economy.

He stressed that remittances are known to help poorer recipients meet basic needs, fund cash and non-cash investments, adding: "Finance education fosters new businesses, service debts and essentially, drive economic growth."

Speaking further, the ABCON boss said although the CBN recently showed greater commitment to curb inflation by raising the Monetary Policy Rate (MPR) by 150 basis points to 13 per cent per annum, strengthening the economic through local production would reverse negative trends in the economy.

He stated that as inflation rate remain higher than interest rates, retaining interest rates on investment would drop and foreign capital inflows would falter, leading to sluggish economic growth.

Gwadabe noted that other advance economies, including that of the United States of America, was also fighting inflation with its interest rate hike.

The United States of America Federal Reserve Bank had maintained its monetary policy tightening stance, raising interest rates by 75 basis points to 1.75 per cent in order to rein in inflation. This is the third rate hike this year and the biggest increase since 1994.

"The rise in United States interest rate will cut capital inflows into Nigeria and other developing markets. United States is the largest source of capital imports into Nigeria in first quarter of 2022 accounting for 5.21 per cent of total capital inflows," he stated.



SON Boss Farouk Salim

Terrorists kill catholic priest in Kaduna

By PAUL MICHAEL, DEFENCE EDITOR, ABUJA

Another Catholic priest, Reverend Father Vitus Borogo, has been confirmed killed in his farm at Kaduna State by rampaging gunmen.

In a statement the Chancellor, Catholic Archdiocese of Kaduna, Reverend Father Christian Okewu Emmanuel, disclosed the gunmen raided the farm at Kujama along Kaduna-Kachia road and hacked the priest to death.

"It is with a heavy heart, but with total submission to the will of God that we announce the death of Rev. Fr. Vitus Borogo, which sad event took place today, at Prison Farm, Kujama, along Kaduna-Kachia road, after a raid on the farm by Terrorists.

"Until his death, late Fr Vitus aged 50 years was the chaplain of the Catholic community of the Kaduna

State Polytechnic, and the Chairman of the Nigerian Catholic Diocesan Priests Association (NCDPA), Kaduna Chapter.

"Most Rev. Matthew Man-Oso Ndagoso, the Catholic Archbishop of Kaduna condoles with the immediate family, the NFCS Family of Kaduna Polytechnic, and indeed the entire Kaduna Polytechnic Community and assures them of his fraternal closeness and prayers," he stated.

Emmanuel said details of Bogoro's funeral arrangement will be announced as soon as possible and prayed for the repose of his soul.

"Meanwhile, we commit his soul to the maternal intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and call on all men and women of goodwill to continue to pray for the peaceful repose of his soul and for the consolation of his bereaved family, especially his mother," the

chancellor added.

Gruesome attacks by gunmen continue unabated in Kaduna State despite the presence of military barracks and other security formations.

The Kaduna State government has consistently raised alarms informing security agencies and the public of plans by terrorists to unleash mayhem on the state.

Airports, trains, barracks, travelers, rural communities, educational institutions, and worship centres have been targeted by terrorists, commonly referred to as bandits.

Several people have either been killed, injured, kidnapped or displaced by the activities of the criminals.

Terrorists on motorcycles killed three people after attacking two churches and several villages in Kajuru Local Government Area of the state last Sunday.



Reverend Father Vitus Borogo

Delta CP meets with stakeholders over herdsmen attacks

By PAUL MICHAEL, ABUJA

Delta State Commissioner of Police, CP Ari Muhammed Ali, at the weekend held a critical meeting with stakeholders at Obiaruku in Ukwuani LGA to discuss a recent crisis between indigenes and the herders community.

There have been incessant clashes between herdsmen and farmers in the area.

In a statement by the State's Police Public Relations Officer, DSP Bright Edefe, the CP expressed sadness over the crisis which has most times led to the abduction of farmers.

Advising the settler community to look inward and identify the moles among them, he urged the herdsmen, farmers and all stakeholders to cooperate and fish out the bad eggs to pay for their evil in the interest of peace.

Edefe stated, "On Friday, 24/6/2022, the Delta State Commissioner of Police, CP Ari Muhammed Ali, in company of the Assistant Commissioner of Police Operations ACP Sa'ad Ibrahim and the DPO Obiaruku had a brainstorming meeting with Stakeholders in Obiaruku to discuss the recent crisis between the Indigenes of the community and the Hausa community. The crisis incited by herdsmen and farmers conflict is a worrisome trend and requires urgent attention.

"The CP in his remarks expressed his sadness over the development regarding the farmers/herdsmen crisis, particularly as it sometimes climax to the extent of kidnapping farmers and others alike. The CP stated that no society thrives in the midst of insecurity, and Obiaruku as a community depends largely on farming without which, shortage of food that will in turn lead to famine and starvation is a certainty, spiralling to unemployment and an unthriving business(es), all as a result of insecurity.

