

# Itsekiri groups warn FG over NDDC board

By GABRIEL ELOZINO (Asaba) and KELVIN OHOROR (Warri)

Others disagree, say delay recipe for violence

A coalition of Itsekiri groups has

warned that if an Itsekiri indigene is not appointed as the Chairman or Managing Director of the next Board of Niger Delta Development Commission, the Federal Government should not constitute it. The coalition comprises Itsekiri Interest Group, Itsekiri

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



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# The Trumpet

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## EDITORIAL:

Federal Government Colleges in FCT shut

→ 12



Newspaper distributor arrested over alleged offensive publication

→ 5



Stakeholders task FG on exclusion of Abuja indigenous peoples

→ 24



Monarch to die by hanging for killing subject over allegations of witchcraft

→ 6

# INEC faces court cases over voter registration

→ 2



INEC Chairman, Mahmood Yakubu



Ozekhome



# INEC faces court cases over voter registration

By PAUL MICHAEL, Abuja

Suits are being filed by concerned individuals and groups against the country's electoral umpire over the recently concluded voter registration.

Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP) has urged Professor Mahmood Yakubu, the Chairman of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to "immediately give seven million Nigerians who have carried out their voter registration online the time and opportunity to complete the process, so that they can obtain their permanent voter cards (PVCs), and exercise their right to vote."

INEC recently disclosed that out of 10,487,972 Nigerians who carried out their pre-registration online, only 3,444,378 completed the process at a physical centre. This represents just 32.8 percent of completed online registration.

In a letter dated 13 August 2022 and signed by SERAP deputy director Kolawole Oluwadare, the organisation said: "The right to vote is not merely the right to cast a ballot but also the right to be given the time and opportunity to complete the registration process, so that the right can be meaningfully and effectively exercised."

"Closing the gates on eligible Nigerians and denying them the time and opportunity to complete their registration cannot preserve trust in the electoral process."

"Denying a significant number of eligible voters the time and opportunity to complete the registration for their PVCs would impair the right to vote of those affected, deny them a voice in the 2023 elections, and lead to disparate and unfair treatment of these voters."

The letter read in part, "The failure of the

applicants to complete their registration may be due to factors entirely outside of their control, especially given the well-documented challenges faced by many Nigerians at registration centres across the country.

"We would be grateful if the recommended measures are taken within 7 days of the receipt and/or publication of this letter. If we have not heard from you by then, SERAP and the affected Nigerians shall consider appropriate legal actions to compel INEC to comply with our request in the public interest.

"Unless they are given a reasonable time and opportunity to complete the registration process, and to obtain their voter cards, these eligible Nigerians will not be able to vote in the 2023 general elections.

"If citizens' chance to vote is denied, that would amount to violation of their fundamental right to vote, just as it would be if they were prevented from casting any vote at all.

"The alleged failure of the applicants to complete their registration at INEC designated centres are not sufficiently weighty to justify their exclusion from the 2023 general elections.

"Any proffered justifications of saving time and cost are therefore wholly insufficient. Administrative convenience is simply not a compelling justification in light of the fundamental nature of the right to vote.

"This severe vote deprivation cannot be justified by any perceived considerations of saving time, especially because Section 9(6) of the Electoral Act 2022 provides that 'the registration of voters, updating and revision of the Register of Voters shall not stop not later than 90 days before any election covered by this Act.'

"Providing fresh



Mahmood

opportunity for the over seven million Nigerians to complete their registration would promote and preserve the right to vote, and

ensure that legal and eligible voters are not inadvertently and unjustifiably turned away from exercising their fundamental right to vote.

"By refusing the over seven million Nigerians the opportunity to complete the registration for their PVCs, INEC have unfairly, unreasonably, and unjustifiably denied them the opportunity to be heard at a meaningful time and in a meaningful manner as to the reasons for not completing their registration.

"Voter distrust is apparent in virtually

empty polling places on election days. Nigeria historically has had low levels of voter turnout.

"Allowing eligible Nigerians to complete their registration would improve citizens' participation in the electoral process, and public confidence in the electoral system, as well as the ability of INEC to discharge its constitutional and statutory responsibility fairly, justly, and reasonably.

"The Nigerian Constitution 1999 (as amended) provides in Section 14(1)(c) that,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

## N'Delta groups disagree over NDDC board

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Liberation Group, Itsekiri Coalition for Good Governance, Itsekiri Freedom Congress, National Association of Itsekiri Students, Sisan Ebiren - Iwere and Iwere Women Consultative Forum.

The coalition handed down the condition during a peaceful protest in Warri, Delta State. They vowed that the protest would continue until FG appoints an Itsekiri as Chairman and/or MD of NDDC. Members of the groups later presented their demands to a representative of the Igba of Warri Kingdom, Chief Rita-Lori Ogbemor.

The protesters carried placards with inscriptions such as: 'We just quiet since, if FG nor appoint Itsekiri as Chairman or MD of NDDC, Peace no go reign oooo', 'Na we dey produce the highest crude oil in Delta State, but have the least developed communities', 'No Itsekiri, No NDDC' and '8 years of marginalization, enough is enough.'

They said: "Since the year 2000 when NDDC Board was created, no Itsekiri has been considered to serve in the capacity of Chairman or MD of the Board, despite being

the highest oil and gas producing ethnic group in Delta State. This is not acceptable to us anymore."

President of Itsekiri Interest Group, Gbubemi Awala, while addressing newsmen at the Merrick Lori Cultural Centre, Warri, urged President Muhammadu Buhari to "face fact and leave the politics surrounding the NDDC Board inauguration."

He implored to Ogbemor and the father of Itsekiri Nation, the Olu of Warri, His Majesty, Ogiame Atuwatse III, to present their demand to Buhari.

Chairman of Itsekiri Liberation Group, ILG, Comrade Oris Mone, in his address, said: "It is not a crime to be minority in Nigeria, Itsekiri has the highest quantum of crude oil and gas production in Delta State, that makes it a must for an Itsekiri to be considered as Chairman and MD of NDDC."

President of Itsekiri Freedom Congress, Comrade Igigio Matthew, expressed sadness over the perceived long marginalization of the ethnic group in the Board of NDDC by the Federal Government, saying: "NDDC is rotational for oil and gas producing ethnic groups, which Itsekiri

happens to be the highest oil producing ethnic nationality in Delta State and second highest in Nigeria."

Gbubemi Awala, on behalf of the coalition, presented the letter to Ogbemor, represented by the Director of Merrick Lori Cultural Centre, Warri, Mr. Frank Uromieyaghan, who assured them that he would present their demands to her, commending them for the peaceful protest.

However, two other groups disagreed with the Itsekiri, describing the continued delay in inaugurating the board as becoming repulsive to the people of the area and endangering peace.

They are Community Development Committee of Oil and Gas Producing Communities of Niger Delta (CDCOGPCND) and Mothers of Oil and Gas Producing Communities of Niger Delta (MOGPCND).

In a joint statement signed by Joseph Ambakederimo, Chairman Board of Trustees, CDCOGPCND and Lady Happy Kagogo, Convener of MOGPCND, the groups stated that the "process of appointing a substantive board has been completed a long time ago," and that "what is going on in

the NDDC is repulsive and all people of good conscience must condemn and oppose it."

The groups held that the Federal Government was deliberately taking the people of the region for granted over time again and again, adding that, it was ready to disappoint the government on its plan to instigate fresh hostilities in the region.

It said, "It seems the government and its agents only understand the language of violence and destruction, but we will not give in to such provocation. Whatever they think they are doing, the import of it is that they have completely destroyed the integrity and high esteem of President Muhammadu Buhari in the region. The President's hands have been misdirected too many times by his appointees. There should be consequences on the part of those who have entrenched this kind of behaviour with impunity. Certainly this attitude of I don't care is a recipe and a call to violence."

"The patience of the people of the region is running thin, any moment from now the government should accept whatever comes out of the frustrations

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4





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# INEC faces court cases over voter registration

**CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2**  
'the participation by the people in their government shall be ensured in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution.'

"Similarly, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, and the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance guarantee the right to political participation, including the right to vote.

"According to our information, the Independent National Electoral Commission, (INEC), recently disclosed that over seven million Nigerians who carried out their voter pre-registration online could not complete the process at physical centres.

"According to a report released by INEC, out of 10,487,972 Nigerians who carried out their pre-registration online, only 3,444,378 Nigerians representing 32.8 percent, completed the process at a physical centre. 7,043,594 Nigerians carried out their pre-registration but are yet to complete the process at a physical centre.

"This represents over 67 percent of those who began their registration process online.

"According to INEC, a total of 12,298,944 Nigerians completed their voter registration; 8,854,566 of which were persons who did their registration entirely at a physical centre.

"The over seven million Nigerians have already completed their registration online, that is, via INEC online portal by providing their biodata and required documents.

"According to INEC process, that is outstanding for the applicants to complete the registration for their PVCs is to visit INEC designated centres for their biometric to be captured."

Constitutional lawyer and human rights activist, Chief Mike Ozekhome,

SAN, has dragged the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to court over the stoppage of the Voters' registration exercise.

The Plaintiffs, in the suit marked FHC/ABJ/CS/1335/22, are praying for a mandatory injunction compelling INEC to forthwith, extend the continuous voters' registration till November 27, 2022, which is 90 days to the 2023 general election as provided by sections 9 (6), 10 (1), and 12 (1) of the Electoral Act 2022.

Mike Ozekhome SAN and Abubakar Sani Esq are identified as the Plaintiffs in the suit dated August 3, and filed at the Federal High Court, Abuja.

The Plaintiffs are asking the court to declare that INEC cannot purport to terminate the continuous voters' registration exercise on July 31, 2022, more than 6 months before the general election scheduled to hold on February 25, 2023, as doing so would disenfranchise millions of eligible potential voters (including the 2nd Plaintiff).

They want a declaration that the stoppage of the continuous voters' registration by INEC on July 31, 2022, which is six months to the 2023 general elections, contrary to the provisions of section 77 (2) of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 (as altered), sections 9 (6), 10 (1), and 12 (1) of the Electoral Act, 2022, and Article 13 (1) of the African Charter on Human and Peoples Right, (Ratification & Enforcement) Act, Cap. A9 LEN, 2004, is, therefore, ultra vires, invalid, null and void.

More so, Ozekhome and his co-plaintiff are seeking a declaration that having regard to the provisions of section 77(2) of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 (as altered), section 12 (1) of the Electoral Act, 2022 and Article 13 (1) of the African Charter on Human and Peoples

Right, (Ratification & Enforcement) Act, Cap. A9 LEN, 2004, the Defendant (INEC) cannot refuse or decline to register any eligible citizen of Nigeria that has attained the age of 18 years, who presents and or intends to present himself to Defendant for registration before 90 days to the general elections.

"A declaration that Defendant can only stop the continuous registration of voters 90 days before the next general elections scheduled to hold on 25th February 2023, (ie, on or before the 27th day of November 2022).

"A declaration that the stoppage of the continuous voters' registration by Defendant on the 31st of July, 2022, amounts to the disenfranchisement of citizens who have

attained or will attain the age of 18 years before November 28, 2022, being 90 days to the date of the 2023 general elections," they demanded.

In an affidavit in support of the suit, Abubakar Sani stated that he had the consent and authority of the 1st Plaintiff (Ozekhome) to depose the affidavit on his behalf.

The deponent averred that the unilateral cessation of the continuous voters' registration by INEC on July 31, 2022, without recourse to the provisions of the Electoral Act tantamount "to executive lawlessness and constitutional infraction".

Sani stated that the said stoppage of the continuous voters' registration

by INEC affected him personally and other Nigerians because he is yet to register to vote in the forthcoming general election, even after visiting many registration centres without success.

According to him, before 31st July 2022, he visited several continuous voters' registration centres in Abuja to register without success due to the overwhelming crowd daily seeking to be registered; stressing that many of the potential voters pleaded with him to challenge Defendant's decision to halt further registration of voters.

"That I know as a fact that the cessation of the continuous voters' registration has disenfranchised me and above mentioned other eligible citizens

and several other citizens who shall attain 18 years before November 27, 2022, which is exactly 90 days to the next general election scheduled to hold on February 25, 2023.

"That Chief Ozekhome has a large clientele across Nigeria, many of whom have inundated him with calls and messages to express their concerns about the cessation of the continuous voters' registration by the Defendant on 31st July 2022.

"As a result of the stoppage, they have been disenfranchised from participating in the forthcoming general elections because INEC has not yet captured them in its voters' register," he stated.

## N'Delta groups disagree over NDDC board

**CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2**  
of the people without no fault of theirs. All indicators on ground are pointing to a possible turmoil that may erupt in the region. We have made representation to the Minister on this but our concerns have been treated with levity so far.

"The resources that have accrued to the NDDC and have been mismanaged under this illegal sole interim administration will soon dry up as a result of the continuing impunity for not wanting to acquiesce to due process and allow a board with the enabling law to administer the Commission for the benefit of the people of the region who are the ultimate beneficiaries of a working and democratic NDDC.

"We have been taken on a circus show for too long and the Minister of Niger Delta Affairs must understand that there comes a time when the people will come out of their cocoon and force the government to do what is right. In this instance it is to inaugurate the

standing board without further delay.

"The process of appointing a substantive board has been completed a long time ago, but to allow the appointees assume work has become confrontational with no clear cut reason only for a phantom forensic audit to be announced. If President Buhari must know, the resources of the commission has far more been mismanaged or stolen under the illegal occupation of the Commission by Interim Management Com m it t e s s / S o l e administrator more than the entire period covered by the audit.

"What is going on in the NDDC is repulsive and all people of good conscience must condemn and oppose it. Even when we believe that we now have a man of good conscience and an incorruptible man in the person of the Honourable Minister, Obong Umana Okon Umana, it seems he too has been indoctrinated wrongly to tow the path of his predecessor who showed absolute disdain to due process. We urge the Minister



Buhari

not to take the bait sold to him by those who do not wish him and the entire region well. An appointed and Senate confirmed board is standing and waiting to be inaugurated and that should happen as soon as possible to help tone down the renewed anxiety for violence and destabilisation in the region.

"We should not forget quickly what has happened in the past in the region which should be a guide and direction on how very important issues that affect the region and its people are addressed. Never again must we encourage the path to

stifle the economy of this country by ways of untoward action. We have had enough troubles on our plate and no more should be added as there will be dire consequences for the nation. We must continue to express our disgust and revulsion to what is happening in the NDDC until the right thing is done. Enough of this trajectory we all seem to be trying to accept as normal when in the true sense of the word it violates the NDDC Act, is morally wrong and reprehensible. We vehemently oppose the one man show running the NDDC."



# Newspaper distributor arrested over alleged offensive publication

By ISAAC JOB, Uyo

**A** newspaper distributor identified as Mr. Chidi Ngadiubia has been arrested by operatives of the Nigeria Police Force, Akwa Ibom Command and detained at its Ikot-AkpanAbia, headquarters, allegedly on the order of the state government. It is allegedly over an offensive publication against the interest of the state government.

The *Trumpet* has gathered that Ngadiubia was picked up at his distribution point, No 15. Asutan Street, which also houses the Punch newspaper office, by the operatives who were on

a mission to arrest the publisher of a local tabloid - The Mail, Mr. Ifreke Nseowo, over alleged offensive publications.

An eyewitness, Mr Chris Etim, who was with the distributor before he was arrested told said that a female caller had tricked the publisher, now at large, by telling him she had an advert for him for publication in his paper.

Apparently sensing problems, he said the publisher directed the caller to drop the advertisement materials with the newspaper distributor to be picked up at a later date.

But on arrival at Ngadiubia's distribution point, they arrested and

took him to the police headquarters at Ikot Akpanabia, in Uyo, the state capital, and asked him to produce the publisher or face the wrath of the law for alleged connivance.

The plot to arrest the publisher had been widely reported by other local tabloids in the state which had alleged that the state government is not happy with certain publications of the newspaper as it relates to the PDP candidate, Umo Uno's alleged certificate forgery scandal.

Meanwhile, Federated Chapel of Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ) of which the hunted publisher is a member has condemned the manner in which

journalists are being hounded in the state.

Chairman of the chapel, Mr. Nsibiet John, in a statement, described the development as "wicked, callous, ungodly, satanic and a fresh attempt to violently violate all known rules of democracy and free press."

He said the arrest of the distributor in place of The Mail Publisher has also raised fresh concerns as the NUJ in Akwa Ibom State had reiterated its stance of not allowing any of its members to be victimised and hounded by any individual, group or institution.

However, the Police Public Relations Officer, Akwa Ibom Command,



Ngadiubia

SP Odiko Macdon while responding to the development said that the State NUJ chairman, Mr Amos Etuk, had already drawn his attention to the matter.

Pledging that the command would invite the parties involved for an amicable resolution, he added: "I have been called by the NUJ Chairman on this not long ago. We need more details on this. We

will stand for the truth as an institution. We are committed to serving the good people of this state.

"We wish to call on our amiable members of the Fourth Estate of the Realm to practise their profession within the ambit of the law and respect other people's views and rights. Let those concerned reach me for us to find the truth and create a level playing ground for all, please."

## 10,000 displaced as France battles month-long wildfire

By OVIRI KELVIN, Abuja

France is battling a wide-fire incident which has ravaged over 7000 hectares of pine forest in Gironde near Bordeaux.

The blaze, an outcome of the record-breaking drought that has enveloped the European continent, resulted in the melting of over 2000 years old glaciers in Switzerland which led to the discovery of a plane wreck and body parts from a Piper Cherokee

crash that happened in 1968.

According to reports by Daily Mail, the fire outbreak that started in July overwhelmed the firefighters of France who decided to call for assistance from other European countries like Greece, Italy, Romania, Poland and Sweden to extinguish the blaze.

The drought over Europe is one of a kind as it has dried up lakes, turned evergreen forests into tinder-dry, melted

glaciers and resulted in a fire outbreak that has chased out over 10,000 persons from their homes.

Surprisingly, on one of the occasions when the firefighters were tackling the outbreak, they were chased fiercely by a fire tornado that erupted when a wind tornado blew through the fireplace.

However, the multitude of firefighters numbering over 1100, are yet to allay the blaze despite deploying different firefighting

strategies including using extinguishing powder from helicopters and water-bombing planes.

Unfortunately, Europe is sweltering during this period caused by the drought that has brought undue heat to the region. Luckily, it has also unravelled the 54-year-old crash of Piper Cherokee of registration HB-OYL in the Aletsch Glacier in Wallis canton, near the Jungfrau and Monch mountain peaks in Switzerland.

## Flush out criminals among you, Akeredolu charges Ebiras leaders

By FRIDAY OMOSOLA, Akure

Governor Oluwarotimi Akeredolu has warned Ebiras living in Ondo to flush out criminals among them and join hands with the government in ridding the state of crime.

This is coming after Ebiras were named among the attackers of worshippers at St. Francis Catholic Church, Owaluwa in Owo, Local Government by the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS), General Lucky Irabor, in Abuja, last week.

Governor Akeredolu stressed that the Ebiras people have lived together with the indigenes of the State for too long, charging them not to deviate from the farming trade. Akeredolu stated this on Saturday at a meeting with the leaders of the Ebiras

Community in the State at the Cocoa Conference Hall of the Governor's Office, Alagbaka, Akure. He said the meeting was summoned in the light of the recent development of the June 5 attack in Owo and other kidnapping cases in the State urging the leaders of the Ebiras Community to deal with the situation in the best way, to protect their name and integrity in the State.

"We summoned this meeting with our brothers. They are not new here but because of the recent developments that have to do with the Owo massacre and kidnappings, we have to call ourselves. I can assure you all that we have had a very frank discussion with ourselves and the leader of the Ebiras in Ondo State spoke on behalf of

Ebiras and a few other persons.

"It is clear that the message from us to them is well understood and we have assurance from the Ebiras who are living in Ondo State that they would cooperate with the security agencies and that the incident in Owo was something that they felt very bad about."

Akeredolu, who is the Chairman of the Southern Governors' Forum, disclosed that he received a letter of commiseration and expression of embarrassment from Ohinoyi of Ebiraland— leader of Ebiras in the World— on what happened.

"So, we leave here today with the belief that our brothers, Ebiras, that are here, would at the least work to ensure that there is security in Ondo

State and in doing that, we have charged them to discuss with all their people."

He urged the state citizens to continue with their brotherliness and maintain the good relationship built with Ebiras in the past, adding that they have assured them of good conduct.

"We believe that it is not those who are residing here that came to perpetrate this crime. That is what they have said and we should give them another chance. Let us live together in peace and I hope and pray that the Ebiras who are here in Ondo State will work with the government and security agencies to make sure that criminals are flushed out within our midst and they have our cooperation in whatever way they wish."

## Bandits kill, kidnap many in Taraba

By SURU CHARLES

The weekend was black and bloody for the people of Gassol local government council of Taraba State following bandits activities which led to the killing of over sixteen persons.

The incident which occurred at the weekend in Gidado and Garinkuka, as well as in Jauro Manu villages in Gunduma district of Mutum-Biyu, led to the abduction of scores of the villagers.

Apart from the recent attacks in the council which led to the abduction of travellers, it would be recalled that the first bomb attack was also recorded in the council.

The explosion which occurred early this year in the council, led to scores of deaths with several other persons left with various forms of injuries.

Aside from the deaths and abductions recorded in the weekend incident, several other persons were also confirmed to have been left with various degrees of gun injuries.

The attackers, according to The *Trumpet* source, invaded the communities in large numbers on motorbikes and began to shoot sporadically, killing sixteen persons on the spot in the different areas.

Wondering why the bandits have continued to have a field day in the area, some of the villagers who spoke with The *Trumpet*, were sad that the government at the center and in the state have not been able to put in place mechanisms to checkmate the bandits.

The villagers who said the bandits always attacked in broad daylight said the weekend episode occurred at about 5.00 p.m.

Abdullahi Chul, a staff member of the council, said the communities tried to repel the bandits to no avail.

Confirming that two of the bandits were killed by the villagers, he said their efforts to repel the terrorists would have yielded positive results but for the sophisticated weapons being brandished by the bandits.

State Command Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), Abdullahi Usman, agreed that there was an attack in the aforementioned council.

The PPRO who could not state the casualties figures, said the command is working round the clock to track down the bandits.

He also urged persons with useful information about the bandits to make it available to the command.



## Prostitute killed allegedly by client

By GABRIEL ELOZINO, Asaba

A sex worker has been killed by a suspected client in a popular brothel (name withheld) in Ughelli, Delta State.

The lifeless body of the victim was discovered in her room, suspected to have been stabbed and strangled to death by a yet-to-be-identified assailant.

According to sources at the hotel, the victim simply identified as Miss Confidence, failed to show up to join her colleagues to scout for customers on that faithful day, prompting the suspicion that something might have happened to her.

"Her colleagues were waiting for her outside as they were looking for customers but they didn't see her. They now went to knock at her door and it was when they opened the door that they found her dead in her room," the source anonymously said.

The development caused pandemonium in the area as panic-stricken colleagues of the deceased are said to have fled.

Contacted, the Police Public Relations Officer of the State Command, Mr. Bright Edafe, confirmed the incident saying, "She was stabbed on the stomach and strangled."

He said the police had commenced investigation into the matter, adding that no arrest has so far been made.

# Monarch to die by hanging for killing subject over allegations of witchcraft

By ISAAC JOB, Uyo

An Akwa Ibom State High Court sitting in Uyo has sentenced the Village Head of Efen Ibom, Chief Essien Matthew Odiong, in Ika local government area to death by hanging.

Delivering judgement, the presiding judge, Justice Edem Akpan, found the monarch guilty of a four-count charge of conspiracy, presiding over unlawful trial by ordeal, stealing of motorcycle belonging to the victim and murder of Udoma Akpan Udo Ubom - owner of the stolen motorbike.

The late Ubom was accused by

his brothers of being a wizard and reported to the Village Head, who brought him before the Efen Clan Council, where the deceased was given an oath to swear and clear himself.

It was gathered that the village Head, 82 years old, married to 12 wives and with 60 children, presided over the trial by ordeal where the deceased was forced to swear and substances injected in him using syringe.

Justice Akpan, found the accused guilty of murder of Ubom by injecting him with some chemical substance, leading to his death on 26th April, 2017.

The Court held that "having

sensed the consequences of his criminal activity, the monarch escaped from the village since 2017 and returned in 2019, when he was arrested by the Police."

Justice Akpan also held that since "the accused had voluntarily admitted that he sat at Efen Clan Council with five other village heads and members of the Clan Council to try the deceased on the allegation of witchcraft, the law has relieved the prosecution of the burden to prove the offence of conspiracy."

According to the Court, "the admission of the process of trial and the decision of Efen Clan Council to administer oath on the

deceased, has logically brought to the conclusion that a plastic bath on the head of the late Udoma Akpan Udo Ubom and injecting some chemical substance through a syringe into his buttocks by the village head, caused the death of the deceased."

Justice Akpan sentenced the Village Head to death by hanging for murder, seven years imprisonment with hard labour for directing unlawful trial by ordeal and three years imprisonment for conspiracy with others now at large.

Before the death sentence, the convicted Village Head, popularly known as "Kill and Bury" pleaded for leniency, asking the court to temper justice with mercy.

## We'll continue to observe prudence, accountability, Buni pledges

By SURU CHARLES

Governor Mala Buni of Yobe state has again reiterated his administration's commitment to ensure transparency, accountability and prudence in all its transactions.

In doing this, prompt payments of public servants' monthly salaries, he said, will continue to be one of his administration's priorities.

His promise was observed to have come following the outcome of a survey conducted by 'Budgit' an independent civil society organization, on payment of salaries in Nigeria.

The report of the survey which covers up to July 2022, was observed to have captured the state as one of the states that is not owing its civil servants.



Gov. Mala Buni

Unlike Taraba, Adamawa, Imo, Ondo, Abia and Ebonyi which The Trumpet noticed were enumerated by the survey as states that are not regular in the payment of civil servants' monthly wages, the reverse was however the case with Yobe.

Elated by the outcome of the survey, the governor in a statement issued out to media practitioners, said his administration has been "committed and consistent, and will maintain the tempo."

In spite of the state's meagre resources, the governor vowed not to toy with the payment of workers' salaries stating that "payment of salaries will remain our priority."

"This administration" as affirmed by him "will continue to observe prudence, account-

ability and transparency in all its transactions."

The governor who also promised to continue to extend the much needed olive branch to public workers, said "We are committed to ensure that we never fail in payment of salary to our workers".

He however urged civil servants in the state and local government pay rolls to reciprocate government's gesture through hard work, dedication and productivity.

Stating that "We all have great roles to play to uplift the lives of our people and create a state of our dream".

Budgit in 2020, it would be recalled, also adjudged the state, as the second best state in Capital Budget Expenditure in Nigeria.

# NSCDC in Sokoto nabs suspected international terrorist, accomplice

By SURU CHARLES, Northern Correspondent

Two suspected terrorists have been apprehended by the Sokoto State Command of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC).

They earlier reportedly escaped from the custody but were said to have been rearrested in Silama local government council of the state.

The suspects whose names were given as Alhaji Korie and Buba Magaji, while being paraded before newsmen, weekend at the command's headquarters, were said to have been arrested in a forest during an operation led by the state Commandant,

Mohammed Saleh-Dada.

The Commandant who narrated how Korie and his accomplice were nabbed by his men, said information available indicates that the suspect, whom he described as an "international terrorist" has over two hundred foot soldiers working in various terrorist camps across the state, including Tureta, Dange/Shuni, Binji and Silame local government councils.

The commandant was also of the view that Korie may likely have links with the Ansaru dreaded terrorist group terrorizing Shiroro, Kagara, and Birnin Gwari areas in Niger and Kaduna States.

He disclosed that the

members of the terrorist gang had earlier reached out to the command offering a bribe of N10 million to free their arrested leader, but failed to turn up for fear being arrested.

The arrested suspects will be arraigned before the court as soon as investigation is completed by the command.

Stressing the command's readiness not to relent in its efforts to chase out hoodlums from the state, he undefined the need for the public to collaborate with it and other security outfits.

This the people can do by assisting security agencies with information that would lead to the storming of terrorists' hideouts, he added.



Ahmed Abubakar Audi, NSCDC boss



# Teachers, mgt settle quarrel at school in A' Ibom

By ISAAC JOB, Uyo

Teachers and management of Federal Science and Technical College, Uyo, AKwa Ibom State have resolved to settle differences bothering on minor misunderstanding that almost resulted in breakdown of law and order in the school.

Investigation revealed that the teachers accused the management of refusal to pay Duty Tour Allowance (DTA), approved by federal government to staffers in Unity Schools across the country.

It was gathered that the teachers also accused the management of admission racketeering, illegal levies and misappropriation of funds from IDEAS World Bank project for the school.

It was gathered that the School Based Management Committee (SBMC) waded into the matter to avoid disruption of academic activities.

Speaking to newsmen in Uyo, the chairman of SBMC in the college, Elder Simeon Umoette, said the committee decided to wade into all the allegations and

address them properly to restore peace needed for learning.

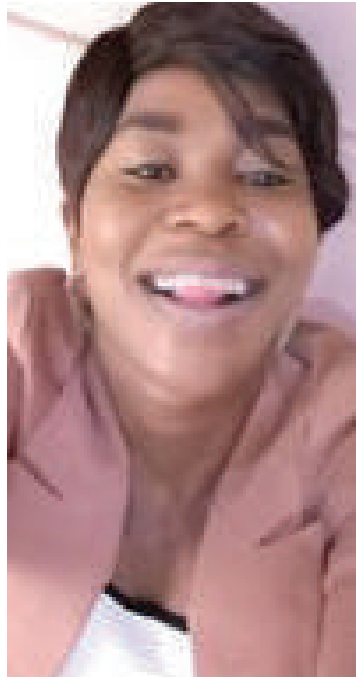
Umoette said the committee comprises representatives of the State Ministry of Education, Divisional Police OFFICER (DPO) "C" Division Uyo, Chairman, Parents /Teachers' Association (PTA), Association of Old Girls Association of the college and leaders of the host community.

He said all the allegations were out of misunderstanding and lack of communication between teachers and the school management, stressing that the matter has been resolved.

Umoette claimed that all the allegations were false and misleading as the Federal Government has established standard procedures guiding administration and operations of all Unity Colleges nationwide.

"Admission into Federal Government Colleges are done with strict adherence to the criteria and guidelines as directed by the Federal Ministry of Education and not the Principal as alleged by the Teachers.

"Fees are paid through re-



Dinah

mittal system and nobody can defraud such a system which is strictly monitored. There are no illegal levies charged in the college besides the ones recommended by the Federal Ministry

of Education."

He further disclosed that teachers did not know that the IDEAS project for the college was awaiting execution as the World Bank has a standard in the implementation of their projects which cannot allow any form of fraud all over the world.

He said the main cause of friction between teachers and them was payment of DTA which has been paid to about 90 per cent of staff members.

"The union insisted that the DTA must be paid at the new rate approved by Federal Government. They didn't know that even though the approval had been made, funds were not yet available. Management was waiting for funds to implement it.

"Meanwhile, the DTA has been paid at the old rate. Subsequent payments of the difference between the old and the new rate is subject to availability of funds."

He therefore urged the general public to disregard reports from local tabloids in Akwa Ibom

alleging frauds and other unfounded misdemeanors against the school management as peace has returned to the college.

Umoette said during the meeting of the SBMC, members passed a vote of confidence in the Director/Principal, Ms Dinah I. Gogo for all her efforts in attracting federal government presence to the school through a series of infrastructural development and staff capacity building.

He listed achievements of the principal to include academic excellence through the performance of pupils in WAEC, NECO and NABTEB examinations, upgrading of hostel facilities, World Bank project for the school and winning of prizes and laurels.

Umoette observed that the principal's intolerance to indiscipline from both staffers and students such as lateness, truancy, irregular attendance in classes and other vices brought squabbles.

He appealed to parents and pupils to maintain discipline in all ramifications being the necessary ingredient for learning.

# Parents finger friends, peers as barber dies after Abuja trip

By ISAAC JOB, Uyo

The family of Mr. and Mrs. Anietie Okokon Obot is in dilemma over the mysterious death of their son, Ofonime, who was the breadwinner but suddenly died on Friday June 8, 2022 without any serious sickness.

The Trumpet gathered that on the fateful day, Ofonime, a promising young barber aged 25, had returned from work late in the evening complaining of chest pains and vomited blood the previous day.

It gathered that before the deceased finally gave up the ghost at around 12:15pm the following day, he fell on the laps of his elder sister while his tongue and mouth turned black. Efforts to revive him by his parents failed.

Although no doctor was able to ascertain the actual cause of his death before he was buried on Saturday, July 16, 2022, family sources said he died allegedly from food poisoning right inside his father's rented house located at Atai- Idung street, Urua Ikpa, in Itu local government of Akwa Ibom State.

However, another family version of the story claimed that his death came after he visited one of his friends in Abuja. They claimed that he was no longer his usual self after his return from the journey, as his mood and behaviour completely changed.

According to the deceased's father: "July 8 was a sad day for the entire family. I was in the palace of a chief in another village over a land dispute case when I received a call from the house that my late son, Ofonime Okokon was vomiting blood

"I rushed back home and met my wife at the entrance to my

compound and she told me that she had the same call and both of us went into the house together. We met my late son lying in arms of his elder sister still vomiting blood. I saw the remaining meal he ate mainly two eggs and cooked indomie noodles, they prepared for him to eat before his health became worst, I even ate the remaining egg while the sister ate one full egg from the prepared meal.

"By this time he was lying on the arms of the sister, they have already sent for drugs from a nearby pharmacy store. But when she forced the mouth of the deceased to administer the drugs, we discovered that the tongue, teeth, gum and entire mouth had turned black indicating that he was poisoned.

"I called on his pet name I used to call him 'Ikpa' and he turned his face, put his two hands into my palm and breath his last that was around 12:15 pm on that day.

"But that morning when he wake up we greeted and food was prepared as he requested to eat egg and indomie noodles which he ate very little before we went out. He was not sick up to the point of death.

"Then I asked the chief that followed me what could be the cause of the black mouth and he said if someone hates you, he can poison you and before you die, your mouth can turn black.

"I think this boy, in one way or the other went into a wrong way to help the family from poverty. That is my personal thinking. Friends must have told him this is the way you can enter and get fast luck. He travelled to Abuja to meet his friend and returned on 11th May to Uyo."

Meanwhile, the deceased's younger sister, Ruth Okokon, aged 22, told The Trumpet in Uyo that the death of her brother is not unconnected with the recent journey he made to Abuja, to see his friend.

Ruth who was constantly trying to hold back tears while narrating her story said before his late brother travelled to Abuja, he promised that he was coming back with money and that the family fortunes will change automatically for better.

She observed that the way and manner her late brother came from Abuja, was suspicious as he became a changed person from his usual self.

She played a video from her phone showing a scene of his deceased brother and his supposed friend and remarked: "The way my brother came from from Abuja, was not nice. He came back without some of his things. He looked worried and emaciated and was lost in thought; he changed completely.

"He stopped talking to everybody. He will just stay on his own all alone without talking to anyone and when we try to ask him what was wrong, he will not say anything and when we asked him he will get angry and leave the place."

Asked how she got the video, she replied that it was copied from the deceased's phone.

The deceased mother, Mrs. Comfort Obot, who was psychologically broken when The Trumpet visited the family said the death of her son had shattered peace in the family.

"He was everything to me. The most painful thing is that there was no premonition of his death. There was a revelation from the church, that we should

pray for the family which we have been doing but like a thief in the night death came. My son never said any last word before he died," she said sobbing.

One of the deceased's apprentices identified as Elijah said all the workers were surprised by the unusual behaviours of their master after his return from Abuja, adding everything about him changed.

"Before he travelled to Abuja, he was talking to us and we used to crack jokes together, we sometimes eat together in the shop. But since he came from Abuja he became a different person entirely.

"One thing we noticed again with him was that he was always on long phone calls during work hours and whenever he started receiving such calls he would not want anybody around him again," Elijah disclosed.

However, a community source who pleaded anonymity said that his death may not be unconnected with the 'unholy association' the boy must have allegedly entered.

According to the source there was a "candlelight procession of young guys numbering about 200 who stormed the venue of his wake ostensibly to pay their last respects to their friend.

But the deceased's father had vowed that anyone directly or indirectly responsible will not go unpunished.

Cursing the perceived killers of his son, Mr. Obot said that they have only succeeded in shattering the peace of the almost 40-years old union. He affirmed that the God of Justice shall certainly avenge his death.

"I used to call him Mbakara (meaning a white man) and I called him that name that morn-

ing before i went out and he assured me that nothing was wrong with him. The God that we served will certainly punished any one who has done this to me," he sobbed.

The challenge before the family now is how to bear the irreparable loss of their breadwinner, whose death they said will continue to impact negatively on their fortunes.

According to the deceased's father, Ofonime was God-sent to the family. He emphasized that his son's death will remain a blow to the family for a long time.

He said: "Whenever he comes back from the barbing shop, he always buy some foods for the family. Even, if we are asleep, he will wake us up and we will rush the food. A night before he died, he bought food for us in the house and all of us ate together. His death is a big blow to the entire family."

Elijah added: "He was a father to me and indeed to all of us under him because he sometimes buy food for us in the shop."

On how far the police had gone in investigation of the matter, Mr. Obot said: "I have not reported the incident to the police because we don't have money for the case, I trust you (journalists) more than the police. Police see white and call it black" he said adding that the family he was was born into don't go to police for anything.

Obot added: "I was working with the AKwa Ibom State Secondary School Board but my salary was stopped in 2009 for offence I didn't commit and since then I don't have confidence in the police. After that incident, i have been at home, growing water leave farm."



# A' Ibom PDP in search of peace over 2023 guber ticket

By ISAAC JOB, Uyo

**A**Kwa Ibom State chapter of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) is embroiled in various intricacies arising from the gubernatorial ticket given to Governor Udom Emmanuel's preferred candidate, Pastor Umo Bassey Eno, for 2023 general election.

Consequently, peace needed to drive the to victory in the state is an illusion as stakeholders, aggrieved aspirants and party faithfuls have decided means to stay afloat in the political system against the party interest.

In the past weeks, chieftains of the party have defected in droves to protest the choice of pastor Umo Eno as governor Emmanuel's preferred successor. The wind of defection is very unprecedented in the history of the state since 1999. The roll call include ward chairman at the grassroot, chapter officers in local government areas and some governorship aspirants who are lukewarm in party affairs.

Last week, the Peace and Reconciliation Committee headed by senator Effiong Bob invited some aggrieved party chieftains especially aspirants who were angry with the manner the party gubernatorial primary which brought pastor Umo Eno was conducted.

Though details of the parley was not made public, but sources disclosed that the meeting ended in fiasco as those who attended returned home with straight faces.