"The CP opined that the perpetrators of the catastrophe cannot engage in these acts alone without the support of some indigenes, as investigations in the past revealed that members of the community are working in cohort with these hoodlums for their selfish interest. The CP advised all stakeholders, including the Hausa community, herdsmen, and farmers, to come together and fish out these persons causing problem for the entire community. He advised the Hausa community to look inward and identify the moles among them, urging members of the community to unite in this fight.

CSOs charge NDLEA to partner religious leaders in rehabilitating drug addicts

By PAUL MICHAEL

Several Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) under WAANSA-NIGERIA have appealed to the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) to partner with religious leaders in its bid to rehabilitate and reintegrate addicts and offenders to be useful citizens.

This was made known in a press statement at the weekend in Lafia, Nasarawa State, to mark the 2022 United Nations Day Against Drugs and illicit Trafficking, which was signed by Temitope Lamidi, WAANSA-NIGERIA president, Yusuf Ardo, Secretary Organising Committee and Igwe Martin, Director Media and Advocacy.

According to the group, the religious leaders are in good position to regulate the behaviour of drug addicts and inculcate hood morals into them.

"As we join the International community to observe this year's day against drug abuse and illicit Trafficking with the theme: Addressing Drug Challenges in Health and Humanitarian Crises, WAANSA-Nigeria appeals to NDLEA to integrate religious leaders in complimenting their effort to rehabilitate drug victims.

"Religious leaders are in a good position to regulate their behaviours and inculcate moralities needed to modify them positively. Doing that will be a practical

way to strengthen action and co-operation which remains the intention of the United Nation," the group said.

It passes a vote of confidence on the NDLEA, saying the drug fight by the agency has led to reduction of illegal proliferation of small arms and light weapons.

"Having evaluated the activities of NDLEA in recent times, the General Assembly of WAANSA Nigeria, which comprises of tens of Civil Society groups working for peace in Nigeria with special consideration to eliminating illegal proliferation of small arms and light weapons, passes Vote of Confidence on General Buba Marwa led NDLEA as we kick

start National mobilization to appreciate the agency and expand the Advocacy against drug abuse to more states and border communities," it said.

WAANSA-Nigeria therefore called on youth, women, traditional rulers, politicians and International communities to support NDLEA, adding that elimination of drug abuse have direct impact towards addressing security challenges currently bedeviling the country.

"All stakeholders in Project Nigeria must realise that we need a peaceful polity that can guarantee election and transfer of power come 2023. Hence, the need for all Nigerians to say no to drugs," the group added.

NPF, INTERPOL synergy leads to recovery of three stolen vehicles in Niger Republic

By PAUL MICHAEL

Synergy between Nigeria Police Force (NPF) and International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) has led to the recovery of three vehicles that were stolen from Nigeria in Niger Republic.

Inspector-General of Police, Usman Alkali Baba disclosed this in a press statement by Force Public Relations Officer, CSP Olumuyiwa

Adejobi, at the weekend.

According to the statement, the achievement was recorded following credible intelligence and physical support from operatives of INTERPOL, which led to the trailing of a trans-border car theft syndicate and the eventual recovery of their loot.

The statement reads, "The Inspector-General of Police, IGP

Usman Alkali Baba, mni, NPM, fdc, has commended the cooperation and synergy between the One Hundred and Ninety-Four (194) member countries of the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) which has facilitated worldwide police cooperation for enhanced crime control.

"The IGP equally commended operatives of the Force Criminal Investigation Department (FCID), INTERPOL Section, for leveraging the platform made available through INTERPOL to curb trans-border crimes especially crimes that cascade into other neighbouring African countries.

"The IGP made this remark upon the successful recovery of three vehicles stolen from Nigeria in the Niger Republic. The achievement was recorded following credible intelligence and physical support from operatives of INTERPOL Niamey which led to the trailing of a trans-border car theft syndicate and the eventual recovery of their loot.

"The investigation which lasted for several days led to the recovery of a Toyota Camry with Chassis

No: 4T1BE46K47U673141, Mercedes Benz 2012 550GL with Chassis No. 4JGBF8GE8CA762560 and a Hyundai vehicle with Chassis No: KMHDH41EBDU54686."

The statement further added that investigation into the matter is still ongoing with a bid to arrest all persons complicit in the case.

While commending the unrelenting efforts of Police Operatives, the IGP commended the INTERPOL Niamey for their cooperation and the important roles played in the recovery of the stolen vehicles.

According to the IGP, the multilateral relationship is vital to nip crimes and criminality in the bud. He urged members of the public to report cases of stolen vehicles so that prompt and necessary action can be taken towards recovering them either within or outside Nigeria.