The party ticket given to pastor Umo Eno has generated dust in the state resulting in court action over credentials particularly the West African School Certificate of pastor Umo Eno now pending before the federal High Court in Uyo as well as Permanent Voters Card and Age declaration which his accusers believed were forged.

Our Correspondent gathered that trouble in AKwa Ibom PDP started when the leader of the party and state governor Udom Emmanuel began the search for his successor. First, Umo Eno was appointed Board Chairman of the state investment company and later became Commissioner for Lands before the lot fell on him to be the party candidate for next year's election.

This never augur well with party chieftains who had stake their necks against all odds to sustain PDP in the state.

Our investigation reveal that one of the party bigwigs who had vowed never to see Umo Eno become the governor of the state is senator Bassey Albert Akpan representing AKwa Ibom North East senatorial district. When the chips were down and it was dawn on him that governor Udom Emmanuel was determined to make Umo Eno his successor against the ambition of the Senator Albert, he dumped the party and settled for Young Progressive Party (YPP) where he had picked ticket to contest for governorship in 2023.



Gov. Udom Emmanuel



Pastor Umo Bassey Eno



Iyorchia Ayu, PDP Chairman

Addressing supporters during the reception ceremony organized by YPP party to receive senator Albert, he described himself as loyal and faithful party man whom colleagues nicknamed him as the last man standing for AKwa Ibom in the senate. Of course, they were right as it was only Senator Bassey Albert alone for PDP in the red Chambers after Senator Nelson Effiong and Senator Godswill Akpabio have defected to the APC on the floor of the National Assembly.

Albert said such steadfastness was supposed to be compensated and accused PDP of lacking reward system and backstabbing her supporters promising to throw out the party in the state through the ballot box come 2023.

However, the last straw that breaks the camel's back for the PDP is the party gubernatorial primary that almost throw it off balance. The primary conducted at Godswill Akpabio International Stadium turn out to be another albatross for the party.

Notable aspirants with the goodwill of the people who were in the race include Senator Bassey Albert, Hon Onofiok Luke and Mr James Iniama.

Others were pastor Umo Eno, Mr Akan Okon, Akanimo Udofia, Ide Owodiong Idemeko, Idorenyin Umoh and Ini Okpon.

In the present circumstance, what has the Reconciliation Committee done to bring lasting peace in the party ahead of 2023 general election? How the candidate conducted themselves during and after the party primary will help to facilitate in the peace process.

Be that as it may, it is pertinent to examine actions and inactions of the aspirants to guide the peace committee in bringing them back.

Beginning with the winner of the governorship ticket in the state - Umo Bassey Eno now enmeshed in a very embarrassing certificate forgery that drags integrity and status of PDP into the mud. Observers are saying that considering the avalanche of evidence now before the court, what happened to PDP governorship candidate in Delta state

who was recently disqualified for certificate forgery may be replicated in AKwa Ibom.

Therefore, to save the party from the shame of not having candidate in the forth coming election, concerned members have suggested substitution of Umo Eno with another candidate who participated in the primary of 25th May, 2023.

Speaking in the same vein, the former chapter chairman of PDP in OrukAnam local government area Mr Sabbath Eda explained that the best option for the party is substitution to meet up with INEC deadline before commencement of campaign nationwide.

His words "We don't know how the case of forgery involving our governorship candidate will end in court. The best thing to do now is to plan for his replacement. Our party can not be shut out from the ballot because of interest of one man" he said.

Meanwhile, if the idea of substitution of candidate to the Electoral Umpire scales through, who among the aspirants would be favoured to fly the party's flag in 2023? Some residents in the state have said that the candidate should be selected from Umo Eno's local government area or the PDP should use the opportunity to address agitation from Itu/Ibiono Ibom Federal Constituency who were clamouring for governorship slot within Uyo senatorial district.

Again, the only aspirant from Umo Eno local government area who was supposed to be considered is the former speaker of the State House of Assembly and now member representing Etinan, Nsit Ubium and Nsit Ibom in the federal House of Representatives Hon Onofiok Luke.

Unfortunately, few days to 25th May, 2023 when the PDP governorship primary was conducted, Luke sent a letter of withdrawal from the race to the state Chairman of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) announcing his withdrawal from the gubernatorial race. The announcement was made at the venue of the primary before the media and party supporters.

But despite the withdrawal, Luke got two votes from a die hard delegates and was

announced at the venue of the election.

No wonder, he is still supporting Umo Eno inspite of the bad forgery case before the court.

Recently, Luke claimed he stepped down for pastor Umo Eno in attempt to collapse support base the party candidate during peace meeting in the palace of Oku Ibom Ibibio and Paramount Ruler of Nsit Ibom local government Ntennyin Solomon Etuk where both Umo Eno and Luke hail from.

Speaking at the Palace of the Oku Ibom Ibibio and President General of the Akwa Ibom State Traditional Rulers Council, shortly after Barr Luke collapsed his campaign structure and support base to him, Pastor Eno promised to integrate all his supporters and work together with him in the overall interest of the state.

He said the reconciliation meeting was symbolic because it was instituted by his fathers and as a child from a humble home, he (Luke) couldn't disobey the monarchs.

"It would have been very difficult for me to be convinced if this meeting had been at the instance of any other set of people.

"I never haboured any intention to betray my party PDP because everything I have achieved, has been made possible by the PDP," Barr Luke stated.

The Monarch, who presided over the reconciliation parley in the presence of other paramount rulers said as a father he could not stay alive to watch his children stay at opposite directions.

He advised the winner of the PDP primaries, Pastor Umo Eno to carry his brother and others along, as more hands make the job a lot easier.

"It is like a farm, with more hands, the weeding is easier."

Our Correspondent gathered that Pastor Umo Eno was accompanied to meeting by eminent personalities such as his running mate, Senator Akon Eyakenyi, Secretary of Maintain Peace Movement campaign team Prince Enobong Uwah, House of Assembly Member, Otobong Bob, former PDP Chairman

and House of Representatives Candidate, Obong Paul Ekpo as well as Royal Fathers in the state among others.

Notwithstanding the peace process, clux of the matter is the legal atmosphere surrounding the PDP gubernatorial ticket in the state.

A legal luminary and Executive Director of Compart Foundation For Justice and Peace Building Saviour Akpan Esq confirmed the position of law on PDP gubernatorial debacle in the state.

His words: "Onofiok Akpan Luke, Aniekan Akan Etim, Sen. Bassey Albert Akpan [assuming he did not leave PDP] cannot benefit from any action/decision of PDP to substitute Umo Eno.

"They had written to withdraw from the Gubernatorial primaries. They did not participate. They termed the primaries as illegal. Only Aspirants/persons who bought the nomination/expression of interest forms are qualified. No stranger- Udom Inoyo, Dr. Essien, etc can come close to the substitution option. That is the position of the law" he stated.

Many have suggested that the only aspirant that PDP can substitute is Mr James Iniama who had maintained a peaceful disposition and conducted himself well as a genuine party man throughout the primaries.

What is left for the PDP reconciliation Committee to do in the prevailing circumstance is to ask pastor Umo Eno to officially withdraw his ambition as he has found himself in a tight corner.

This action will be supported by the new Electoral Act which had stated the obvious in such situation.

Section 33 of the Electoral Act states: "A political party shall not be allowed to change or substitute its candidate whose name has been submitted to under section 29 of this Act except in the case of death or withdrawal by candidate

"Provided that in the in the case of such withdrawal or death of a candidate, the political party affected shall, within 14 days of the of the occurrence of the event, hold a fresh primary election to produce and submit fresh candidate to the commission for the election."

By this provision of the new Electoral Act, the PDP in AKwa Ibom can arrange a fresh primary within the time frame stipulated by law to produce another flagbearer for 2023 governorship election.

The reconciliation Committee must ensure that only those who bought the form and are still members of the party participate in the fresh primary election.

The legal expert listed aspirants qualified for the fresh contest which PDP must arranged within the stipulated time by the law.

He mentioned the aspirants as Ini Okpon, Ide Owodiong, Idorenyin Umoh and Hon James Iniama as the new brides to be adorned by the party for peace to return for 2023 general election in the state.



## Tackle graft, delay in litigation, Okutepa urges NBA President-elect

BY PAUL MICHAEL, ABUJA

President-elect of the Nigeria Bar Association (NBA), Yakubu Chonoko Maikyau, SAN, has been urged to tackle issues of corruption, bribery, and delay that usually bedevil the litigation aspect of the Nigerian law practice, especially at various Court registry.

A Senior Advocate of Nigeria, J.S. Okutepa, who gave the charge in a statement at the weekend noted with dismay the endemic corruption that bedeviled the court registry, the first collapse of Justice in the country.

He expressed dissatisfaction with the unprofessional of most Court bailiff-official process servers, as well as the difficulty and frustration at most registries in serving court documents from companies, working in connivance with some legal practitioners, using untraceable addresses and directors as hurdles in serving court processes.

He said, "Whether you are young, or old, SAN or not, we all face these militating and excruciating experiences in practice. When you file processes, you go through hell to have them served. The process servers in most court registries, otherwise called bailiffs, are in most cases something else.

"Justice starts getting murdered from this stage. The frustrations you face when they act in collaboration with some lawyers on the other side are in most cases nightmares. Yet, without service, no proceedings can take off.

"It is worse when you are to serve companies that have no traceable addresses but have registered addresses on record; no traceable directors but have directors' names in CAC record."

The learned silk further decried the frustrating antics of trials in the hands of lawyers whose only brief may just be to frustrate the hearing of matter



J.S. Okutepa

while accusing some legal practitioners of deliberately employing these tactics when expedient.

"If and when you manage to get judgments, you may discover that there is no justice in the judgments. You then want to go on appeal. Here you are face to face with another hurdle.

"Certified true copies of some judgments are not ready to be collected for months after delivery. Some judges in Nigeria now have the habit of claiming



Ifeanyi Okowa

to be correcting judgments after they have been delivered.

"Whether these practices that have acquired notorious status across Nigeria are constitutional and legal are yet to be tested.

"The Nigerian Constitution says we are entitled to a copy of a judgment within 7 days of its delivery. In some cases, you don't get copies of these judgments/rulings for months.

"Yet, inability to obtain or get copies

of judgments on time has been held not to be a good ground for extension of time," he added.

Okutepa urged the incoming NBA under the watch of Yakubu Chonoko Maikyau SAN to come to the aid of core litigation lawyers.

He stressed that lawyers must be seen as doing right, as well as "clearly defined boundaries for the judex, the registries and legal practitioners" in order to bypass the collective difficulty experienced by all.

## Pantami inaugurates committee to probe IPPIS, TSA, other FG payment systems

BY PAUL MICHAEL, ABUJA

Minister of Communications and Digital Economy, Isa Pantami, at the weekend inaugurated a Presidential Steering Committee for the technical review of the Integrated Payroll and Personal Information System (IPPIS), the Treasury Single Account (TSA) and Government Integrated Financial Management System (GIFMIS) over irregularities.

He is the chairman of the committee which also comprises the Minister of Finance, Budget and National Planning; Managing Director, Galaxy Backbone; and

Chairman, Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC).

Others are Office of the Head of Civil Service of the Federation; Office of the Auditor-General of the Federation as well as National Salaries, Wages and Income Commission.

The rest are the Director General, Bureau of Public Service and Reforms (BPSR) and Director General, National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA), who serves as the Secretary of the committee.

The committee is expected to 'cleans' the systems from the manipulation of some

corrupt officials.

Pantami during the inauguration said that the committee would be supervised by the ministry and the relevant government institutions.

The minister disclosed that the systems have technical challenges which needed to be corrected.

According to him, the committee has mandated to proffer solutions to the possible leakages inherent in the systems that were exploited by people to divert public funds.

"The committee is to advise the president on how to improve the systems particularly, if there are leakages that are being exploited by evil people," Pantami stated.

The efficacy of some of the government's payment systems, especially the IPPIS, has been put under spotlight following the uncovering of over N100 billion fraud by ousted Accountant General of the Federation, Ahmed Idris and the refusal of public lecturers to be enrolled on the salary payment platform.

As part of its argument in favour of the over five months of strike, ASUU has maintained that IPPIS was defective, prone to fraud and unworkable for a peculiar remuneration regime for university lecturers.

Pantami explained that at the time IPPIS (2006), GIFMIS (2012), and TSA (2015) were deployed, the provision of NITDA Act 2006 under section A of setting the

standardisation of ICT deployment in federal public institutions was not followed.

He said as a result of this, "these three systems were not subjected to government certification and IT project clearance as encouraged by law and many other government policies.

"However, in spite of that, many achievements had been recorded by their deployment.

"For example, based on the report from the relevant institutions of government, the IPPIS saved the government over N120 billion, while TSA saved over N10 trillion for government."

According to the Minister, these records showed that government had recorded some gains, particularly in the recent allegations on the system by people who siphoned money.

"It is because of this that we must identify where the challenges are, if any and see how these systems can be enhanced technically.

"So that we will be able to consolidate the gains achieved so far and also improve on them to achieve many more successes," he added.

The minister warned that any institution that fails to give access would be reported to President Muhammadu Buhari.

"A punishment is going to be recommended to the President for implementation," he said.



Isa Pantami



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| 7 x 3          | 166,172.00 | 179,229.37               | 6.5 x 3   | 110,459.64     | 118,744.11 | 6.5 x 3                  | 89,455.78      | 96,164.94     | 8 x 2                           | 60,591.76      | 65,136.14   |                          |
| 7 x 4          | 197,125.00 | 211,909.37               | 7 x 2   | 79,304.29      | 85,252.11  | 7 x 2                    | 64,224.63      | 69,041.48     | 9 x 2                           | 80,454.83      | 86,488.95   |                          |
| 8 x 2          | 99,768.24  | 107,250.85               | 7 x 3   | 128,456.43     | 138,090.67 | 7 x 3                    | 96,336.94      | 103,562.21    | 10 x 2                          | 86,147.92      | 92,609.02   |                          |
| 9 x 2          | 112,183.69 | 120,597.47               | 7 x 4   | 158,608.73     | 170,504.38 | 7 x 4                    | 145,965.10     | 156,912.48    | 14.5 x 2                        | 124,915.92     | 134,284.61  |                          |
| 9 x 3          | 168,358.90 | 180,985.39               | 7 x 5   | 198,260.25     | 213,129.77 | 7 x 5                    | 182,500.19     | 196,187.71    | 5 x 3                           | 56,804.77      | 61,065.13   |                          |
| 10 x 3         | 187,065.45 | 201,095.35               | 8 x 2   | 90,633.42      | 97,430.92  | 8 x 2                    | 73,399.58      | 78,904.54     | 6 x 3                           | 68,170.86      | 73,283.67   |                          |
| 14.5 x 2       | 260,395.00 | 279,924.62               | 8 x 3   | 135,950.22     | 146,146.48 | 8 x 3                    | 125,871.78     | 134,674.05    | 7 x 3                           | 79,526.68      | 85,491.18   |                          |
| 8 x 4          | 199,536.48 | 214,501.71               | 8 x 4   | 181,266.93     | 194,841.95 | 8 x 4                    | 167,043.40     | 179,022.80    | 8 x 3                           | 103,375.58     | 111,130.80  |                          |
| 9 x 4          | 224,478.54 | 241,314.43               | 8 x 5   | 226,238.74     | 254,477.52 | 8 x 5                    | 208,805.79     | 224,469.23    | 6 x 4                           | 100,634.10     | 110,944.41  |                          |
| 10 x 4         | 299,302.72 | 321,752.57               | 8 x 6   | 271,900.48     | 292,008.02 | 8 x 6                    | 250,284.32     | 26,911.09     | 7 x 4                           | 120,404.56     | 129,434.90  |                          |
| 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 |                          |
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# Federal Government Colleges in FCT shut

**T**errorists and bandits in Nigeria have stepped up their nefarious game by threatening to and actually invading major cities in Nigeria, especially the Federal Capital Territory Abuja. They have also threatened to abduct President Muhammadu Buhari and the governor of Kaduna State Mallam Nasri El-Rufai. In response to the invasion threat of the Federal Capital Territory Abuja, the feeble federal government closed down all Federal Government Colleges in the city and instructed parents to pick up their wards immediately. Following the government's instruction, private school owners also closed their schools and institutions. By reacting this way, the Federal Government is inadvertently admitting its failure to secure the lives of the people and guarantee their safety

The terrorists in Nigeria have become daring, remorseless, unrelenting, and brazenly audacious. They now operate with implacable fury as though the length and breadth of the country belong to them. Unchallenged, they function with growing impudence and inexplicable confidence as wild animals running rampage in the jungle with sinister motives. They command simultaneous identity as either bandits or terrorists whose abode is the forest. But gradually bored and tired of the forest, they have decided to relocate to civilized habitation, sacking humans in various categories. As terrorists or bandits, these scoundrels are having a field day in Nigeria. They kill and maim easily, leaving sorrow, anguish, and pain.

Nigerians live in febrile anxiety following the unfortunate growth of terrorism all around the country. As the people groan daily, the activities of these monsters also grow daily. It appears that the groaning across the country remotely fuels their despicable growth. Unfortunately, the federal government seems helpless in the face of the terrorist onslaught. Everywhere is unsafe, the streets, forests, inner roads, markets, schools, hospitals, and even government administrative buildings; nowhere is spared of terrorist invasion. Therefore, the country

bleeds from all pores as insecurity surges with unrelenting vigour.

The above scenario adequately captures the situation in Nigeria. Terrorists and bandits are gradually taking over the reins of power in the country. They are rich through an enormous amount of money collected as ransom after each kidnapping operation. Schools are always their target. When they strike, they do not encounter any form of resistance from the many security agencies in the country. Having assured Nigerians that insecurity would become history across the country if he was elected President, Muhammadu Buhari has failed abysmally to achieve one of the cardinal objectives for which Nigerians voted him to power.

It is sad and at once disconcerting. Instead of

insecurity decreasing under his administration, the situation gets worse by the day. A viral video where some soldiers admitted that they were asked by their superior officers not to attack or fight bandits and terrorists is trending at the moment. It leaves much to be desired for those committed to seeing Nigeria flourish. Yet, every day the government and army authorities regale Nigerians with tales of how they are fighting insecurity in the country.

The government's reaction to the terrorists' threat has far-reaching implications on the polity and the psyche of Nigerians. Firstly, it shows the government's helplessness and inability to combat terrorism and maintain a peaceful environment for the people. Secondly, it gives the terrorists more confidence to know that the government recognizes their existence. Thirdly, it creates unease within the rank and file of the Nigerian Army.

As a fall-out of the terrorists' threat to invade Abuja and following the closure of many private and government institutions, members of the National Assembly are reported to have vacated their official quarters, moving around in less flamboyant vehicles to hide their identity. It is a shame.

President Buhari has his job cut out for him. His shameful legacy as the man in charge when Nigeria witnessed the worst threat of insecurity in its democratic history is assured if he does not react effectively to check the growing cases of terrorism in the country. It is bad enough that the economy is in shambles and there are uncertainties around every facet of Nigeria. The president, in his capacity as the Commander-In-Chief of the Armed Forces Federal Republic of Nigeria, must react and protect the country. Ordinarily, Abuja as the Federal Capital Territory, the seat of power, should be the most fortified and protected of all the cities in Nigeria. If the threat of terrorists' invasion can force the government to close major institutions, then other states in Nigeria should be seriously alarmed. The Nigerian Army must wake up. President Muhammadu Buhari must wake up and rally his troops to action.



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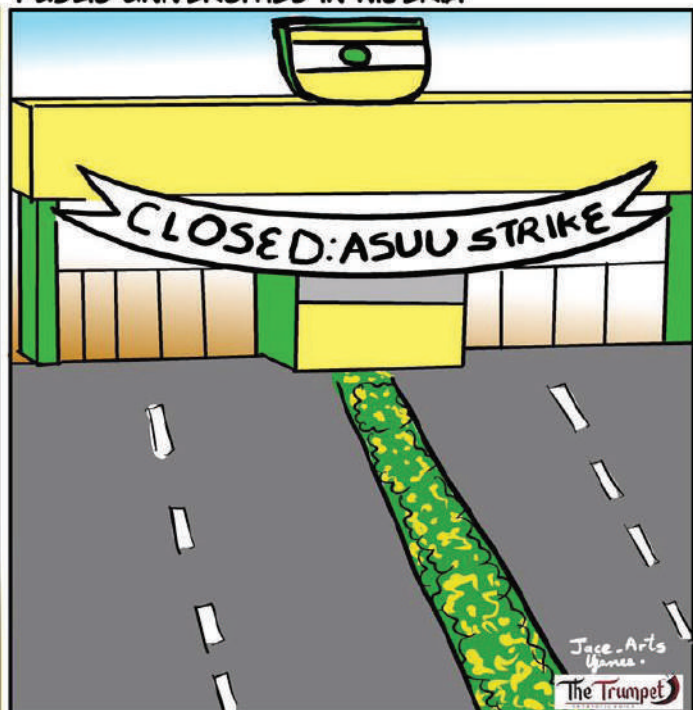
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POLITICIANS AND THEIR KIDS IN FOREIGN UNIVERSITIES



PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN NIGERIA





## Conversation Nigeriana

**Orezi:** The come has come to become the come in the land of a no-coming government, a government where the President never comes through when trouble come to the land!

**Ahmadu:** What do you mean my sweet sister? Is somebody missing in Action?

**Bolaji:** You mean its something like Waiting for Godot?

**Emeka:** Alhaji, this one that you are calling Orezi sweet sister this morning, I hope you do not have plans for ze ozer room!

**Orezi:** Do you mind, Emeka!

**Emeka:** Is love in the air? Who is the Romeo?

**Orezi:** Do you mind! There is no Juliet here. I don't believe in dying for love in a foolish way and in a foolish country. All I am saying is that the come has become the come before our very eyes and we can only gnash our teeth in infant gums!

**Bolaji:** Hmmm! You are speaking in parables like an old woman!

**Ahmadu:** Me o! I am entitled to four, live, breeding hajiyas! When the time to come and become the come I shall become!

**Orezi:** Alhaji, do you mind?

**Emeka:** She has caught a wealthy politician boyfriend!

**Orezi:** I'm in a serious mood young man; the current situation does not encourage romance. New boyfriend? That's not a concern now. The come has become the come in the polity. Ordinary bandits have threatened to kidnap our president, a retired Army General and a state governor!

**Emeka:** Anybody can issue a threat na; it means nothing. It

doesn't matter.

**Ahmadu:** But it's not the first time. Bandits almost killed Governor Ortom a year or two ago when they opened fire on his convoy!

**Orezi:** You are right! They openly challenged him after he banned open grazing in his State. Little wonder Ortom has set up his own army in Benue State. A man must be a man!

**Emeka:** Was Governor Zulum not targeted in the past? In fact, he has escaped assassination twice in the hands of non-state actors. So, anyone can threaten...

**Bolaji:** That's not true; just threaten the president now especially as your name is Emeka whether Tucano jets will not be sent to decimate your hometown and desecrate the graves of your ancestors!

**Orezi:** You are correct. The Nigeria Army was sent to attack IPOB after it was declared an illegal organization. They did Operation Crocodile Dance to kill unarmed men and women in the southeast! Now that the real threat from the real terrorists our soldiers are caught napping!

**Emeka:** There is a special mindset in this government, indeed in the country that supports anything anti-Igbo! For example, see the vicious campaign against Peter Obi by the agents of the major political gladiators. Ethnic profiling has become second nature in our land!

**Ahmadu:** True, ethnic profiling has resulted in the hang-the-Fulani sentiment in the land. All bandits are supposedly Fulani. Yet the Fulani himself is under siege!

**Orezi:** Alhaji, please don't go that route. Don't go there. The Fulani

merchants of death need to be called out. There is an official lack of will to do right by the Nigerian people! But you can see that it has backfired against the Nigerian government. Nigeria is almost a failed state. Do you sincerely believe that our Army is incapable of dealing with the terrorists if given the orders?

**Bolaji:** Who is in charge of Nigeria?

**Orezi:** God is in charge!

**Bolaji:** Which God? The God I know has given up on us on account of our foolishness! How do you account for the fall of the naira?

**Emeka:** Why won't the naira crash when the Finance Minister and governor of the CBN are deeply enmeshed in politics? Should Emeziele not have been fired after the fiasco of the APC convention? Or should he not have resigned?

**Ahmadu:** Nobody resigns in Nigeria! The President should have resigned in his first term when the effects of his ailment became glaring. The economy has become sick like the Number One Citizen!

**Orezi:** The country is sick too.

**Ahmadu:** Even the north is fed up with Bubu. Apart from Arewa Consultative Forum asking him to resign, did you read the story of the young man in Kano who climbed on to a high wall and threatened that he would remain up there until the president resigned? Things are happening even among the ordinary people!

**Bolaji:** Let us start thinking of options to save the country. I see Peter Obi as an option. In fact, he is the only option right now. The old, grizzled politicians cannot save

themselves let alone save Nigeria!

**Ahmadu:** The Peter Obi/Ahmed Datti pair should be given a chance.

**Orezi:** Give them a chance? They should fight for power. Right now, they are a social media powerhouse. The reality on the ground is different.

**Bolaji:** It is romantic to think Peter Obi can win the presidential elections in the current atmosphere in the country. Much as I believe that we need a third force I have my doubts about Peter Obi winning the elections. Does he have the reach-out capacity? Are his followers ready to vote? Are they not social media persons? Can he secure enough votes in the core north? Can he deliver on the southeast by 70 percent? How can he govern the country even if he wins? There are no polling centres on social media!

**Ahmadu:** There you are wrong. Dead wrong! The Peter Obi Movement has caught the imagination of Nigerians. Did you see the million-man march in Nasarawa State? It will soon be replicated in Sokoto and Kano. We in the north are fed up with the mainstream politicians. We suffer the most.



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Buhari is from the north and he has been president for seven years; what do we have to show for it? We are worse off. Jonathan showed more compassion. He showed care. He opened Alimajiri schools. What has this man done/ appointed his cronies to positions of influence and so people are angry with the north. Which north? The ruling class, my brother, the ruling class. What can Atiku do differently? Can Tinubu change anything? Are they not part of the rot in the system?

**Orezi:** This is a full declaration!  
**Emeka:** Yes o! The Ahmadu Declaration.

**Bolaji:** The truth is that no one is certain who the victor will be. The climate is hazy. Things could happen before February 2023 that could change the entire landscape. So, let us be hopeful.

**Ahmadu:** True; we are not certain who the victor will be. But we are certain about who will best do the job: its an outsider who is ready to do things differently.

**Orezi:** Is there any outsider among the three?

**Ahmadu:** That na JAMB question!

## Abdullahi Adamu on issues forty-five years ago

By  
Eric  
TENIOLA



Long before he was elected governor of Nasarawa state in 1999, long before he became National Chairman of APC, Alhaji Adamu Abdullahi, the Sarkin Yakin Keffi, represented Keffi, when it was part of Nasarawa at the Constituent Assembly in 1977. He was thirty years old (30) then.

On November 1, 1977, he addressed the Constituent Assembly. He declared on that day "Before I make my observation on the principles of the Draft Constitution, I would like to crave the indulgence of the Chair to enlighten me on the issue of ratification. I want to get the position clear in relation to the Head of States' pronouncements during the opening ceremony. I want to know at what stage we would decide or get to know exactly where the final authority for ratification of the Constitution lies.

Still before I make my observations on the Draft, I would like to know also whether the Head of State's speech during the inauguration ceremony would be debated or not.

I have some more observa-

tions to make. I would like to comment on the observations made by the Chairman of the Constitution Drafting Committee (Chief Rotimi Williams) when he was introducing the Bill. I want to emphasise the need to follow members to inculcate the spirit of oneness bearing in mind the diversities of our societies. I would like to mention here that it would appear that as a result of the military intervention in the political life of this country over a decade now, a lot of our citizens seem to have forgotten the basic concept of federalism. We have to find avenues as much as we can, and we must try by all means to accommodate the diversities that are obvious in the plurality of our nation.

I would like also to comment on the Presidency as presently provided. I would like to observe that the Presidency as being advocated, new as it is, should not provide avenues for fear simply because it is a new venture in our political process. I do believe that in view of the diversities that have been inherent in our system, and

in view of the fact of our previous experiences before the advent of the military in our politics, we need some unifying grounds, or some unifying authority and I see this type of unifying factor in the office of the Presidency as is presently advocated in the Draft.

We all know that our experiences over the Parliamentary system which we have experimented upon in the past, a lot of energy had been dissipated in unnecessary rancor as a result of which certain fundamental issues had been deliberately ignored for selfish reasons and because of the destructive nature in accommodating one another's feelings with regard to national issues.

When we get to the Committee Stage, I would want fellow Members to make a critical analysis of the electoral requirements for the Presidency as at present provided for in the Draft, that is, the area that stipulates what percentage of votes a prospective presidential candidate has to obtain from a given percentage again of the State that make up the Federation. I hope we will give some thinking to the provisions as is contained in the Draft of the moment.

I would like to make a comment or two on the Sharia even though previous speakers have made comments on it. I want the idea to be enshrined in the Assembly that the question of Sharia is fundamental to the existence of a citizen of this country who opts to have faith in Islam, and if we want to provide for the right of individual to pursue a faith

of his choice, we have to create avenues for the atmosphere under which he would observe the basic injunctions of his religion. Here, I would like to observe that the debate or the observation which people have made or have been making in the papers and some of the utterances one has heard this morning with regard to Sharia are, to my mind, not only emotional but very unrealistic. We are living in a country where it is a reality that in Nigeria today we have at least barest minimum of forty percent of the entire population in the teachings of Islam. This being the case and these people having accepted the principles enshrined in the Islamic faith are binded by certain very strict requirements that would have to regulate their day to day lives. If this be the case, there should not be the question of your giving somebody a right to choose a religion and on the other side of the scale only to go back and remove his right to exercise that fundamental provision that you have in the Constitution.

I would like also sound a note of warning here on the comments in the papers and some of the views from one or two colleagues in the Assembly this morning. These comments seem to border on threat. If you do this, it would be this or that. The thing is, short of saying do not follow a particular faith in terms of religious obligation, you cannot stand between anybody and what he believes in.

Also, I would like to touch on the question of the creation of more states. The Draft at the moment touches on the fact that Nigeria is

composed of so many states, and in some other sections there seems to be a tautology on the procedure for creating new States where there is need for such creation. In as much as I cannot oppose the opinion of anybody, having realized the fundamental rights of any section in this country to determine its own political association, I would like to sound a note of caution that we should not be led by some super logics into being sentimental again on the question of States. We have to face it very realistically. We have to face it, bearing in mind the interest and aspirations of the particular group who want a State to be created for them. Their case should be taken into consideration.

I would also want to touch on the question of traditional institutions in this country. I do believe and very honestly, too, that for some time now we have been deceiving ourselves in this country. We, as a people, have certain norms of life that we cherish. This being the case it is absolutely unbecoming, Mr Chairman, for us to do away with them completely and neglect our traditional institutions which are the basis of our plurality as a people—the institutions on which this country has relied over the past centuries, institutions that have stood the test of time, institutions that we can go to at critical moments of need. Maybe we tend now to relegate these institutions to a position of neglect. I feel we should distinguish between failures of institutions and the failures of functionaries of institutions.

To be continued next edition



# Ebonyi founding fathers split over Umahi's successor

By CHARLES ONYEKWERE, ABAKALIKI

Barely six months to another governorship election in Ebonyi State, the political turf is being heated as intrigues over who succeeds the incumbent governor, Engr. David Nweze Umahi, heightened.

There is a cold war among the founding fathers of the state as Governor Umahi is allegedly 'foisting' the governorship candidate of the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) Rt. Hon. Francis Ogbonnaya Nwifuru on the elder statesmen.

The attempt, The Trumpet learnt is allegedly being perfected by the governor, under zoning arrangement or charter of equity, which some of the elders had reportedly said does not exist in Ebonyi State.

A credible source further told The Trumpet that the governor's plan was to use the founding fathers to resurrect and proclaim that there's written charter of equity that had long existed in the state since creation, and therefore, it is the turn of the Northern Senatorial zone of the state to produce a governor in 2023.

Recall that Governor Umahi had during a recent courtesy call on him by the founding fathers at the new Government House, Abakaliki urged them to preach and insist that equity prevails in Ebonyi State governorship election in 2023.

He had consequently asked them to set up a committee to see to its actualization, as according to him, it will bring peace and unity.

The source further hinted that the fears of Governor Umahi that the APC gubernatorial candidate, Nwifuru, may not get the nod of the elders ahead the 2023 elections heightened after Nwifuru met with the founding fathers last week during which they remained adamant to his obvious overtures to be endorsed by them.

One of the founding fathers who did not want his name mentioned told The Trumpet that during the meeting, Nwifuru went into a lengthy narrative on zoning and why his



David Umahi

Izzi people had been accommodative of the rest of the other parts of the State and visitors being where the State capital is located.

According to the source, the APC guber candidate extensively argued and pleaded for the support of the founding fathers but apart from countering some of his narratives on historical grounds, they refused to succumb to his plea for them to endorse him.

"At this stage of our lives, ours remain to maintain peace, unity and ensure the progress of the State among everyone and not to take sides, because they are all our children. We are like the Referees and therefore shouldn't take side with anybody", the source told our reporter.

Unsatisfied with the feedback he got from the founding fathers after the Speaker's visit, another source within them authoritatively disclosed that recently, they received another

invitation via text messages from their Secretary that a meeting had been summoned yesterday, Thursday August 11, 2022.

The agenda for the proposed meeting, according to the source, simply read; "Communique".

"When I got across to the Secretary to enquire more, I realized he was actually instructed by the Chairman to send out the invitation. But the natural concern for many of us was the agenda which caused some of us to enquire deeper.

"We were told it was about our last discussion with the Governor on the need for us to ensure that equity prevails. But because some of us share a different opinion that as elders, we cannot begin to take certain actions that is tainted with divisiveness at this stage of our lives, the Chairman saw the need to postpone the meeting indefinitely so we can meet and take a stand that will be in the best interest of all of us and the group", the source further hinted The Trumpet.

The elder statesman, however, expressed surprise that while they had thought that another date would be collectively agreed upon by the elders, they were shocked to receive another text message re-summoning another meeting by 11:00 a.m today being Friday, August 12.

"Again, I picked up my phone as usual and phoned the Chairman if the invitation was his directive and he said he's not aware of it. Well, my findings proved that it was His Excellency (the Governor) who asked the Secretary to summon the meeting and get us to concur with a communique that has already been prepared.

"For some of us, we have decided to stay away from that meeting because that's not the mode and pattern of convening our meetings. Those planning to meet tomorrow (today) has a hidden motive and agenda and we can never be a part of such", the founding father reiterated.

The said Communique from the 'faction' now

loyal to the governor and his choice candidate, Nwifuru, led by a former Governor of the State which was sighted by our Reporter after listing the historical pasts of how Governorship had rotated peacefully among the three Senatorial zones of the State; from North to Central and then to the South, stated clearly that as elders they were deeply interested in the Governorship position returning back to the north under the principle of "Charter of Equity".

"Anything or anyone seeking to govern the State from any other zone can lead to crises and disunity which the State can ill-afford at this time in it's history", the communique which was yet to be officially endorsed by the Chairman and Secretary as the group's tradition demands reads in part.

However, The Trumpet also sighted another Communique prepared by the other 'faction' where the Chairman of the group and some others particularly from Ebonyi South Senatorial zone which countered the claims contained in the document prepared by the 'faction' loyal to the Governor.

Though, it is also yet to be officially endorsed, paraphrased, it reads in part, "... The Governorship position has always been contested among candidates from the three Senatorial zones... It was Dr. Ogbonnaya Onu from the South who contested against Dr. Sam Egwu from the north in 1999 and the founding fathers had no role to play in it. In 2007, Dr. Onu contested again against Chief Martin Elechi from the Central. In 2015 when Umahi vied from the South, Dr. Edward Nkwegu from the North against him. In all of this, the founding fathers did not and has never endorsed any candidate in the past.

"Therefore, the founding fathers cannot at this stage where candidates of various political parties have already emerged, delve into discussing the issue of zoning of the Governorship position to a particular zone. That is like shifting the goal post in mid way into a football match", the counter Communique reads.

The 'faction' of the founding fathers opposed to Governor Umahi rather advised that the best convenient time to discuss the matter should be in 2024 when there would be no serious political interests, and not now.

Another source said it is expected that should the founding fathers loyal to the governor proceed with their planned meeting today, the other faction comprising the Chairman and about five others may likely distance themselves from the outcome.

"We would also make our position known to Ebonyians in the coming days if they proceed further because we cannot allow some of our members drag all of us into the mud just for a morsel of meat", the elder statesman opined.

The Trumpet gathered that the founding fathers comprises former political office holders, public and private servants, who played prominent roles in the creation of the State. They include some former Governors, Deputy Governors, former National Assembly members, former political appointees, among others.

## Pat Utomi unveils Labour Party plans for Nigerians

### ● Urges youths to take back country

Renowned economist, Prof. Pat Utomi, has challenged Nigerian youths to embrace the challenge of taking back the country through the Labour Party in the 2023 general election.

Utomi unveiled the plans of LP for Nigerians ahead of campaign activities for next year's elections at the weekend in Lagos while speaking at a programme to commemorate the International Youth Day.

The professor of political economy disclosed that the Labour Party administration will revive the nation's economy through coordinated entrepreneurship programmed to be anchored around the youths.

He said the party hopes to set up entrepreneurial programmes as well as "listening clinics" across Nigeria to listen to citizens' problems and offer suggestions on how to solve them.

He said the All Progressives Congress (APC) and the People's Democratic Party (PDP) have failed in these areas, but that the LP hopes to make 2023 a people's government, in which people can be heard in the drive to build a new Nigeria.

"Entrepreneurship training programmes will be offered free to young people across Nigeria, from Jigawa to Jos and Jakande estates in Lagos, and capital support prepared in the associations that we have, with your 'soro soke' third force.

"In addition, we will talk about the listening clinics that we plan during the course of this month and going further from this month, these listening clinics will be opportunities for people across the country in different economic sectors and communities to express themselves about what their real problems are and tell us where the pain is, and suggest to us how they think the healing can come", he said.

He encouraged youths to rise up to environmental challenges, adding that the month of August is significant because Africa is observing its climate month and the world is celebrating youths.

"The scope of our announcement today will include programmes of the youth and the useful clean-up to take back their country in this Africa climate month," he said.

"As we all know, August is Africa's climate month. We also know that the real scourge that is throwing the world into a huge panic right now is the environment. And so, August has been set aside as climate change month for Africa to use to activate a response to the challenge of the environment. Interestingly enough, International Youth Day also happens to be in August.