He called on the owners of the recovered vehicles to approach the Nigeria Police Force Criminal Investigations Department, INTERPOL Section, at the Force Headquarters, Abuja, for the recovery and claims of their vehicles, with valid proofs of ownership and proper means of identification.



IGP, Baba



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14.5 x 4	520,790.19	559,849.45	9 x 2	101,962.78	109,609.99	9 x 2	93,773.60	100,872.44	8 x 4	137,692.17	148,019.082	
7 x 5	218,243.02	234,629.74	9 x 3	152,944.01	164,414.81	9 x 3	141,108.54	151,691.68	10 x 4	172,301.37	185,224.22	
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			14.5 X 5	472,286.06	507,707.52	HP7.25 X 6	246,131.63	264,591.50				
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IOC restrict IBA from 2024 Paris Olympics

By **OVIRI KELVIN**, Sports Editor, Abuja

The Executive Board of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) have restricted the International Boxing Association (IBA) from participating in the qualifying and competitive events of boxing sport in the 2024 Paris Olympics.

IOC pronounced it on Friday, stating that the decision became necessary due to pressing issues of concern involving IBA's system of governance, refereeing and judging strategy.

According to the Olympics world governing body, the decision is also necessitated by the need to provide certainty for athletes to qualify for Olympic Games Paris 2024.

"The decision is centred on the athletes and the need to provide certainty on the Olympic competitions and qualifications leading to Paris 2024," IOC said.



"It follows the continuing and very concerning issues of the IBA, such as its governance and its refereeing and judging system," the world's body stated.

Furthermore, IOC assured that the body will fashion out an exclusive way with the Paris 2024 Organising Committee to organise boxing sport from

the qualifying stage to the competitive event devoid of intrusions from IBA.

The statement continued: "The IOC administration will finalise on an exceptional basis alternative models for the organisation of these boxing competitions, working closely with the Paris 2024 Organising Committee and athletes'

representatives

"The outcomes of these discussions and suggested recommendations will then be presented to the IOC EB in due course," it added.

However, the IOC contemplate whether the sports will be included in the 2028 Olympic Games slated for Los Angeles, California, USA.

Eastbourne: Serena Williams happy despite forced exit

Serena Williams could not proceed further in the Eastbourne International championship after her partner in the doubles, Ons Jabeur wounded her right knee to pull out of the contest.

The 40-year-old, who made a shocking return to tennis on June 14 to put an end to the speculations suggesting she has retired from the sport, was issued a wild card to help her prepare for the tournament adequately before time.

Both tennis pair, Jabeur and Williams, were scheduled to play Serbian Aleksandra Krunic and Polish Magda Linette in last week's Thursday semi-final but the injury on the right knee of the world number 3 resulted in a walkover win for Krunic and Linette to cruise to the final.

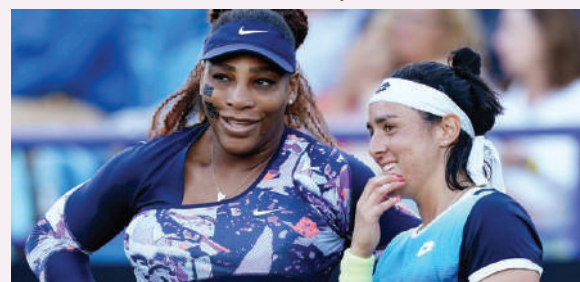
The duo later got a second walkover in the final of the women's doubles at Eastbourne against the pair of Latvian Jelena Ostapenko and Ukrainian Lyudmyla Kichenok to win the event.

According to Williams, who was not perturbed about the unfortunate incident that led to their forced withdrawal, it was a huge relief to be back in the game, adding that it created an avenue for her to practice again.

"I feel good, as good as one can feel after having such a long time off. I was telling Ons, this was a really good match and the second set, in particular, they played really well, but we were able to just play different circumstances," she said.

"It was actually good match play and match practice, which is exactly what I needed and what I wanted to do coming here, so I couldn't have asked for more," Williams added.

The 23 Grand Slams winner will look forward to featuring in Wimbledon as an unseeded participant after she was handed a wild card by the All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club to participate in the June 27 to July 10 event.



Nottingham Forest sign Awoniyi for club-record fee

Super Eagle Taiwo Awoniyi has completed a move to the newly-promoted Premier League side, Nottingham Forest for a club-record fee of £17m.

This results in Awoniyi returning to England on a five-year deal where he started his football career with Liverpool.

Awoniyi, who joined the Merseyside club Liverpool in 2015, spending most of the period away from England while processing various loan moves from Belgium down to Germany, saw him secure a permanent move to Union Berlin last season.

According to a report from Germany, the Super Eagle who made his debut in the national team on October 7, 2021, earning 4 caps and a goal scored in the Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) qualifiers

against Sudan in Group D, was instrumental to Union Berlin's last season success.

The forward, who turns 25 in August and is happy to return to England to play in the topflight division, said it was a dream come true, Sky Sport reported.

He said, "It's always been my dream to play in the Premier League."

Awoniyi in last season's campaign for Union Berlin, the club where he exhausted his last loan spell before making a permanent switch to Germany, scored 15 goals in 31 Bundesliga appearances. These results complemented the Iron Ones' qualification for a UEFA Europa League next season.

However, he added that after he spoke with Forest boss Steve Cooper, he was

impressed with the club which he claimed has a rich history.

The Super Eagle continued: "Having spoken to Steve Cooper about our ambitions and looking at Forest, with its great history, it's a club that I want to be part of."

Meanwhile, Cooper in a separate statement disclosed Nottingham Forest are excited to have overtaken other contending European clubs to snap up the player, who helped Union Berlin qualify for two consecutive UEFA competitions after 20 years.

He said, "There's been a lot of interest in Taiwo from other Premier League clubs, and other clubs across Europe, so we're delighted he's chosen Nottingham Forest."

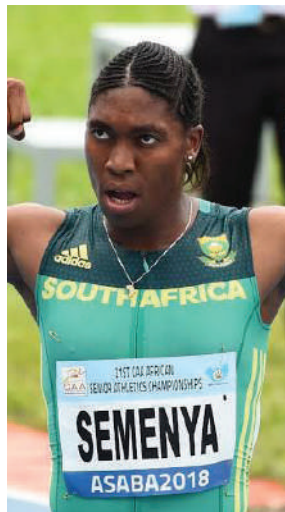
"He's a player who we really believe in and we look forward to him going on to



fulfil his potential and become a top Premier League striker with Nottingham Forest," Forest's boss added.

Awoniyi was an influential figure in the attack of the Iron Ones where he netted 15 times to become the sixth-highest goalscorer in the German Bundesliga last season.

African athletics leaders are cowards, Semanya claims



Three-time world champion Caster Semenya has branded the African athletic leaders as cowards for failing to stand against rules barring African athletes from competing in certain athletic events.

Semenya, who was barred from competing in her preferred 800m due to her high level of testosterone that violates the World Athletics' Differences of Sexual Development (DSD) rules, lamented over the refusal of the African continent to stand against the unfair treatment target at African athletes.

The 31-year-old according to BBC Sport Africa, stressed that the African athletics leaders owe it as a duty to stand for these

embattled athletes.

The two-time Olympic champion constrained by the DSD rules to compete in races below 400m, added that African athletes can be great if the African leaders choose to stand in their defence.

She said, "I think that, in this day, we have coward leaders."

"In this continent, people are quiet. I don't know why they're quiet. They're not fighting for their own athletes."

"You have got to show up and work, fight for your athletes, and then African athletics will be great. At this moment it's disappointing," Semenya lamented.

This is not the first time

Africans have been affected by this rule and Semenya believed that many are not able to speak up to contest the unfair treatment.

Highlighting other similar cases, BBC Africa noted that Burundian Francine Niyonsaba, an Olympic silver medalist and Kenyan Margaret Wambul, known for 800m races were affected by the rule.

In 2021, Christine Mboma and Beatrice Masilingi were "forced to step down" in the 400m races because of their high testosterone level but later went to compete in the 200m in Japan where Mboma clinched the Olympic silver medal for Namibia.

How Rivers United won their first NPFL trophy

Rivers United have been crowned champions of the Nigeria Professional Football League 2021/2022 season after their contender and fierce rivals for the season, Plateau United, fell to a 2-1 defeat at the Godswill Akpabio International Stadium, Uyo, on Saturday.

The home side Akwa United on matchday 35 against the second-placed visitors on NPFL chart, got a late winner to dash the hopes of the latter while they ignite theirs towards qualifying for a continental football next season.

Daniel Onovo banged the first goal in 10 minutes of the game to hand Akwa United the lead before the Jos' boys responded 8 minutes after the start of the second half to tally the scoreline through the effort of Jesse Akila.

Both teams struggled to take the lead with Plateau United eager to close ranks after they drew their previous match against Gombe United in Jos on matchday 34.

However, Akwa United in nick of time after the 90', edged Plateau United to steal a late winner when Leo Ezekiel prodded on a pass that shook the visitors' net.

Meanwhile, Rivers United play Nassarawa United at the Jos Township Stadium today Sunday, where a guard of honour is expected to be mounted for the new NPFL champions.

According to the Pride of Rivers, who won the league with four outstanding matches left on the NPFL fixtures, their five years wait for a league triumph have ended in praise.