"In this year that Africa is hosting COP27 in Sharm el Sheikh in Egypt, we want to urge the youths of our country, through a systematic programme that the #Obidient movement is developing, to begin to take over their country by taking over the environmental challenge.

"We want the youths to clean up and take back their country in this Africa climate month in which we mark the International Youth Day."

## Why I fought Jonathan, by Oshiomole

### ● Lauds ex-president

By TUNDE JOSHUA, ABUJA

A former National Chairman of All Progressives Congress (APC), Comrade Adams Oshiomhole, at the weekend disclosed that he fought former President Goodluck Jonathan because of political differences between the duo.

He however, acknowledged that the People's Democratic Party (PDP) administration of the

former president left unforgettable legacies in the country.

Oshiomole expressed his respect for the Otuoke, Bayelsa State-born Jonathan at the one year memorial lecture in honour of the late Captain Hosa Okunbo, in Benin City.

He eulogised the leadership qualities of the former president which he said are ingredients needed for good governance but

did not spared what he termed bad principles of the PDP as a party.

But, Oshiomole was quick to say that Nigerians hardly appreciate good leaders until they leave office.

He recalled Jonathan's launch of Almajiri school which was meant to mop up all children into education with special funds appropriated for it.



# Wike is biggest investor in PDP - Fintiri

● *Says he is capable of reconciling Atiku, Wike, assures of unity in PDP*

By TUNDE JOSHUA, ABUJA

Rivers State Governor Nyesom Wike has been described as the biggest investor in the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP).

His Adamawa State counterpart, Governor Ahmadu Fintiri said this at the weekend while addressing PDP members and his supporters at Yola International Airport.

He said this against the backdrop of his appointment to lead the former Vice President Atiku Abubakar's reconciliation team, as part of ongoing efforts at resolving the lingering feud between the latter and the Rivers State helmsman and the party's presidential candidate.

Assuring party members that Wike is not leaving the party but will back Atiku's presidential campaign, Fintiri said Wike has made substantial investment in the party to let it all go to waste if he refuses to back Atiku for the 2023 polls.

He said, "Who are his friends in the APC? Are you telling me those who are now romancing with Wike love him?"

"I can assure you that with God, the party will put its house in order before the 2023 elections.

"Even Wike knows he has been by far the biggest investor in the party. Can he now walk away from all of his investment?"

"We recognise he loves his people and I can assure you that he will have a fair deal if it comes to that, just to put the crisis behind us."

The governor who disclosed that he has been made the chairman of the reconciliation



Ahmadu Fintiri

committee set up by Atiku to resolve his feud with Governor Wike, said he is the right man for the assignment considering his relationship with both politicians. He said "I am an embodiment of both men".

He expressed confidence that he could reach a truce between former Vice President Atiku Abubakar and Governor Wike with the help of God.

He assured that the crisis rocking the party would be resolved amicably before the 2023 general elections.

He also disclosed that there were encouraging signs that the committee would succeed in brokering a peace deal, following his first meeting with Wike while acknowledging the enormity of the task at hand.

# 'Kogi State PDP approaching 2023 polls more united'

By TUNDE JOSHUA, ABUJA

In a display of unity, several groups drawn from across the eleven wards in Omala Local Government of Kogi at the weekend converged in Abejukolo under the aegis of 'Abu Ibro season two' with a pledge to work for the emergence of former Governor Abubakar Ibrahim Idris as consensus governorship candidate of the Peoples Democratic Party in the state come 2023.

They said, after a series of consultations, they have agreed that only Alhaji Idris has what it takes to deliver the local government, Kogi east and the state in general.

They recalled how the party allegedly betrayed Idris when they mobilised against his son so he could not pick the ticket. They claimed that if the party had given the ticket to Abubakar his son, PDP would have coasted to victory.

The convener of the meeting, Honourable Andrew Ede said Abu Ibro has done well for the state and all of them decided on their own to endorse him because he is the best candidate that has all it takes to deliver the State from poverty. He said, also that the last election is enough to teach everybody lesson.

Another speaker at the meeting Hon. Hassan Salifu (aka Dangote) said, people from Ogodu have made up their minds to support Abu Ibro because of what his father has done for Ogodu, "That it was through him we the Ogodu people had a road constructed from Egume down to Ofugo in Anka LG and they believe that the road from Ibado, Ojaji down to Olla which Baba Ibro didn't complete before his tenure expired, his son will come and complete it for us.

Another speaker Dino Benjamin from Bagaji ward said, "Last time our people made a mistake for not voting Abu Ibro and we all saw the result at least, but this time around, we are going to give him hundred percent votes in the coming election in Omala."

From Opada Ofeiji ward Daniel Onailo said, with the caliber of persons who are leading the project, this time around Omala will surprise everybody.

He said, one single vote will not miss from their zone.

Honorable Zubairu Jibrin from Olla said, they are in the meeting because they are convinced and believe that Abu Ibro is going to be a good governor if given the chance to lead.

Enejo shaibu indicated that, majority of the people who left the party out of annoyance are back to support Abu Ibro.

"Those who worked against Ibro and his son today are not finding it easy. If Abu was allowed to contest last time, he would have won the election. The party PDP should take note of this."

Odiba Isa Amidu, of Opatala ward said, the happiest side of it all is that Honorable Shittu Idris Haruna is at the forefront of the struggle adding that they can't afford to make another mistake.

"PDP should go back to the drawing board and then leave sentiments aside, they shouldn't allow jealousy to becloud the party. God gives power to whoever he likes and to any family."

Honorable Huseini Abdullahi of Ogodu said, that they must make sure that the delegates from Omala are properly screened to avoid what they saw at the last primary in Lokoka township stadium. this "This time around there will be no room for any mistakes as some fake leaders among us who claimed to be close to Baba Ibro are the same people who caused trouble because of their selfish interests.

# Senator faults state pardon granted Dariye, Nyame, others

- *Charges youth to give FG 3 months ultimatum to end corruption*
- *Says flagrant display of ill-gotten wealth worsening situation*

By TUNDE JOSHUA, ABUJA

The Senator representing Osun East senatorial district, Francis Fadahunsi has faulted the All Progressives Congress (APC)-led Federal Government over recent state pardon granted some Nigerians including two former Governors, Jolly Nyame of Taraba State and Joshua Dariye of Plateau.

The People's Democratic Party (PDP) Senator said the government is further entrenching corruption by granting such state pardon to politicians and public office holders convicted of corrupt charges.

He said such gesture might have negative consequences as the government might be encouraging the youth to engage in corrupt practices.

Senator Fadahunsi questioned the rationale in granting such pardon to corrupt political office holders after tax payers money had been spent to prosecute their cases to logical conclusion even at the Supreme Court.

He said, "leaders like former governors Joshua Dariye and Jolly Nyame who were convicted for financial crimes against their states are now being granted state pardon and the society are celebrating them.

"How would the frustrated youths be happy with the government, which had no effective sanction against corruption?"

"I hereby challenge the youths to issue a three-month ultimatum to the Federal Government of Nigeria to get things right or face the consequences.

"it is unfortunate that the level of misap-

propriation and fraud is much and this could lead to a total collapse of the country.

"I am not encouraging the youths to take laws into their hands but embrace a civil means like dialogue and electoral process to change the system. The God of justice had landed in Nigeria to avenge the wicked," he said.

Speaking with journalists in Abuja on Saturday as part of his message to Nigerian youths in commemoration of the year 2022 International Youth Day, the lawmaker lamented the high rate of unemployment among the youths which he said is aggravating spate of criminal activities including banditry and kidnapping.

The retired Deputy Comptroller of the Nigeria Customs Service, who is the Deputy Chairman, Senate Committee on Customs and Excise said investigations had revealed that the young Nigerians having failed to make government improve the situation after the end-SARS protests in 2020, were now taking laws in their hands.

The Senator further alleged that educated young Nigerians are forming kidnapping gangs targeting the elite, the rich and those in government at all levels.

He said the youth were protesting against elite flagrant display of affluence, corruption and rot in the education, healthcare sector.

He said, "education is no longer within the reach of the poor any longer. The sons and daughters of the poor who were going to public schools are no longer getting quality education because government had refused to fund public education.

"Regrettably, the children of the elite are going abroad to study while those who could not afford foreign education enrolled their children in high fee paying private schools from primary to tertiary.

"Meanwhile, there are many idle youths who are prone to criminality because they are into drugs and are taking up arms against the elite and their children in form of kidnapping.

"There is a case of unemployment galore because children of the poor who are graduates of higher institutions could not get a white collar job in public establishments which had been flooded with sons and daughters of the rich and the elite.

"Employment slots in federal agencies had been reserved exclusively for the children of the elite.

"Automatically university graduates from poor homes are engaging in menial jobs and criminality while the talented ones embraced the entertainment industry where they had to use drugs to suppress complex.

"The Head of Service had also compounded the crisis by placing embargo on employments.

"The sons and daughters of the poor are therefore, highly frustrated while those of the rich are returning from overseas after their education to take appointment in the best health institutions and other federal establishments."

The lawmaker therefore urged the government to take necessary steps to address the time bomb by funding education and provide jobs with realistic empowerment programmes that could meaningfully engage the idle youths.



# Group pledges support for Omo-Agege's guber ambition

By GABRIEL ELOZINO, Asaba

A group, Igben Political Family (IPF) has lauded Deputy Senate President Ovie Omo-Agege for his massive development strides in Delta Central senatorial district, saying that if elected as governor, the state would witness tremendous transformation.

The IPF which is a political group founded by the Federal Commissioner representing Delta State in the Public Complaints Commission, Hon. Harvest Igben, also vowed to support the guber aspiration of the Delta Central Senator.

Speaking during the inauguration of the Udu Ward 4 Executive of IPF in Udu Local Government area of the state, the commissioner commended the group on

its grassroots mobilization inclination.

Igben, represented by the General Coordinator of IPF, Mr. Ejoor Mukoro, stressed the need for members of the group to be loyal to the IPF and the APC, adding that he had absolute confidence in members of the group.

He commended the local government executive for mobilizing the people at the grassroots level for the APC, just as he charged the newly inaugurated Ward executive to work closely with the local government executive for the success of the party during the 2023 general election.

He urged them to go out and woo those who are not in any political party into the APC and the IPF, just as advised them against sharing their votes but to give total support to the party.

Earlier, the All Progressives Congress (APC) Ward 4



Omo-Agege

chairman, Mr Felix Otie, said the meeting was to formally inaugurate the Ward 4 Igben Political Family IPF to synergize with the party to secure victory for it.

Inaugurating the group, the Udu local government IPF chairman, Mr Godwin Dolor advised them to show commitment towards the task ahead.

Hon Felix German in his remarks appealed to members of the group and others present to be patient and committed for them to enjoy the dividends of democracy.

Using himself as example, Hon German who was the formal Minority Leader to the Udu Local Government legislative arm said it was his loyalty and commitment that gave rise to his being elected as councilor to represent the Ward.

He assured the people of Emadadja community that they stand to benefit immensely in the next political dispensation if they work hard to give victory to the party.

Members of executive of the Igben Political Family IPF Ward 4 include, Mr Bright Ahunu, Felix Okorode, Paulina Onoseme, James Samuel and Moses Torere.

# 442 parcels of Crystal Meth uncovered in smoked fishes

By PAUL MICHAEL, Abuja

No fewer than 442 parcels of Crystal Methamphetamine which were concealed in heads of fishes have been uncovered.

Operatives of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) made the discovery while carrying out due diligence on cartons of fishes for export to Dubai, the United Arab Emirates through the SAHCO shed of the Murtala Muhammed International Airport, Ikeja Lagos.

Director of Media and Advocacy, Demi Babafemi, who made the disclosure on Sunday in a press statement, said the consignment arrived the airport on Friday 5th August.

"The 11.90kg consignment was brought to the SAHCO export shed of the airport on Friday 5th August by a freight agent, Adekunle Oluwapelumi Paul, 32, from Yagba West LGA, Kogi State, who was promptly arrested upon the discovery that the seven cartons he presented for export contained parcels of the dangerous drug wrapped with foil paper and concealed in the heads of hundreds of smoked catfish.

"The following day, Saturday 6th August, another consignment containing 1.45kg cannabis concealed inside granulated melon and crayfish and packed among other food condiments going to Dubai, UAE was

## NDLEA intercepts 1.1m Tramadol tabs in Kaduna, others in Lagos, Kano

also intercepted by NDLEA operatives who arrested the freight agent, Ajisefini Lateef that presented the cargo for export at the SAHCO shed. The 39-year-old agent is from Abeokuta West LGA, Ogun State," Babafemi said.

Meanwhile, anti-narcotic officers at the Akanu Ibiam International Airport, Enugu have arrested a 50-year-old Mgbeobuna Victor Eberechukwu for ingesting 77 pellets of cocaine.

"He was arrested on Saturday 6th Aug following his arrival from Addis Ababa, Ethiopia onboard an Ethiopian airline flight.

"The suspect who hails

from Idemili South LGA, Anambra state passed out the 77 wraps of the illicit drug in eight excretions spanning four days," he said.

He further stated that three suspects, Saifullahi Sani, Salisu Nafi'u and Abdulrazaq Mamman, were arrested in Zaria, Kaduna State on Thursday, 11th August with 1,112,350 tablets of Tramadol (225mg and 100mg) weighing 38.3kg.

"In Kano, a female drug dealer, Saratu Abdullahi, 28, from Wurno council area of the state was nabbed at Hotoro with 541 blocks of cannabis weighing 245kg," he added.

In another development, NDLEA operatives recovered a total of 1,773.25kg cannabis sativa at Ebutte-Meta and Akala in Mushin areas of Lagos State in separate raid operations between 9th and 10th August.

"At the Tincan seaport in Lagos, 86 parcels of cannabis indica (Colorado) weighing 43kg were recovered from a 40ft container during a joint examination with Customs and other security agencies.

"The illegal consignment seized on Friday 12th August came from Toronto via Montreal, Canada and concealed in two drums inside a Mercedes Benz SUV

in the container.

"In Abia, two suspects: Nnanna Ijo, 58, and Orji Uguru, 29, were arrested on Friday 12th Aug. with various quantities of cannabis, heroin and cocaine at Nde-Agbai, Abiriba, a week after Nnanna was released from detention over a similar offence committed in June," Babafemi added.

Chairman/Chief Executive of NDLEA, Brig-Gen Mohamed Buba Marwa (Rtd), while commending the officers and men of the Agency for the seizures and arrests, charged them to always remain steps ahead of the drug cartels.

# Costa Rica 2022: Falconets defeat South Korea

By OVIRI KELVIN, Sports Editor, Abuja

Falconets defeated South Korea women 1-0 in their second Group C match at the FIFA U20 Women's World Cup on Sunday at Estadio Alajuela Morera Soto in Costa Rica.

The late-hour match according to West African Time, saw the U20 Nigeria women's team take on the Asian squad squarely in an encounter delayed due to bad weather conditions.

In the course of the vital match that determines who tops the group between the two champions in their continents, having won their opening group games, the Falconets had

tested the South Korean goalie severally but were unable to beat her in the first half.

South Korea U20 females before the encounter against Falconets defeated Canada 2-0 to go top of Group C after Nigeria humbled France with a late strike from Flourish Sabastine, top scorer for her team in the African qualifying series.

Prior to this crunch encounter with the formidable Falconets, the South Korea had thrashed the Chinese Taipei women 4 unreplied goals on July 26 at the Women's EAFF E-1 Football Championship: Final Stage having earlier played a draw with the China women team and suffered a

## Secure quarter-final place

2-1 defeat in the hands of the Japan women.

While South Korea women's 2022 footballing campaign season is of mixed results, draws, wins and losses, the Falconets have been wonderful throughout the qualifying series where they maintained 100 per cent outcomes.

Processing the second Group C match, both teams locked horns in the tightly-fixed duel to play a goalless first-half draw without breaking the deadlock.

However, what would seem to have been heading for a goalless stalemate for the

South Koreans in Alajuela, turned the other way round as Onyenezide in the 83rd minute fired Falconets the winning goal.

Consequent to the victory against the Asians, the Nigeria U20 women's team now tops group C with 6 points having first smashed France in their opening Group C match to book their place in the quarter-finals.

The Falconets' last Group C fixture is against Canada U20 Women's team, who lost their opening game in a 2-0 to South Korea, on Thursday, 18 August, 2022.



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# How \$1.9b monthly loss to oil theft puts Nigeria on edge

*Nigeria is one of the major crude oil producing countries in the world. The country is among the top 15 crude oil exporting nations. Over the years, the country has been contending with oil theft, pipeline vandalism and oil bunkering, which have posed serious economic challenges and negative health implications for the entire country. Recently, the Federal Government declared that it loses over \$1.9 billion monthly to the menace, while the creeks and environment of the oil bearing states continue to be polluted. Last week, the Minister of State for Petroleum Resources, Chief Timipre Sylva, led a Federal Government delegation to the oil producing states to solicit support of governments of the nine Niger Delta states in a bid to end the menace. But in spite of the efforts, the oil and gas sector will require a long time to mend, **JOHNMARK UKOKO** writes.*

Nigeria, richly endowed with huge deposits of crude oil and natural gas in several states of the country, is presently on edge. The country has earned trillions of dollars from crude oil and gas since the natural resources were first discovered in commercial quantity in 1959 at Oloibiri in present day Bayelsa State.

Sadly, most of the proceeds of crude oil sold in the last six decades ended up in private pockets of top politicians, military top brass and senior civil servants, while the country is left with little resources for economic growth and development of infrastructure.

Besides the diversion of crude oil earnings to private pockets, the country now grapples with massive and unprecedented crude oil theft and in spite of measures purportedly put in place by successive administrations to tackle the menace, no desirable results have been achieved.

Over the years, the United Nations (UN) and Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) had raised concerns about the impact of crude oil theft not only on Nigeria, but also on the global oil industry.

Evidences have shown that some powerful countries around the world collaborate with unpatriotic Nigerians to fleece the country of huge volumes of crude oil, hence the inability of Nigeria authorities to end the menace.

Unfortunately, most security apparatuses deployed to the Niger Delta region to protect oil installations and facilities turn around to aid and abet crude oil theft with unpatriotic Nigerians and their foreign collaborators.

Curiously, the menace that Nigeria has grappled with for years, seem to have worsened in the last few years of the President Muhammadu Buhari administration to the extent that top government officials, players in the oil sector and even International Oil Companies (IOCs) have raised the alarm that over 100,000 barrels of crude oil were being stolen daily.

While most Nigerians find it difficult to believe the revelations and disclosure of the IOC chiefs at a conference in Abuja last year, the Federal Government declared last week that the country was actually losing about 400,000 barrels of crude oil daily, amounting to about \$1.9 billion monthly.

The development, which has

made it difficult for the country to generate enough revenue to meet its daily expenses, led to acute foreign exchange shortage in the economy and massive economic challenges in the country in the last few months.

The financial strains the country is passing through due to the massive crude oil theft, which has been adjudged the worst in the country's history, made the Federal Government to send a delegation led by Minister of State for Petroleum Resources, Chief Timipre Sylva to the nine oil producing states of the Niger Delta to solicit the support of the governors to end the menace.

Prominent among the states the delegation visited were Imo, Rivers, Delta, Akwa Ibom and Bayelsa, which is referred to as the state that had witnessed the worst cases of pipeline attacks and crude oil theft over the years.

The delegation also had the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS), General Lucky Irabor and Group Managing Director (GMD) of the Nigeria National Petroleum Company (NNPC) Limited, Mele Kyari, among others.

Speaking at the Bayelsa State Government House in Yenagoa, Sylva said the Federal Government delegation visited the state to seek collaboration against oil theft in the Niger Delta, adding that the stealing of crude oil was being perpetrated at an alarming rate and should no longer be tolerated, given its negative effects on the nation's economy.

Sylva, who lamented that oil production has been severely affected and also having negative impact on foreign investments in the country, commended Governor Douye Diri for his willingness to partner with the government to end oil theft and assured that the Federal Government was determined and desirous of ending the menace, adding that a lasting solution was long overdue.

On his part, Irabor said the military has heightened operational engagement to stop criminal activities in the region, noting that the activities of oil thieves was a serious cause of concern, as the economy was bleeding and urged those involved in the act to have a rethink, failing which military action will be taken.

Also speaking, Kyari said the country was facing a dire



Chief Timipre Sylva

situation that is not just affecting the economy but also the environment.

Maintaining that the importance of collaboration with states in the region could not be over-emphasised, as only one tier of government could not do it alone, he said Nigeria was losing huge amounts of money daily to the menace, which was seriously limiting the country.

Responding, Diri pledged to collaborate with the Federal Government in its bid to tackle the menace, which he said, posed a serious threat to the Niger Delta region and canvassed urgent action to end the ugly trend in the interest of the state, Niger Delta region and entire country, adding that oil theft was also affecting government at all levels.

He said: "Oil theft is affecting government at all levels. It has also denied the locals their means of livelihood. If the oil theft menace is not stopped or reduced drastically, the implications would be grave."

Recalling how the CDS discussed with governors on the issue, Diri welcomed synergy between the states and the Federal Government to tackle the menace and assured the delegation that his administration would play a vital role in ensuring that oil theft was effectively nipped in the bud.

His words: "The federal and state governments depend on

oil. So, oil theft does not affect only the Federal Government. It also affects the state and the local governments. We have spoken about this over and over again and we will continue to talk about it.

"We are talking about our environment that has been brazenly polluted through oil bunkering activities. If you go to our communities, you will see oil floating on our rivers and that has led to the destruction of our people's means of livelihood.

In Asaba, the Delta State capital, the message was the same, as Governor Ifeanyi Okowa also highlighted the economic losses the menace has imposed on the state and the negative impact on its economy.

He expressed concern over the impact of oil theft on the state's revenue and health implications on the people and the environment, adding that the state government was ready to support and collaborate with the Federal Government to tackle the challenge.

Okowa, who commended the delegation for the visit, pledged his administration's support at all times, maintaining that oil theft must be stopped so that the country's economy could thrive.

The delegation, which visited the nine oil producing states of the Niger Delta region to preach the gospel,

commended the Rivers State

Governor, Nyesom Wike and his Imo State counterpart, Hope Uzodimma, for their fight against oil bunkering and oil theft in their states even before the Federal Government woke up to the reality of the challenge.

On several occasions, Wike and Uzodimma visited locations where crude oil was being refined by local refiners, which posed serious health hazards to their communities and economic losses to the entire country.

It would be recalled that Wike on many occasions visited sites where criminals, in collaboration with some security forces, were reportedly engaging in oil bunkering, thereby exposing the people to danger.

Following his strides, it could be said that no politician at the state or federal level has fought oil theft and oil bunkering the way Wike had done.

While oil theft, bunkering and petroleum pipelines are being massively damaged, thereby making it difficult for the country to meet its OPEC production quota, the Nigerian Navy, the Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA) and other government agencies set up to protect crude oil production and pipelines, appear to be helpless or have been compromised.

And whereas OPEC offered Nigeria between 1.7 million and 2 million barrels per day production quota, the country has only been able to export between 1.1 million and 1.2 million barrels per day (mbpd) for several months running.

Although it is coming late, the Federal Government seemed to have woken up to its responsibility in setting up a committee to fight the menace and with the revelation of the Minister of Finance, Budget and National Planning, Zaniab Usman Ahmed, that the country was losing \$1.9 billion monthly to oil theft, it must not be condoned or allowed to continue going forward.

But whatever happens now or in the future, with the massive oil theft, dysfunctional refineries and continued importation of petroleum products, which had deteriorated to the extent of signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Niger Republic for importation of fuel, the country's oil and gas industry and the economy will require a long time to mend.



# Renewed port concession pacts ready soon, minister pledges

Stories by **JOHNMARK UKOKO**

Minister of Transportation, Muazu Jaji Sambo, has assured that the details of the renewal of concession agreements with some terminal operators are now ready and will be perfected within the next 45 days.

He gave the assurance during a visit to the Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA) in Lagos at the weekend where Managing Director of NPA, Muhammed Bello-Koko, suggested that the five terminal operators will be given six months to renew their concession when their agreements expire soon to which the minister refused.

While addressing journalists during his visit to the Tin Can port, the minister said: "I do not have six months. I will ensure that the concessions are renewed in the next 45 days" and assured that he would prioritise the reconstruction of the dilapidated quay aprons of the Tin Can Port.

According to him, the quay aprons of the port are getting destroyed due to lack of maintenance, adding: "I have advised the management of NPA, in the past, there is what we call programmed preventive maintenance, this is why at every port, we have an engineering outfit headed by the Chief Port Engineer.

Part of his responsibility is to draw out preventive maintenance programmes for the ports under his jurisdiction every year, he takes it to the headquarters for consideration and approval and that forms part of the forthcoming budget.

"If you carry out preventive maintenance, you would avoid a lot of the deterioration that is taking place. This is the truth, the sooner we accept it, the better.

"As you would recall, I was posted to the Federal Ministry of Transportation on June 6, 2022. This is actually my second official assignment outside Abuja. I was in Kano for the Dala Inland Dry port to declare it as a port of

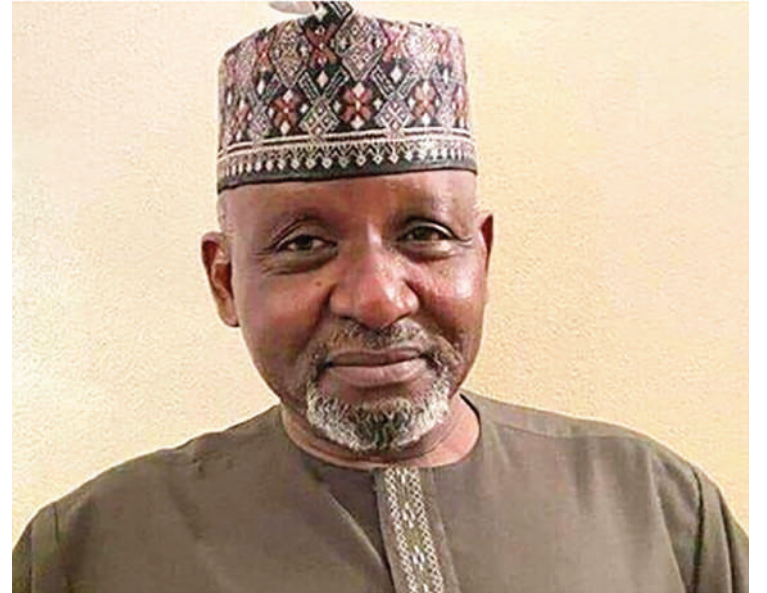
origin and destination.

"Today I am in Lagos, the maritime headquarters of Nigeria. The purpose of my coming to Lagos is to look at the ports and the related infrastructures which are supposed to support maritime activities. As you all, the ports are the gateway to the nation's economy.

"If we get our acts right, the maritime industry can replace the revenue from the oil industry, this is why we have come to see how we can support the port authorities in order to improve on their deteriorating structures," he said.

Speaking earlier at the Port and cargo terminal by SIFAX Group, Sambo said the NPA had approached him with a devastating problem that the Tican Port is facing.

"I personally attach great importance to the maritime industry, there are billions of dollars that can be earned from the maritime industry, if we get our acts right," Sambo stressed.



Muhammed Bello-Koko

## Sambo applauds SIFAX Group, assures of FG's support

Minister of Transportation, Muazu Sambo has commended SIFAX Group for its socio-economic impact in the country and promised to support the company's businesses in order to contribute more to the economy.

He stated this during an inspection tour of Ports and Cargo Handling Services Limited, the flagship business of SIFAX Group at the Tin Can Island Port, pointing out that SIFAX Group and its subsidiaries were adding great value to the Nigerian maritime sector and by extension the economy, and as such, deserved government's support.

A statement issued by the Group Head, Corporate Communications of SIFAX, Muysiwa Akande, quoted the minister as saying: "I am excited at what your company is doing. You are really doing a great job. I want to assure you that we will look into the issue of concession renewal and make sure that this is wrapped up in no time.

"All the challenges being faced by your business have been outlined and we have begun consulting relevant agencies to make sure that we tackle them headlong. The maritime sector is dear to my heart and with the

right atmosphere it can become a major revenue earner for the government. We will make sure that this terminal will operate at maximum capacity in no time."

While welcoming him to the terminal, Managing Director of Ports and Cargo Handling Services Limited, John Jenkins, noted that the company was committed to exploring the potentials of the maritime sector, adding that SIFAX Group, the parent company, is continually investing in the terminal in order to deliver best value for all customers and grow the industry.

Executive Director, SIFAX Off Dock Nigeria Limited, Captain Ibrahim Olugbade, also highlighted SIFAX Group's intervention in the maritime sector through the development of various inland container terminals around Tin Can and Apapa Ports.

He said: "We have developed various inland container terminals around Apapa and the most important of them is SIFAX Inland Container Terminal, located at Ijora. In the nearest future, we hope to receive vessels at this terminal. We move boxes from various terminals to the off docks and also received empty containers too."

## Outrage as Nigeria signs MoU to import fuel from Niger Republic

Public outcry has trailed the Nigerian government's Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with its Niger Republic counterpart for the importation of petroleum products from the Sahel country.

A statement issued Nigeria's the Ministry, of Petroleum Resources, Soraz Refinery, Zinder, revealed that Niger Republic has an installed refining capacity of 20,000 barrels per day (bpd) domestic requirement, which leaves a surplus of 15,000 barrels per day.

Group Managing Director (GMD) of the Nigerian National Petroleum Company (NNPC) Limited, Mele Kyari, signed the MoU on behalf of Nigeria, while Director General of Niger Republic's National Oil Company, Societe Nigerienne De Petrole (SONIDED), Alio Toune, signed on behalf of Niger Republic.

The signing ceremony was witnessed by the ministers of state for petroleum of both countries- Chief Timipre Sylva of Nigeria and Foumakoye Gado of Niger Republic.

"This is a major step forward, Niger Republic has some excess



Foumakoye Gado

products, which need to be evacuated and Nigeria has the market for the products, therefore, this will be a win-win relationship for both countries.

My hope is that this is going to be the beginning of deepening trade relations between Niger Republic and Nigeria," the minister said.

Commenting on the development, Kyari said the two countries have had long engagements in the last four to five months with a view to restoring

the importation of petroleum products from Niger Republic into Nigeria.

"With this development, we hope to have a long-lasting and sustainable commercial framework to have a pipeline from Soraz Refinery in Zinder, Niger Republic to the nearest Nigerian city, so that we can develop a depot.

"We are happy that we have reached that conclusion and our two ministers have endured this framework. We are also working on a detailed MoU between the two companies, so that we can continue the execution process immediately," he said.

Nigeria currently imports refined petroleum products despite having four refineries in the country, which have largely remained comatose for several years. As a result, huge foreign exchange is spent to ensure that there is no scarcity of petroleum products in the country.

Government officials have expressed hope that the 350,000 capacity Dangote refinery, which is near completion, will end the importation of petroleum products into the country.

## Clearing agents suspend payment of customs duty at ports

Association of Nigerian Licensed Customs Agents (ANLCA) has directed its members to suspend further capturing of cargoes and payment of duties due to constant network malfunctioning and serial failure of the Nigerian Customs Service (NCS) server.

Acting President of ANLCA, Dr. Kayode Farinto, in a correspondence to members of the association, at the weekend, noted that the server failure was causing

astronomical increases in duty payment on imported vehicles.

"We noticed on Friday, August 12, 2022 that there is a systems error on Customs' portal to the extent that when you make declarations, it was giving outrageous and astronomical duty payable. I have contacted the Nigeria Customs headquarters in Abuja and they confirmed that they were having challenges with their system, hence I advise

our members that if they have not made declarations on their jobs, they should kindly wait till Monday (today).

He said the NCS has assured those who have already made assessment of their cargoes, at all area commands would be given access to cancel such declarations, adding: "Please let us kindly bear with them till the challenge is sorted out on or before Monday (today).

## Business Journal for public presentation of September 16

Executive Vice Chairman and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Nigerian Communication Commission (NCC), Prof. Umar Danbatta, will deliver the keynote addresses as guest speaker at the public presentation of Business Journal Newspaper on Friday, September 16, 2022 in Lagos.

The event with the theme: The Media In National Development: Successes, Challenges And Prospects, will be chaired by the Commissioner for Insurance and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the National Insurance Commission (NAICOM), Sunday Thomas, while a renowned economist and financial expert, Dr. Biodun Adedipe, will review the preview edition of the newspaper.

Publisher of Business Journal, Prince Cooney, made this known at the weekend in statement made available to The Trumpet in Lagos, saying: "Danbatta's decision to deliver the keynote address as distinguished guest speaker at the Business Journal Newspaper public presentation event represents a

positive milestone in our journey to become the leading business and financial media Group in Africa."

He added that the newspaper segment joined the already existing online and magazine segments on a tripod of value creation for stakeholders across key sectors of the Nigerian economy for the benefit of decision makers in the public sector and professionals in the Organised Private Sector (OPS).

"The NCC remains a key stakeholder in media engagement in the country through robust partnership and professional capacity development. Since assuming office, Danbatta has continued to provide strategic leadership for the telecommunications industry as a regulator to the benefit of the government, network operators and subscribers.

"The trajectory of his impressive and impeccable career is anchored on humility, progress and professionalism. We are indeed grateful to him for this great honour," the statement reads.



## Customs generates N1.293tr revenue in first half of 2022

Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) has generated N1.293 trillion in the first six months of 2022 into the Federation Account.

Public Relations Officer (PRO) of the NCS, Timi Bomodi, a Deputy Comptroller, disclosed this at a media briefing in Abuja at the weekend, saying the amount was an increase compared to N1.004 trillion generated in the corresponding period of 2021.

He said the amount surpassed its achievements for 2021 by N48 billion, accounting for 28.8 per cent, adding the revenue generation was remarkable, given the fact that only 116, 691 Pre-Arrival Assessment Reports (PAARs) were issued against the 129, 667 processed within the same period of last year.

“Our half year scorecard comprehensively captures our activities from January to June 2022. The revenue target given to the Nigeria Customs Service for the year 2022 is N3.019 trillion, exceeding the target for 2021 by 80.78 per cent. As it has become customary, the service remains focused and steadfast in its commitment to meeting the challenges of the moment. It is fully confident in its ability to innovate and adapt to a dynamic socio-economic environment,” he said.

Bomodi said N156 billion was also generated into the non-federation account as collections on behalf of other government agencies.

While giving a breakdown of the amount generated within the period under review, he said the figures were generated from excise, industrial incentives from free trade zones and anti-smuggling activities, among others.

On excise, free trade zones and industrial incentives, Bomodi said excise duty was tax levied on the manufacture, sale and consumption of goods under excise control.

Bomodi, who said the amount was collected through the 22 commands of the service, noted that N68 billion was collected from manufacturers of alcoholic beverages, as well as cigarettes and tobacco, among other products.

“In the month of June, the service began collections from extant traders producing carbonated and sugary drinks newly added under schedule five of the CET. So far, the service has collected more than one billion Naira from carbonated and sugary drinks in the month of June.

“Other revenues from telecommunication, like call and data and digital network services are yet to be collected. The service is expected to start collecting revenue on these products and services as soon as the modalities for collection are put in place. Duties from these revenue sources are expected to boost our collections in the current year,” he said.

Bomodi also said of the 42 free trade zones in the country, only 25 were active with 15 of them operating in Zone A, four in Zone B, five in Zone C and one in Zone D.

He pointed out that in addition to providing employment opportunities for Nigerians, the special economic zones were expected to engender transfer of technology and building of local capacity, among benefits.

On enforcement and anti-smuggling, Bomodi said in the period under review, various goods with total Duty Paid Value (DPV) of N39 billion were seized due to policy infringements, adding that narcotics and other illicit drugs with DPV of N8.8 billion were among the top seven items seized, followed by foreign parboiled rice with DPV of N8.3 billion, among other collections.

## OPEC pegs Nigeria's crude oil losses at N101billion

Stories by **EDU ABADE**,  
Business Editor

Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) has declared that Nigeria's crude oil production dipped by 2.3 million barrels in July 2022 compared to the production level in June 2022.

In its latest Monthly Oil Market Report for August 2022, OPEC stated that crude oil production figures based on direct communication indicated that Nigeria's output dropped by an average of 74,000 barrels per day in July.

This implies that for the 31 days in July, the country lost about 2.3 million barrels of crude oil. The organisation further stated that the average cost of Brent crude, the global benchmark for oil, during the month under review was \$105.12/barrel.

By losing 2.3 million barrels in July this year, it means Nigeria's

oil earnings fell by about \$241.1 million or N101.13 billion (at the official exchange rate of N419.37 to the dollar) in the month under review.

Data from OPEC further showed that Nigeria's oil production in June 2022 amounted to 1.158 million barrels per day, but dropped to 1.084 million barrels per day in July.

The country had produced 1.024 million barrels per day in May this year, according to figures released by OPEC at the weekend.

The Federal Government, operators and industry experts have consistently blamed Nigeria's poor output and its continued failure to meet the monthly oil production quota approved by OPEC on massive crude oil theft in the Niger Delta.

Chief Executive Officer of the Centre for the Promotion of Private Enterprise, Muda Yusuf, blamed the challenges in the oil sector on the high



Muda Yusuf

level of insecurity across the country, adding that this had continued to discourage investors in the sector, leading to lower production of crude oil and lower earnings for Nigeria despite the increased price of crude, which

witnessed marginal decrease in recent times.

He said: “Investors in the oil and gas sector continue to lament the challenges posed by insecurity, oil theft, unstable policies and inappropriate fiscal regimes. The downstream sector has continued to be weighed down by the pricing regimes and the regulatory environments which have continued to dim the growth prospects in the sector.”

Meanwhile OPEC stated that crude oil prices dipped in July, as against their costs in June, adding that crude in OPEC Reference Basket fell by \$9.17 or 7.8 per cent month-on-month in July to an average \$108.55 per barrel.

“Oil futures prices remained highly volatile in July, amid a sharp drop in liquidity. The ICE Brent front month declined \$12.38 or 10.5 per cent in July to an average \$105.12 per barrel, while NYMEX WTI declined by \$14.96 or 13.1 per cent to average \$99.38 per barrel,” it stated.

## EKEDC signs agreement with TCN to upgrade distribution in Agbara, Badagry

Eko Electricity Distribution Company (EKEDC) has signed a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with the Transmission Company



Tinuade Sanda

of Nigeria (TCN) to upgrade the capacity of electricity distribution infrastructure to provide quality and reliable power supply within its network in Agbara and Badagry areas of Lagos.

Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer (MD/CEO) of the company, Tinuade Sanda, stated this during a town hall meeting with customers at Agbara District, which covers Ijanikin, Agbara Industrial Estate and Badagry environs.

Sanda informed the customers of the rehabilitation of Badagry Expressway and Badagry II 33KV feeders through the Capex projects funded by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) to improve power supply in Badagry and its environs and release some distribution transformers to replace the faulty and overloaded ones.