In a statement tagged, "RIVERS UNITED WIN 2021/22 NIGERIA PROFESSIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE TITLE WITH FOUR GAMES TO SPARE", Rivers United claimed they have an unassailable 10 points lead over Plateau United with three games left.

"Rivers United's 5-year Nigeria Professional Football League title wait ended on Saturday as they were confirmed as NPFL champions courtesy of second-placed Plateau United's 2-1 loss at Akwa United," the club said.

Prior to this outcome, coach Stanley Eguma had always displaced the assumption that Rivers United have won the title, reiterating that he does not want to be distracted from the target.



Gareth Bale moves to MLS Los Angeles FC

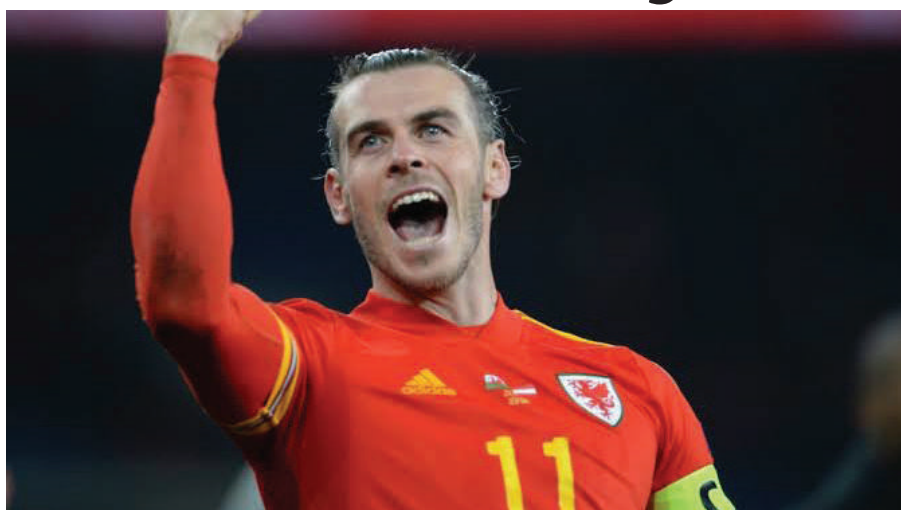
By OVIRI KELVIN, Sports Editor, Abuja

Real Madrid forward Gareth Bale will move to the United States to continue his football career after his nine years spell at Santiago Bernabeu ends this month.

Since the Welsh has been told his contract will not be renewed at the club he won five Champions League trophies, several pending offers are on the table for the former Tottenham star to pick from.

Last week, a report from Wales said the captain of Wales national team would consider a deal with Cardiff City whose training facilities are close to the office of the Wales Football Association where he could easily gain access to the country's physios and therapists.

Another report from



England linked the player, who scored a brace against Liverpool in the 2018 Champions League final to hand Real Madrid a vital win to lift the trophy, to return to Tottenham.

To end the varying speculations over his next move, Bales has posted a

picture on Twitter where he wore the shirt of Los Angeles Football Club and wrote, "see you soon, Los Angeles" with a tag on the MLS club's official handle.

To confirm the development, a report by Sky Sports said the Welsh football player has agreed

on a one-year deal with Los Angeles FC.

Bale's move to the MSL is to keep him in top form before the world cup begins this year which Wales qualified for after 64 years by defeating Ukraine in the final of the qualifying playoff in Cardiff.

Tornadoes hit 4, battle for NPFL survival

Niger Tornadoes continued the battle for Nigeria Professional Football League (NPFL) survival as they humiliated Kwara United with unreplied four goals to move up from the relegation zone.

Tornadoes with close points difference with about eight other NPFL clubs including Nasarawa United, secured maximum points on matchday 35 to reverberate their surge towards the NPFL lifeline.

According to the match report, the visiting Kwara United on 5th, a point above Enyimba that have a game in hand on 6th, conceded an own-goal at the Ahmadu Bello Stadium, Zaria to hand a 2-minute lead to the relegation battling Tornadoes.

Significant of a tornado, the home team swept the visiting side from the sound of the referee's whistle to the end of full-time to compound the woes caused by the own-

goal scored by Issa Gata, who mistakenly converted a corner kick into his net through a poor clearance.

On rampage for the home side where Jonas Emmanuel, whose effort doubled the scoreline in the 19th minute, and two second-half goals from Musa Wakili and Shamsudeen Hashim.

After the game, the Ikon Allah Boys stressed that the resounding victory which is the biggest win recorded on matchday 35 NPFL fixtures, allayed the pressure from the mid-week loss to fellow relegation struggling side, Lobi Stars in Jos.

However, in furtherance of the battle for survival and continental qualification by Niger Tornadoes and Kwara United respectively, the Ikon Allah Boys travel to play fellow relegation struggling side MFN that deep-rooted in NPFL red zone while Harmony Boys host Nasarawa United on matchday 36 fixtures.

Inter expect PSG to finalise Skriniar's deal soon

Inter Milan expect the French league champions, Paris Saint-Germain to finalise Slovak Milan Skriniar's deal soon as they look to finance pending targets' deals identified as possible replacements for the defender.

Reportedly, Nerazzurri turned down PSG's initial offer for the player who they value at €80m but are positive Les Parisians will come back with an improved bid.

According to Sempreinter, Inter have pencilled Fiorentina's Nikola Milenkovic and Torino's Bremer as replacements for the Slovak who was a stud in the defence of Nerazzurri last season to emerge as one of the most coveted



defenders in Europe.

The report explained that though PSG's first offer was turned down by the Italians, there is a possibility that Inter will sell the player at €70m with add-ons that will approximately rise to €80m.

Italy want a big-money move for the defender and will not settle for less

while Parc des Princes, determined to build their defensive lineup, are eager to snap up the Slovak to France.

Speculatively, Inter believe the deal will be finalised in a week before clubs' pre-season tours due to kickstart next month.

If PSG conclude the deal,

Chelsea and Tottenham also on the list of clubs bidding for the defender would have been surpassed.

Meanwhile, Inter legend Ivan Cordoba believes Brazilian Bremer would not be able to cover the defensive strides attained by Skriniar.

According to a report by an Italian media outlet, Cordoba claimed that Bremer is a good defender but needs time to get to the Slovak's level.

"I think Skriniar is at the top," he said.

"Bremer is on his way to getting there. It's hard to make comparisons right now," Cordoba added.

Skriniar joined Inter Milan from Sampdoria five years ago in a deal that was around €20m plus Gianluca Caprari's swap.



NWFL holds AGM/Congress in Bayelsa State

By AHERHOKE OKIOMA, Yenagao

The 2022 Annual General Meeting and Congress of the Nigeria Women Football League (NWFL) has taken place in Yenagao, the Bayelsa State capital with a resolve by stakeholders to work towards improving women's football in the country.

Declaring the event open, Governor Douye Diri expressed delight with the level of progress of women's football in the nation, while urging youths to take advantage of the avenues offered by the game to make something meaningful for their lives.

The Governor, who described football as a money-spinning sport which provides means of empowerment for many individuals, charged managers of the game to make women's football attractive.

Earlier, the Commissioner for Youth and Sports Development, Daniel Igali noted that Bayelsa State had in the last two years experienced a revolution in sports owing to this administration's support for sports development with Bayelsa Queens emerging the NWFL Cup winners and the NWFL Super Six champions.

Chairperson of the NWFL Board, Aisha Falode said the Congress was an opportunity for key actors to assess the 2021/2022 football season while setting the agenda for the new season, especially in improving standards.

While thanking Governor Diri and the Bayelsa State government for hosting the AGM and Congress, she stated that the goal was to make the women league one of the best in the world.

Chairmen of women's football clubs from all the women league tiers across the country, board members, administrators and other stakeholders attended the AGM and Congress of the NWFL.

Meanwhile, the NWFL Congress which took place in Yenagao has approved September 14, 2022, as the kick-off date for the 2022/2023 season of the NWFL Premier League across the country.

In a communiqué issued at the end of the 2022 Annual General Meeting / Congress, it was resolved that the NWFL will work hard to protect the integrity of the league by ensuring fair officiating of all matches that will be played in the premiership as the league board will also engage the services of match assessors for all games that will be played.

The Congress agreed that the NWFL Premier League 2022/2023 will be played in an abridged format of two groups, A and B comprising seven teams each, with each of the teams drawing at least one bye. The league will be concluded by the Super Six to decide the season's champions, as it was done in the previous season.

Ronaldo is not for sale, United warns Chelsea

Manchester United have told Chelsea that the Portuguese forward, Cristiano Ronaldo, will not be leaving Old Trafford this summer for Stamford Bridge.

In recent news making headlines in England, the Manchester United player's representative, Jorge Mendes, was reported to have met with the Blues co-owner Todd Boehly last week.

Although it was alleged that their discussion would have been centred on a possible switch of Ronaldo to the West London club this summer, United who are still indecisive on signing new players to Old Trafford will be adamant to honour the deal.

Recently, Ronaldo criticised the Red Devils' floppiness in

the summer transfer market and confided in his close circle according to a Spanish report that he would leave the club should they fail to inject fresh legs into the squad for next season's campaign.

Arising from the above, there are insinuations that the former Juventus hitman who is also linked to return to the Italian league giants, may leave Manchester United following the failure of the club to qualify for a European clubs' tourney next season.