In a statement issued by the General Manager, Corporate

Communications, Godwin Idemudia, and made available to The Trumpet, the company said: “Agbara District remains a core focus area of the management due to the expanse landmass of the communities under the district, hence the need to engage our customers and address the challenges affecting electricity supply in those areas.”

Sanda, who was represented at the forum by the Chief Commercial Officer, Rekhia Momoh, thanked the customers for their support and informed them of the rehabilitation projects by the company to improve power supply to the areas under the Agbara District.

The customers appreciated the DisCo for the platform of engagement and commended the prompt response to faults by the Agbara team of EKEDC.

They requested the DisCo to provide more distribution

transformers to their growing communities and replace the deteriorating electrical poles and wires affecting the power supply. Other complaints included high estimated billing and request for prepaid meters.

Sanda assured the customers of prompt resolutions to their complaints and announced that EKEDC is about to commence a 72-hour metering exercise (mobile MAP) for Agbara District in September to step up the metering of customers without prepaid meters and put the issue of estimated billing to an end.

She explained that the MAP scheme was reintroduced by the Nigerian Electricity Regulation Commission (NERC) to close the metering gap before the commencement of Phase 1 of the Federal Government's National Mass Metering Programme (NMMP).

## CAPPA backs youths on calls to make Big Tobacco pay for harms

Global youth organisations have condemned the tobacco industry's resolve to create a new generation of smokers and users of their product through addiction and urged the government at all levels to make the tobacco companies pay for their past, present and future health hazards and harms their products were causing.

The youths, who spoke on behalf of themselves and future generations on the sidelines of the International Youth Day, which holds on August 12 every year are seeking justice, as well as get compensations and ensure that the tobacco industry does not get a seat wherever and whenever issues affecting the welfare of youths are being discussed at global forums.

In a statement issued in Lagos, Director of Programmes, Corporate Accountability and Public Participation Africa (CAPPA), Philip Jakpor, highlighted the tobacco industry's involvement in the vaping epidemic, digital marketing, sports sponsorship, child labour, environmental harms, including accumulated toxic single use plastics in the oceans, which are covered up by fake philanthropic programmes and dubious grants.

(CAPPA) joined the call of the global youths.

“When governments allow the tobacco industry to influence tobacco control or vaping policy, they are serving the heads of our children to the tobacco industry on a platter and we should not allow this.

“Vaping policies should consider primarily the risks of youths' addiction and recreational use. The youths also want governments to exact tobacco industry accountability and liability, which can come in the form of revocation of licences, compensation for harms, financial guarantees for future harms and could involve court cases, tobacco surcharges, penalties, fees and taxes, among others,” the statement reads.

The group also explained that smoking and consumption of other tobacco products cause eight million deaths yearly in addition to causing addiction and environmental hazards associated with deforestation in communities where tobacco plants are cultivated and discarded

cigarette butts.

It further pointed out that single use plastics in cigarette packs and butts alone cause at least \$20 billion yearly in losses of marine resources, which it insisted outweighed any economic gains of the tobacco industry, costing \$1.4 trillion in economic losses every year.

CAPPA, a Pan-African non-for profit organisation, is passionately devoted to working with African communities in building partnerships with them and taking collective social action towards the promotion and defence of the rights of peoples.

It challenges the abuse of Nigeria and Africa's natural resources, the environment and peoples through corporate state policies and practices.





## Kane's late goal denies Chelsea victory in fierce London derby

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

England striker Harry Kane snapped a late equaliser for Tottenham to deny Chelsea a win at Stamford Bridge on Sunday.

The London derby between two strong sides saw the return of former Chelsea manager and Tottenham boss Antonio Conte to Stamford Bridge.

Chelsea, after kick-off, got the first goal in the 19th minute when new signing Kalidou Koulibaly smashed in Marc Cucurella's cross past Tottenham goalie Hugo Lloris to hand the Blues a lead till the close of the first half.

However, on return for the second forty-five minutes, Tottenham responded squarely to cancel the Senegalese first Premier League goal through Pierre Hojbjerg's 68-minute effort, having capitalised on Jorginho's error in the penalty area.

This resulted in Conte going ecstatic to celebrate the goal outside his technical boundaries which angered Chelsea boss



Thomas Tuchel to respond likewise when Reece James scored the Blues' second goal in the 77th minute.

Following what looked like a finished job for Chelsea in front of their home fans soon turned sour as Kane in the additional time headed a late equaliser before stoppage time to spark an open confrontation between both clubs' managers.

Meanwhile, Conte in a post-match interview, refrained from commenting on the incident involving Tuchel, adding that he prefers to talk about the

game. "My opinion is it's better to talk about the game. It was a difficult game for both teams and we try in every game to be competitive," he said.

The Italian manager, who was linked with a move to Paris Saint-Germain at the close of last season, as a replacement for Mauricio Pochettino, insisted that Chelsea proved to be a better team compared to last season.

"Chelsea showed they are a really good team. Compared to last season we did better, but if we want to

create problems for Chelsea [in the table] we have to be better," he continued.

"I don't want to comment on the [Tuchel] situation, this is not the most important thing. If there's a problem, it's between me and him. It's normal to come here and to suffer but at the same time we created chances to stay in the game," Conte added.

Chelsea in their next Premier League fixture will travel to Elland Road to face Leeds United who beat Wolves in their opening match before playing a 2-2 draw with Southampton on Saturday.

## Algeria 2023: Salisu Yusuf perfects strategies ahead of Ghana clash

■ As Adeyinka's arrival completes Super Eagles B camp

Head coach Salisu Yusuf and his assistants are perfecting tactical strategies with the number of invited players already in camp for the African Nations Championship qualifying match against Ghana in a fortnight.

Yusuf on August 8, called to camp 35 players to battle for shirts ahead of the 2023 African Nations Championship qualifying fixture.

The first set of 31 players arrived at the Bolton White Apartments on Wednesday, 10th August while the other three joined the following day.

Almost all the invited players are already in camp but the arrival of goalkeeper Adeyinka Adewale at the Bolton White Apartments in Abuja, on Sunday afternoon, has completed the body of invited players to the camp of the Super Eagles B.

The Akwa United FC first choice goalkeeper got clearance from the team's management to sort out a few family matters before joining his teammates.

The goalkeeper, who was in the Super Eagles A squad for the friendlies against Mexico and Ecuador earlier in the year, as well as the Africa Cup of Nations qualifying matches against Sierra Leone and Sao Tome and Principe in June, was full of elan and zest on arrival.

The Eagles B will square up to the Black Galaxies in the first leg in Cape Coast on Sunday, 28th August with the return encounter billed for the MKO Abiola National Stadium in Abuja on Saturday, 3rd September.

The winner on aggregate will earn a berth at the 7th African Nations Championship finals to be staged in Algeria early next year.

The players will resume full training on Monday, 15th August after being

allowed rest on Sunday.

### ALL THE PLAYERS IN CAMP:

**Goalkeepers:** Victor Sochima (Rivers United); Adeyinka Adewale (Akwa United); Ojo Olorunleke (Enyimba FC); Nathaniel Nwosu (Flying Eagles)

**Defenders:** Tope Olusesi (Rangers Int'l); Kazie Enyinnaya (Rivers United); Sani Faisal (Katsina United); Samson Gbadebo (Akwa United); Ebube Duru (Rivers United); Christopher Nwaeze (Akwa United); Isa Ali (Remo Stars); Tosin Adegbite (Enyimba FC); Temple Emekayi (Rivers United); Andrew Ikefe (Plateau United)

**Midfielders:** Babatunde Bello (Akwa United); Philip Ozor (Enyimba FC); Maurice Chukwu (Rivers United); Hafeez Nosiru (Kwara United); Zulkifilu Mohammed (Plateau United); Chiamaka Madu (Rivers United); Jide Fatokun (Kwara United); Kenechukwu Agu (Rangers Int'l); Joseph Onoja (Rivers United); Haggai Katoh (Plateau United); Uche Onwuasonaya (Rivers United)

**Forwards:** Abdulazeez Yusuf (Gombe United); Sadiq Abubakar (Enyimba FC); Chidiebere Nwobodo (Rangers Int'l); Promise Amadi (Akwa United); Chijioke Akuneto (Rivers United); Valentine Odoh (Abia Warriors); Andy Okpe (Remo Stars); Adams Yakubu (Akwa United); Godspower Aniefiok (Kano Pillars); Ossy Martins (Rangers Int'l)



## Raducanu, Williams, make first-ever clash in Cincinnati



British number one Emma Raducanu is set to face 23 Grand Slam winner Serena Williams in what will be their first-ever career clash after they were slated to play each other at the Western and Southern Open in Cincinnati.

Raducanu, who earned her highest WTA ranking in 10th place on August 11, 2022, turned pro four years ago to start her campaign for Grand Slam titles.

Although the Canadian-born British international clinched her first Grand Slam

last year after she defeated Leylah Fernandez, 6-4, 6-3, to win the 2021 US Open, the 19-year-old lost in the second round of 2022 Australian Open and 2022 French Open.

Also, her opponent Williams, who revealed last week about retiring from the sport, said she was 'evolving away from tennis, toward other things that are important to me'.

Williams' exit from the sport could come after the upcoming US Open where Britain's Raducanu will be defending the title she won

as an unseeded 18-year-old a year ago.

Prior to the US Open event, the duo will meet for the first time in Cincinnati on Monday, with the winner of the first-round clash taking on either Victoria Azarenka or Kaia Kanepi in the next round.

The American, who clinched her first of her six titles at Flushing Meadows in 1999, was tearful following her second-round exit to Belinda Bencic at the National Bank Open in Toronto on August 10, 2022.

## Taiwo Awoniyi fires Forest to first Premier League victory in 23 years

Nottingham Forest striker Taiwo Awoniyi scored his first Premier League goal against West Ham United on Sunday to hand Forest their first Premier League victory in 23 years and 90 days.

The former Union Berlin striker, who moved to the English topflight league this season at circa €20m to sign a five-year deal, opened the goal chart for Forest just

before the close of the first half.

Awoniyi, 25, a former player of Liverpool before he was sold to Union Berlin, has kick-started a campaign to show to the Reds what they missed for failing to give him enough time to prove himself at Anfield.

West Ham scored the first goal through Said Benrahma which was disallowed by VAR

in the 42nd minute before Awoniyi broke the deadlock in what resulted in the only goal of the game to hand Steve Cooper his first Premier League win since Nottingham gained promotion to the English top-tier last season.

Feelers have continued to overwhelm the entire space at City Ground that contains about 27,000 fans whose chants, "Forest

are back" rented the air spine-tingling.

According to post-match Opta stats by The Telegraph, Taiwo Awoniyi netted Nottingham Forest's first Premier League goal in 23 years and 90 days (Chris Bart-Williams vs Leicester City in May 1999) – the longest gap between a team scoring consecutive goals in the competition's history.





## PSG want Victor Osimhen at Parc des Princes

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

Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) have signified interest to sign in-form Napoli striker Victor Osimhen next season during a discussion with Napoli Sporting Director, Cristiano Giuntoli, about Fabian Ruiz and Keylor Navas in France.

Osimhen's name was said to have been mentioned by PSG coach Christophe Galtier, who in the 2019-2020 French Ligue 1 season, coached the Super Eagles' striker before he made the big-money move to Napoli.

According to an Italian journalist, Paolo Bargiggia, who reported the development, PSG football adviser Luis Campo was in sync with Galtier on Osimhen when Giuntoli met with PSG representatives.



"During Giuntoli's trip to Paris a few days ago, not only the names of Fabian Ruiz and Keylor Navas were at the centre of the discussion but talks about Victor Osimhen were also held," Bargiggia wrote on his verified Twitter handle. "The Nigerian striker

is highly regarded by coach Galtier and Campos, having already had [coached] him at Lille. The French club has placed him as an option for next season," he added.

Victor Osimhen made a switch to Napoli last three seasons ago from LOSC

Lille having had a spell in German Bundesliga with Wolfsburg and RSC Charleroi in Belgium First Division A.

Penultimate the season he switched allegiance to Diego Armando Maradona Stadium, the 23-year-old scored 18 goals in 38 appearances for LOSC Lille coupled with 6 assists to propel Les Dogues to a fourth-place finish.

This goal-poaching quality attracted the interest of Partenopei to spend a club-record fee of €70 million potentially rising to €80 million with add-ons, making him the most expensive African transfer to date.

Last season, Osimhen despite being ruled out of action to miss about 8 Serie A matches from late November 2021 to early January 2022, netted 14 goals in 27 appearances to complement Partenopei's third-place finish.

## Aribo leads Southampton's comeback with first Premier League goal

■ **Substitutes, game changer for Saints- Hasenhüttl**

Southampton midfielder Joe Aribo got his first Premier League goal against Leeds United to reignite a resurgence that saw the Saints come back from two goals down to tally the scoreline later in the second half.

The Nigeria international, who joined the Saints the summer from Rangers, ensured Southampton secured a point in their second Premier League fixture.

Aribo, a 61-minute substitute for Mohammed Elyounoussi, superbly controlled the ball in the opponent's 6yards box to fire a powerful strike having earlier displaced Illan Meslier with a clean dribble.

Meanwhile, Southampton boss Ralph Hasenhüttl commended the players for the comeback to save a point at St. Mary's Stadium on Saturday.

The Austrian gaffer admitted that he was under undue pressure when the Saints were two goals down adding that the substitutions, Joe Aribo and Sekou Mara, made were instrumental to the comeback.

"I'm sweating, not only because of the heat but because of the intensity of the game today," Hasenhüttl admitted.

"In the end, I think it is a deserved point because we showed we can react. It's not always easy when you're two down to turn things around but I think the subs did a very good job today, and we were immediately on them," he acknowledged.

Hasenhüttl said after the end of the first half, he had to make some changes to ensure the Saints controlled the game

which, however, paid off.

"In the second drinks break we had to adjust a little bit, and after these changes, we were in the game," he said.

"We were speaking last season about how five subs will be a game changer, and especially when they have temperatures like today it's even more important to bring some fresh players," Hasenhüttl continued.

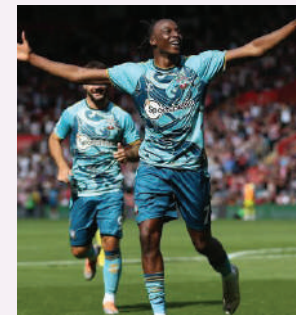
"This is why they are so important to us. I said at the moment that everybody has to do his job, and also the guys who worked until that moment have the responsibility for winning a point today. It feels good, but we have to keep on going.

"We are trusting in ourselves and the way we are fighting, and everyone did a good job today.

"It's not always possible to come back after conceding two goals, so we have to be very critical because this is not possible all the time.

"It was important, especially after the first game, to come back here and taking a point can be a good first step in the season," he added.

Southampton's next game is against Leicester City where Joe Aribo will square up against fellow Super Eagle Kelechi Iheanacho at King Power Stadium on Saturday.



## Park Volleyball: Avenue to bond with environment, says Gagariga

Chairman of Nigeria Park Volleyball Commission (NPVC), Major General Taritimiye Gagariga said Park Volleyball will provide the platform for ex-international to bond with their environment where they can impact positively on the grassroots.

Gagariga said the innovation will help those above the age of 50, who have passed the national leagues' ages, to be actively involved in the sport.

The Chairman, who made the statement during the official launching of Park Volleyball in Kontagora, Niger State, emphasised that for progress to take place in grassroots volleyball, all the stakeholders must be prepared to invest in the game.

"The Park Volleyball will help ex-international bond in their various environments and they can impact the

basic skills and techniques of volleyball into the much younger players," Major General Gagariga said.

According to him, Park Volleyball will spur ex-internationals, aged players, and coaches to promote the importance of this innovation across the nooks and crannies of the country.

The NPVC Chairman, while highlighting the various divisions in the national volleyball leagues, reiterated that the Park Volleyball, despite creating an avenue to bring age players back into active sport, will strengthen our various diversities.

"Park Volleyball is one of the ways we can strengthen our various diversities," he identified.

"The Nigeria Volleyball Federation have the Premier League, the National Division 1 and 2 Leagues; you do not



expect individuals over the age of 50 to compete in these leagues," Major General Gagariga added.

In a related development, Emmanuel Okunwuzo, a 6'5ft Niger Brass middle player was discovered in a four-team event at the Kontagora In-Country Challenge held at the Volleyball Arena, Kontagora Barracks on Friday.

The four-team event included Kontagora VC, Niger Brass (Minna), Super Stars VC of Kontagora and Federal University of Education VC.

Nevertheless, Major General Gagariga applauded the various programmes executed by the academies across the country, giving much regard to the coaching programmes.

## Khaka flourishes in new role for Arsenal

Arsenal midfielder Granit Khaka is happy with his new role for the Gunners where he has been presented the opportunity to move freely on the pitch by coach Mikel Arteta.

The Switzerland international, in the match against Leicester, netted the third goal in the 4-2 bashing of the Foxes after Gabriel Jesus' brace.

Khaka, 29, having anchored the Gunners midfield as a defensive midfielder, solely or in pair with a teammate, finds his new role to go deeper into the opponent's half to support Arsenal's attack, amazing.

In an interaction with Arsenal media, Khaka said that he has

gotten more freedom to support the team's attack.

He added that having been given the privilege to move freely, with the support from his teammates through the consent of the Arsenal manager, he affirmed that everything is going fine.

Khaka said, "I've got more freedom to go up and down.

"I know I can do that. I have a lot of freedom from the coach, and my teammates.

"At the moment I'm happy with how everything is going.

"Let's continue to work like this and hopefully at the end of the season we can be more than happy," the midfielder advised.

Further in his speech, Khaka acknowledged all the players for the great job they did against the Foxes, stressing that it feels good to score.

"It's always good when you score and it's always good when you can help the team - not only me, but all the players did a great job today. I'm more than happy to help, of course," Khaka admitted.

Meanwhile, Arteta commended the Swiss for his contribution in the match and for doing exactly what he was, tactically, instructed to do.

The Gunners boss, who believes in the attribute of Khaka, added that the player could have

doubled his effort from a header in the first half.

"We want [Granit] to arrive in the box and create those moments," Arteta said.

"He has done it in his career, and I'm a big believer that he can do it and he now has this moment to do it.

"He should have scored another with that header in the first half, but I'm really pleased with him," added the Arsenal manager.

Although the Switzerland international is enjoying his new role for the Gunners, Oleksandr Zinchenko and Fabio Vieira may pose a competitive challenge to him for that position.

## It's a shame, Xavi laments over draw

Barcelona manager Xavi Hernandez has been left disappointed by the result of the match against a familiar foe, Rayo Vallecano, where the Catalans were held to a goalless draw at Camp Nou.

Xavi, condemning his players' flaws, said he was disappointed following the lots of enthusiasm that had been generated which they failed to prove on the pitch.

The Catalans boss noted that the players need to be more effective to finish every given opportunity.

"Trying to tell them [players] that this is just the beginning. We have generated a lot of enthusiasm and we will show it on the field," Xavi said.

"We have to improve our effectiveness, take advantage of our opportunities.

"Today we have seen a difficult team like Rayo, worked very well by Andoni Iraola.

"The pity is not having scored a goal. We lacked effectiveness, they also lost a lot of time, and in each action, they lost time. We lacked effectiveness," the Barcelona manager insisted.

Rayo Vallecano defeated Barcelona, home and away, last season to register themselves as a formidable foe against Blaugrana.