Remarkably at 37, Ronaldo still has a lot in stock to offer in any club's attack and recorded the highest goals for Red Devils in all competitions last season to win the revered club's award, Sir Matt Busby Player of the Year Award.

More so, the Mirror

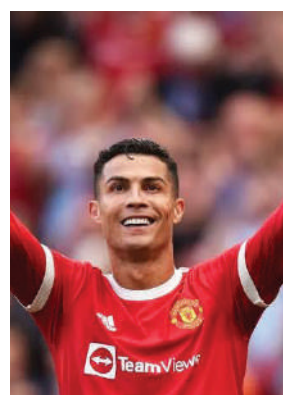
reported last week that Mendes was in talks with Bayern Munich for Ronaldo to switch to Allianz Arena but a close source in Old Trafford rebutted the move saying United will not honour a deal.

The source explained that the new manager Erik ten Hag last month, included the Portuguese national team captain as a key part of his plans for next season which the club will strictly protect to see it stay that way.

"Cristiano is not for sale," the source told Mirror.

"We want and fully expect him to be with us next season," the source stated.

Reportedly, Ronaldo's second spell in England saw United break the bank to hand him a two-year contract worth £500,000-a-week last



summer to bring the club back to its glory days.

While Ronald has kept his end of the bargain, having scored 24 goals to become the club's highest for the Red Devils last season, United are in a rigmarole to bolster the club squad to complement the striker's effort.



NDLEA arrests man with cocaine, kingpins

By PAUL MICHAEL

Operatives of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies (NDLEA) have arrested a Brazilian returnee, Benson Uche Igwedum, who allegedly concealed cocaine in his private part.

A statement on Sunday by NDLEA's Director of Media and Advocacy, Femi Babafemi, said the suspect was arrested at the arrival hall of Murtala Muhammed International Airport, Ikeja Lagos on 20th June.

According to him, Igwedum had swallowed about 50 wraps of cocaine before departing for Nigeria but excreted 48 pellets in Addis Ababa where he handed them over to another

person.

He said, "Igwedum was nabbed at the Lagos airport on Monday 20th June upon his arrival on Ethiopian Airlines from Sao Paulo, Brazil via Addis Ababa. Preliminary investigations reveal the suspect had swallowed 50 wraps of cocaine before departing Brazil and excreted 48 pellets in Addis Ababa where he handed them over to another person.

"He however claimed he was unable to excrete the remaining two wraps at the hotel room in Addis Ababa before boarding his flight but later excreted them in the aircraft restroom during the flight from Ethiopia to Lagos."

According to Babafemi, "After three weeks of painstaking investigation and

tracking, operatives of the MMIA command of NDLEA on Saturday night, 25th June arrested a drug kingpin, Onyekachi Chukwuma MacDonald, behind attempts to export 40 parcels of Methamphetamine popularly called Mkpuru Mmiri locally to London, United Kingdom through the NAHCO export shed of the Lagos airport.

"Onyekachi was arrested at Manacola estate, Alakuko area of Lagos at the weekend, three weeks after his Mkpuru Mmiri consignment weighing 2.05kilograms was intercepted at the airport and his freight agent, Peter Christopher Anikan arrested on 7th June.

"During his interview, the suspect said hes from Ahiazu, Mbaise Local Government Area of Imo state and had

lived in Dubai, UAE for 10 years before returning to Nigeria in 2019. He stated that after his return to Nigeria he opened a phone accessories shop in Sango Otta, Ogun state but the business collapsed. He then started sending cigarettes to London and decided to conceal the illicit drug in the consignment after advice by a friend."

In another development, the agency seized another consignment of 2kg Mkpuru Mmiri at a courier house in Owerri, Imo state.

"The cargo seized on Wednesday 22nd, June had ankara and lace fabrics in which two cylindrical cellophanes containing the drug heading to Hong Kong were concealed.

"Also at the Lagos airport, NDLEA operatives on Friday 24th June intercepted 500,000 tablets of Tramadol 225mg packed in 10 cartons and labelled Tramaking imported from Karachi, Pakistan on Emirates Airline. The consignment weighing 407.60kg was seized during a joint examination with Customs and NAFDAC officials.

"Same day, a Dubai, UAE-bound passenger, Alegbeleye Taiwo was arrested at the departure hall of the MMIA with 40 ampoules



Marwa

of pentazocine injection. The 21-year-old suspect claims hes from Osun state," Babafemi said.

Meanwhile, two kingpins behind the importation of two recent drug consignments from Canada concealed in vehicle containers through the Tincan seaport in Apapa, Lagos have been arrested by NDLEA operatives.

"One of them, Gboyega Ayoola Elegbeji was arrested at his house, 14 Bakare Street, Idi Araba, Lagos on

Wednesday 22nd June, for importing a 40ft container TRHU7874497 containing 33 parcels of cannabis indica (Colorado) weighing 16.5kg.

"The second suspect, Sunday Joe Oyebola, (aka Otunba) was arrested on Thursday 23rd June. He's linked to the importation of a 40ft container MEDU4389887 containing four vehicles used to conceal 290 parcels weighing 145kg cannabis indica (Colorado) from Montreal, Canada," he said.

NCS, SON trade words over importation, proliferation of substandard goods

By PAUL MICHAEL

Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) and Standard Organisation of Nigeria (SON) are engrossed in a war of words over importation and proliferation of substandard goods.

Director-General/Chief Executive of SON, Mallam Farouk Salim, had on Thursday flayed Customs over the smuggling of fake and substandard goods out of the nation's seaports. He spoke while destroying fake goods intercepted by the organization in some parts of the country.

Salim accused the Service of being responsible for revenue losses, as well as the preponderance of fake and substandard products in the country.

He faulted Customs for excluding officials of SON from joint examinations of imported goods at the seaports and borders, saying the exclusion is a major reason for the proliferation of substandard and fake products.

Responding on behalf of the Comptroller-General of Customs, the Public Relations Officer, Timi Bomodi, in a statement at the weekend described the position of SON as mere fiction while accusing the organization of incompetence.

Bomodi stated that NCS has always directed suspicious items bordering on brand and intellectual property rights infringements to SON even without any intervention from them.

He stressed that the Service has not received or turned down any request from SON on joint examination of goods at the borders. He affirmed that the services of Customs are accessible to SON.

Bomodi said, "We want to state that the allegations are untrue. The Nigeria Customs Service is fully cognizant that strategic cooperation among security and regulatory agencies lies at the heart of national security willfully works in tandem with other security and regulatory agencies including SON to achieve national goals.

"Under the Nigeria Integrated Customs Information System (NICIS II), SON and other regulatory agencies of government are linked directly and frequently make inputs in reference to items of significance to their operations. At no time has NCS refused to oblige them with any request. Indeed the Nigeria Customs Service even without intervention from SON on its own directs suspicious

items bordering on brand and intellectual property rights infringements to them.

"The attached redacted documents buttress the fact that SON has access to our systems, are informed and fully participates in examinations and even go as far as collect product samples were necessary during examinations for their investigations. Even the field inspection process chart on the SON official website shows the involvement of SON at the ports and borders during examinations.

"There exist open channels of communication between officials of SON and NCS Area Commands should the need arise for clarifications or interventions."

He remarked that the statement of the SON's DG is an attempt to portray NCS in bad light and cautioned that government agencies should work in synergy in the interest of the nation.

He added: "Therefore this statement ascribed to the DG creates a totally false narrative and is viewed as an attempt to portray the NCS in a negative light. It is questionable, raises serious concerns and calls for scrutiny by discerning members of the public.

Customs hands over N48m seized donkey skin to NAQS

By PAUL MICHAEL

Kebbi Area Command of the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) has handed over Donkey Skin worth N48,130,642 to the Nigeria Agricultural Quarantine Services (NAQS).

Area Comptroller of the Command, Comptroller Joseph Attah during the handing over ceremony at the weekend, said the interception was made by the Command's Rapid Response Team around Bahindi - Dogon Rimi Waterside in Bagudo Local Government Area of the state.

According to him, a total of 2,820 Donkey Skins, which were concealed in about 94 jumbo sacks with each containing 30 pieces each, were recovered by the Service.

He added that exportation of Donkey Skins is prohibited by

Law, so the attempt to smuggle them outside the country contravenes Section 63(b) of CEMA CAP C. 45, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 2004 (as amended).

His words: "The items were evacuated from the location and brought to our Headquarters in Birnin Kebbi. Physical examination revealed ninety-four (94) jumbo sacks, each containing thirty pieces making a total of two thousand eight hundred and twenty (2,820) donkey skins. The item is valued at N48,130,642.00.

"Donkey skins fall under Schedule 6 of Common External Tariff - (2022-2026) exportation of which is prohibited. The intent to smuggle it out of the country, therefore, contravenes Section 63(b) of CEMA CAP C. 45, Laws of the Federation of

Nigeria, 2004 (as amended)."

While condemning the slaughtering of the 2,820 donkeys, which might eventually lead to the extinction of the livestock, he recalled Nigeria's signatory to a multilateral Convention on International Trade on Endangered Species of Flora and Fauna (CITES) which makes a trade on donkey skins illegal.

"The items were converted to seizure and in line with the directive of the Comptroller General of Customs, Col. Hameed Ibrahim Ali (Rtd), the ninety-four (94) jumbo sacks of the donkey skins are being handed over to Nigeria Agricultural Quarantine Service, Kebbi State in the spirit of interagency collaboration," he added.