Barcelona inarguably were aware of the threats posed by Rayo Vallecano and needed to finish them off at Camp Nou but failed in their deliveries.

Xavi continued: "It's been a shame, I'm disappointed. A lot of expectations have been generated this season and starting like this is not the best way.

"We knew about Rayo's difficulties, yesterday I talked about having to circulate the ball a lot and it cost us to keep working hard," he added.

The Barcelona manager, however, praised the club's golden hands, Ter Stegen, for saving a point for Barcelona by ensuring he kept a clean sheet.

Moreover, while Xavi reposed his confidence in Stegen, he added that keeping a clean sheet is what he was brought in for.

"It's important that the goalkeeper gives us points, that's what he's for, I believe in him,"



## Africa U21 Nations Championship: 'Our target is to qualify for FIVB U19 championship'

### NFVB President confident in team's success

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

**H**ead coach of Nigeria U21 men's volleyball team, Sani Mohammed, says the Nigeria Volleyball Federation (NFVB) has done all that is required to ensure the Nigeria U21 volleyball team succeed in the Africa U21 Volleyball Championship in Tunisia.

Mohamed said the technical crew have been studying various teams in the tourney, especially the teams from the north Africa region.

According to Mohammed, other teams are scared of the Nigerian team but that will not make the Nigeria U21 volleyball squad rest on its oars as they use this avenue to prove to the world how formidable Nigerians are in volleyball.

"The team is prepared, the President of Nigeria Volleyball Federation, Engr Musa Nimrod and his board



members have tried their best; it is left for the players and coaches to do their best in Tunisia," Mohammed said.

"The technical crew have been studying the teams that will participate in the tournament because we do not sleep; other teams are wary of our current squad and development.

"We beam our searchlight on the host Tunisia and other North African Nations. They feel the U21 is their birthright but this is an opportunity to let the World know we are

equally good," he added.

The head coach, however, revealed that every team possesses varying tactics but the final results prove the better side.

"Every team has their strategy and when we meet on the court, the result will show our level of preparedness," noted Mohammed.

Before leaving the shores of Nigeria on Friday, August 12, en route to Tunisia, the head coach of the U21 volleyball team, Sani Mohammed is upbeat that the Nigeria U21

volleyball team will qualify for the 2023 FIVB U21 Men's World Championship.

In a press briefing, Mohammed reiterated that the technical crew has done a lot of research about their opponents from North Africa especially, the host nation Tunisia.

The volleyball coach explained that the Nigeria U21 team comprises mainly players that won the Africa U19 Nations Championship where they were exposed to play the FIVB U19 Boys Championship, adding that they aim to qualify for the FIVB U21 Men's Volleyball Championship.

Meanwhile, the President of Nigeria Volleyball Federation (NFVB), Engr Musa Nimrod is confident the team will be successful with a podium finish in the championship.

Musa, while assuring the team of the federation's utmost support, charged the players to aim for a podium finish before they left for Tunisia through the Nnamdi Azikiwe Airport.

## FIFA alters World Cup calendar, sustains existing tradition

The world football governing body has altered the schedule for the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar to uphold its existing tradition where the host nation is fixed to kickstart the fixtures after the opening ceremony.

Before Qatar 2022 FIFA World Cup, previous editions had the opening game played by the host nation against its opponent which was made different in the 2022 edition.

According to the format adopted by the organisers of the event, the Netherlands was slated to play Senegal in the opening match on November 21 in Qatar while Qatar the host nation, scheduled to play Ecuador, would be at a later date.

However, FIFA may have allegedly had a rethink over the earlier proposition and decided to revert to its traditional way.

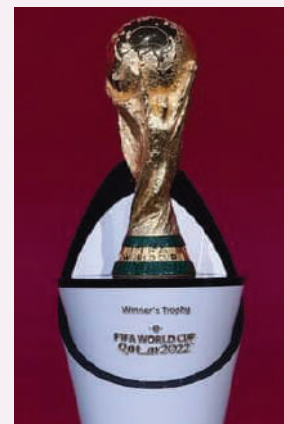
Despite the shake-up to bring forward the Qatar versus Ecuador tie to November 20, other fixtures remain unchanged as the Netherlands will play Senegal on Monday, November 21.

In a statement by FIFA,

"The change ensures the continuity of a long-standing tradition of marking the start of the FIFA World Cup with an opening ceremony on the occasion of the first match featuring either the hosts or the defending champions.

"The decision followed an assessment of the competition and operational implications, as well as a thorough consultation process and an agreement with key stakeholders and the host country," FIFA explained.

Moreover, FIFA added that Qatar versus Ecuador fixture will be held as a stand-alone event on Sunday, November 20.



## NFF, LMC resolve Aiteo Cup imbroglio

The Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) and League Management Company (LMC) have stepped in to resolve the issues that emanated from its decision to award Kwara United the second qualifying ticket to CAF Confederation Cup.

Recall that Remo Stars have automatically qualified for the CAF Confederation Cup following its third position on the log of the recently concluded Nigeria Professional Football League (NPFL) season.

However, there is a second opportunity for other clubs in the Nigeria football divisions to have a shot at the CAF Confederation Cup through the Aiteo Federation Cup being organised by the NFF.

With a greenlight to clinch the ticket aglow, 64 Nigerian clubs were slated in a draw to compete amongst themselves where the winner of the tourney will finally have the opportunity to join Remo Stars in clubs' continental football.

While the tournament lasted up to the last 8, a new decision by the NFF to hand the salt of the event to Kwara United triggered the withdrawal of several clubs from the quarter-final stage.

Among the clubs that presumably boycotted the tournament were Kano Pillars, Wikki Tourists, Nasarawa United, Katsina United, and Lobi Stars.

However, due to their withdrawals, Kogi United

got two walkovers to the final awaiting to play the winner between Niger Tornadoes and the Heartland of Owerri.

But in a twist of event, on Friday, the NFF, LMC and representatives of the clubs that are through to the Aiteo Cup quarter-finals, went for an emergency meeting where they reached a compromise in the spirit of fair play.

According to the resolutions reached, the NFF maintained that all the quarter-final matches will be played on August 20 in the earlier selected venue except Ilorin centre where Heartland tackled Katsina United.

Furthermore, the NFF said that 8 of the quarter-final teams will receive the sum of

N3 million as compensation to ameliorate their expenses while Heartland and Katsina United will receive N5 million each if they decide to replay their tie.

Proceeding to the semifinals, the four successful teams will be given N2 million each while the finalists will be handed N1 million each as compensation.

Consequently, the winner of the event will be awarded the prize money of N25 million which may be subjected to a 50% upward review.

Additionally, the winner of the Aiteo Federation Cup will also be granted automatic qualification to the round of 16 of the 2022-2023 edition of the Aiteo Federation Cup.

## Timo Werner rediscovers self in Bundesliga

Former Chelsea striker Timo Werner has rediscovered his scoring form after returning to German Bundesliga for RB Leipzig.

Werner completed the move from Chelsea in the summer transfer window having failed to secure a regular starting place in Thomas Tuchel's squad.

Three seasons ago, Chelsea snapped the Germany international to Stamford Bridge in 2020 following his exploits for RB Leipzig where he finished the Bundesliga 2019-2020 season as the second highest goalscorer, behind Robert Lewandowski.

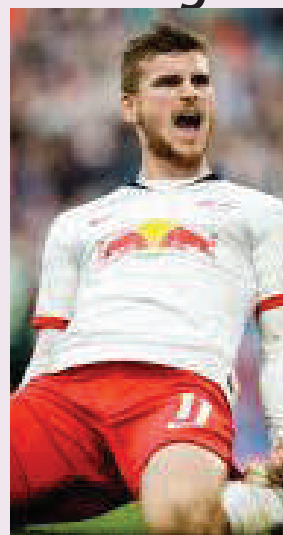
However, the player on getting to Stamford Bridge, could not perform as he did in the German topflight division under Thomas Tuchel who had to deploy him from the central striking position to the wings.

Despite the switch of role, the 26-year-old who scored 91 goals in 157 appearances for Leipzig to become the club's all-time record scorer, could not replicate the same feat for two seasons in the English Premier League for Chelsea.

Consequently, Chelsea sold Werner whom they bought for €53m back to

Leipzig for €20m in a four-year deal and the player who played five Premier League matches before he scored his debut goal for the Blues, opened the goal chart with a 30 yards powerful strike for Leipzig against Cologne in his first Bundesliga appearance on return to Die Roten Bullen.

Leipzig in their next Bundesliga fixture will travel to Alte Forsterei Stadium to face Union Berlin and the pair of Timo Werner and Christopher Nkunku, who both scored against Cologne, will lead Die Roten Bullen's attack.



## Africa Super League will boost football on continent, says FIFA President

President of the International Federation of Association Football (FIFA), Gianni Infantino, commended the new football innovations by the Confederation of African Football (CAF) to develop and improve the competitiveness of football in Africa and beyond.

Infantino said he was happy to have witnessed the historic event development on the foundation of the existing footballing framework.

The FIFA President, speaking on Thursday at the groundbreaking ceremony of the African Super League by CAF at Arusha in Tanzania, explained that since the Africa Super League is built within the pyramidal structure of international football, it will definitely transcend the success of club football in Africa beyond the continent.

"As FIFA President, I am happy to witness such a historic moment of this exciting football project to boost and improve club football in Africa," Infantino expressed during the groundbreaking ceremony.

"African club football needs to be brought to the next level and to do that, it is important to be innovative and to have new ideas, while fully respecting the existing institutional framework.

"The Africa Super League, built within the international football pyramid structure, is a project which will make African club football shine in

Africa and beyond," the FIFA President assured.

Earlier in his remark, the President of CAF, Dr Patrice Motsepe, during the launch of an innovation projected to change the face of African football, stated that the African Super League is one of the most historical feats achieved to grow football in all dimensions in the continent.

Motsepe noted that one of the benefits of the Africa Super League is that it would ensure African football is on the same pedestal with UEFA, CONMEBOL, CONCACAF and other Confederations' tourneys.

"This is one of the most exciting projects in the history of African football and will significantly contribute to the development and growth of the quality and competitiveness of football in Africa," CAF President said.

"The Africa Super League would contribute to ensuring that football on the African Continent is managed and operated at the same professional, ethical and governance level as UEFA, CONMEBOL, CONCACAF and other Confederations," Motsepe clarified.

Moreover, CAF President added that the prize money in the tourney is \$100m with the winner receiving \$11.5m. He also said that \$1m will be sent to each of the 54 Confederations to help develop football in their countries which amounted to \$54m.





## Ex-militants warn ministry officials, mull citizens arrest

By **AHERHOKE OKIOMA,**  
Yenagoa

Former militant leaders from the nine states of the Niger Delta have warned officials of the Federal Ministry of Justice led by the Solicitor-General of the Federation and Permanent Secretary, Mrs. Beatrice Jedy-Agba, to stop allegedly sabotaging the Presidential Amnesty Office. They specifically mentioned the probe of the allegedly looted N60 billion Amnesty Training Centre located in Bayelsa State.

The angry former warlords also warned that the alleged sabotage of the Presidential Amnesty Programme (PAP) from filling proper defence against a \$3.8 billion suit, plus damages filed by the accused fifteen companies involved in the 2019 looting centre is provocative and raising tensions across the region against the ministry and its officials.

Under the aegis of the Reintegrated Ex-Militants Forum (REF), they, however, declared that failure by Jedy-Agba and others to allow proper judicial process as well as to immediately provide the Amnesty office with competent legal representatives to defend the alleged fraudulent cases as required by law, will lead to

them being declared "Persona Non Grata across the nine (9) states in the Niger Delta region and order citizen's arrest."

The REF, in a statement issued by its National Coordinator, former General Tony Ebikalaide (aka Black Spider), said, "at the strategic moment, alerts will be issued to all ex-militant camps to be on the lookout across the entire Niger Delta region to ensure citizen's arrest of the Solicitor-General of the Federation and Permanent Secretary, Federal Ministry of Justice Mrs. Beatrice Jedy-Agba, and other officials in the Judiciary fingered in the alleged plot to sabotage the PAP cases for their personal benefits."

Another group, Niger Delta Amnesty Beneficiary Forum, had accused Jedy-Agba and other officials in the judiciary of corruption and being compromised.

The group said: "instead of the officials of the Federal Ministry of Justice and the Solicitor-General of the Federation and Permanent Secretary to support the legal representation made by the Amnesty Office's legal team against the suits filed by the accused 15 companies in the tune of N3.8 billion, plus 21 per cent post-judgment fees, and special damages which can go as high as N5 billion to N8 billion,

Mrs. Jedy-Agba and other officials in the judiciary are busy sabotaging the Amnesty office's efforts in court by removing the Amnesty Programme's legal adviser and other experienced legal officers from the Amnesty office to deprive the Amnesty office from putting in proper representation in court."

The Niger Delta Amnesty Beneficiary Forum in their previous publication also stated that the "15 companies' suits had different directors, and were filed separately on the same day, but all 15 cases were assigned to only two (2) judges of the FCT High court."

It added: "Whereas there are over 140 courts within the FCT jurisdiction. What are the odds that one judge was assigned nine (9) cases, and the second judge assigned six (6) cases? We had our observers in these courts proceedings; therefore, it will interest you to know that the suits were diligently defended by the Amnesty office lawyers, but in a bid to ensure that there is no clog on their way, the Solicitor General hastily posted out the lawyers that were diligently defending the Presidential Amnesty Programme against these fraudulent suits."

The REF called on President Muhammadu Buhari and other officials in the Presidency, including the



Mrs. Beatrice Jedy-Agba

National Security Adviser, Major General Babagana Mohammed Monguno (rtd.), to note the alleged schemes by some officials within the Federal Ministry of Justice and the Judiciary in collusion with plaintiffs suing the federal government; these officials may sabotage cases in court worth billions of naira in favour of plaintiffs for their personal monetary gains.

It added: "These frequent acts of treachery and or treason, if not nipped at the bud, might cause grave economic and national security implications for the federal government."

"Mrs. Beatrice Jedy-Agba and her colleagues have taken our silence for weakness. Since the appointment of Col. Miland

Dixon Dikio (rtd.) as the Interim Administrator of PAP, the Niger Delta region has been the most peaceful region in the country. Col. Dikio vigorously worked with stakeholders to gain the trust and respect of the diverse ex-militants and ex-warlords camps. Col. Dikio has successfully repositioned the PAP towards achieving its core mandates as envisioned by our founding-father and hero, Late President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua GCFR, and Col. Dikio is on track with the PAP to achieve major milestones prior to 29th May 2023.

"We are all witnesses to the lawlessness and anarchy going on in the country, where many parts of northern Nigeria are not motorable, including corruption

allegations and arrests of government officials for fraud by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission. Col. Dikio (rtd.) is the only appointee by the President Buhari administration from the Niger Delta region that is directly working with ex-militant leaders and ex-warlords to stem the tide against violence, kidnapping of expatriates, pipeline vandalism and total anarchy that would have been caused by angry ex-militants across the oil and gas-rich Niger Delta region which could devastate the national economy.

"Can Mrs. Beatrice Jedy-Agba and her colleagues try this nonsense at the North-East Development Commission (NEDC) or any northern intervention agency?"

"We are aware in the past that the sons and daughters of the Niger Delta region are the ones being used to truncate efforts of our region's intervention agencies such as the NDDC and the PAP, and against the development of our region, including the empowerment of people in the Niger Delta, but this time around, we want to warn Mrs. Beatrice Jedy-Agba, who hails from Edo State to thread carefully as she and her colleagues are no longer welcome in Edo state or any other state across the Niger Delta region.

## Stakeholders task FG on exclusion of Abuja indigenous peoples

Civil society groups from Nigeria and across Africa and ancestral peoples of the Federal Capital Territory, (FCT) who met in Abuja to mark the United Nations World Day of Indigenous peoples have expressed deep concern over what they consider as the continued socio-economic exclusion of indigenous peoples in Abuja. The groups said the situation is a time bomb that should be addressed without delay.

Hundreds of stakeholders celebrated the August 09 event in the FCT with a regional conference, a workshop and a day dedicated to the promotion of indigenous heritage when thousands of indigenous peoples gathered at the Abuja Old park to showcase the culture and of their people. They insist that their land taken away represent the most significant historical injustice they suffer.

The conference organized

by Resource Centre for Human Rights and Civil Education, (CHRICED) and the MacArthur Foundation was attended by hundreds of people, traditional rulers from the various kingdoms, Government Officials, Civil Society Organisations, (CSOs), Executive Director, CHRICED, Mr Ibrahim Zikirullahi, the media, labour, peasants, several representatives of indigenous peoples Environmental Rights Action, (ERA), Prof A B Ahmed of the Faculty of Law, Bayero University, Executive Director, Centre for Transparency and Accountability, (CTA), HRH Alhaji Ismaila Danladi Mohammed, Journalists for Democratic Rights, (JODER), and the members of the FCT Original Inhabitant Association. There are nine indigenous ethnic groups in the FCT namely the Gwari, Koro, Bassa, Epira, Ganagana, Nupe, Gade, Gwandara and Dibo

Since 1976 when the Nigerian Capital was moved from Lagos to Abuja, the original owners of the land claim that have been subjected to all forms of socio-cultural repression. They said peanuts was paid to them which does not meet up to the worth of their land.

In a communiqué issued at the end of the National stakeholders dialogue on Rights of Original inhabitants of FCT and signed by Dr Ibrahim Zikirullahi and leaders of several civil society groups the stakeholders said the bottled up anger of indigenous peoples in the FCT should be addressed to Justice.

The stakeholders said indigenous peoples are distinguished by their ancestral land, their distinct language, culture and time honoured values which are treasured and have been preserved for centuries;

They noted that in Nigeria,

the rights of indigenous peoples in the FCT are a major challenge in the search for sustainable development, peace and stability

The participants said they recognise other ethnic groups like Hausa and Fulani who are in the FCT and have been there for several decades adding that they are not asking them to leave but to work with the other indigenous ethnic groups for peace and stability in the FCT.

The stakeholders in the communiqué said 'we are aware that the Original Peoples of the Federal Capital Territory, (FCT) are indigenous to their territories, their ancestral land which they have lived for centuries. That they own the land; the land is their livelihood, their dignity and pride; they have cultivated the land which is their greatest material and spiritual assets.'

That the indigenous peoples in the FCT are about nine with their own culture and civilisations that

continue to face existential threats from various dimensions;

Participants noted that in 1976, the history of Original People of FCT was deconstructed with the movement of the Federal Capital from Lagos to Abuja by the military government. The movement led to dramatic changes in the sociology, the land ownership, control and management effected through the military Decree 6, all of which affect the past, present and future of FCT indigenous peoples;

"That indigenous peoples in FCT are recognised by their own history and values backed by international instruments including but not limited to International Convention on Indigenous Peoples, the ILO Convention 168 all of which emphasise the protection of indigenous peoples including their intellectual and cultural property"

On December 23, 1994,

the UN General Assembly resolution 49/214 adopted the International Day of Indigenous Peoples to address the fears over ancestral land and associated lost resources.

The communiqué said that the FCT 1976 Decree 06 has affected the history, spirituality, indigenous knowledge, environment, culture, civilisations and heritage of indigenous peoples of the FCT;

That indigenous peoples in the FCT have been consistently denied their right to land and capacity to own property in a territory that historically belongs to them. Other forms of discrimination and exclusion manifest through denial of access to ancestral land, lack of economic, political, cultural opportunities and identities, denial of statehood, denial of access to utilities like health, quality education and job opportunities' they said.