

Insecurity: Bauchi joins the league of school closing states

By Salihu Makera & Mijinyawa Ahmed

Apervasive fear of student abductions by bandit and terrorist groups has prompted several state governments in Northern Nigeria to pre-emptively close primary, secondary and even tertiary schools to mitigate the risk of further attacks.

The latest state that joins the league of the state is Bauchi which order the closing of schools due to insecurity in recent time.

The state government has ordered the immediate closure of all public and private schools across the state, including state-owned primary, secondary, and tertiary institutions, as well as Federal Government-owned schools.

The directive was announced in a press statement issued by the Ministry of Education's Information Officer, Jalaludeen Usman.

"This decision, though difficult, was taken by the Government of Bauchi State after extensive consultations and in response to overwhelming security concerns affecting the safety of students, teachers, and school communities across the state," the statement read.

The government reaffirmed its commitment to safeguarding learners and



Some Students Rush to Evacuate Hostels from Shut across the various schools

urged the public to remain calm, vigilant, and cooperative by reporting any suspicious activities.

"We call on parents, guardians, school proprietors, and all concerned stakeholders not to panic but to remain calm and supportive. The government is working closely with security agencies to address these concerns swiftly and comprehensively, ensuring that normal academic activities resume as soon as it is safe to do so," the statement added.

The government also assured residents that further updates will be provided as the situation

develops. Bauchi has joined the list of states that have shut down schools due to heightened insecurity and the recent mass abductions of students in parts of the country.

Last Saturday, Katsina State announced the closure

of all primary and secondary schools in the Basic and Secondary School Education, Sani Danjuma.

Katsina, a North-Western State, joined Plateau, a North-Central state, which earlier on Friday also announced the closure of all its primary and junior secondary



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schools for security reasons.

"All Government Junior Model Secondary Schools will close effective Saturday, November 22, while all Primary and Day Schools will close effective Monday, November 24," the Plateau government said.

Also on Friday, the Federal Government announced the closure of 47 of its federal secondary schools, known as Unity Schools.

The school closures occur amidst the rising attacks in the country by armed persons on schools, religious houses, and security officials.

Most of the attacks have occurred in the northern part of the country, which comprises 19 of Nigeria's 36 states.

On Monday, armed men invaded the Government Girls Comprehensive Secondary School, Maga, in the Danko/Wasagu area of Kebbi State, North-West Nigeria, abducting at least 24 schoolgirls and killing the school's vice principal.

On Friday, gunmen stormed St. Mary's Catholic Primary and Secondary Schools, Papiri, in Niger State, North-Central Nigeria, and abducted hundreds of students and staff. Over 315 students and staff were kidnapped, but 50 students have been confirmed to have escaped.

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News Extra

Bauchi joins the league of school closing

From front page

In the same vein, on Tuesday, gunmen attacked a church in Eruku, Kwara State, in north-central Nigeria, killing at least two worshippers and abducting several others.

Terrorists in the North-Eastern Borno State also recently ambushed a military team and killed a Brigadier-General and four security officials.

In Niger State the severity of the threat was underlined by the state chapter of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), which confirmed the abduction of 303 students and 12 teachers from St. Mary's Catholic Primary and Secondary Schools, Papiri, Agwarra Local Government Area, on Friday.

Consequently, the governments of



institutions, including tertiary level schools, situated in high-risk areas.

Following the closure directives in Plateau and Niger States, parents

the first-term examinations in most affected schools were either underway or set to begin on Monday.

Niger Governor Mohammed Bago, addressing a news

avoidable" incident.

"This incident could have been avoided. However, it is not a time for blame game. Our mission today is to see how we can rescue these

children and all those kidnapped alongside," he said.

The governor

"Following the insecurity challenges in the country. It has been observed that the organized labour and

clerics to unite and

boarding students, either

focus on the rescue in public or private

secondary schools, are

the target of the bandits, government's with reference to the commitment to recent abduction of students in Kebbi and Niger States.

According to him, Nigeria is the only country we have and Niger State is still our state. As such, we must continue as has directed the government to protect the lives and property of our citizens.

He said the closure of schools in the state with immediate effect.

"In the light of the above, I am directed to inform all principals and proprietors of secondary schools to deboard all students without further delay."

Plateau State government had, on

Friday, also closed down private and public schools in the state for Christmas break for all primary and secondary

schools in the state, given the prevailing security concerns.

Police Com

Bago added that the exact number of abducted children had not been confirmed, saying security agencies were conducting headcounts before an official statement would be issued later in the day.

Similarly, the Taraba State government, on Saturday, ordered the closure of all basic and secondary school hostels in the state over increasing wave of abductions.

The announcement was contained in a statement issued by the Commissioner for Basic and Secondary Education in the state, Dr Augustina Godwin.

The statement indicated that the directive, which is with immediate effect, affect both public and private secondary schools in the state.

The governor called on security agencies, civil society organizations, organized labour and

clerics to unite and

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Police Com

Yobe Orders Immediate Closure of Boarding Schools Over Rising Security Concerns

By: Mijinyawa Ahmed

The Yobe State Government has ordered the immediate closure of all boarding secondary schools as a precautionary measure to protect students amid rising security concerns across parts of the country.

The directive was issued following a high-level security meeting chaired by Governor Mai Mala Buni, where he met with heads of security agencies to review recent incidents affecting schools nationwide.

According to a statement by Mamman Mohammed, Director-General of Press and Media Affairs to the governor, the decision became necessary to

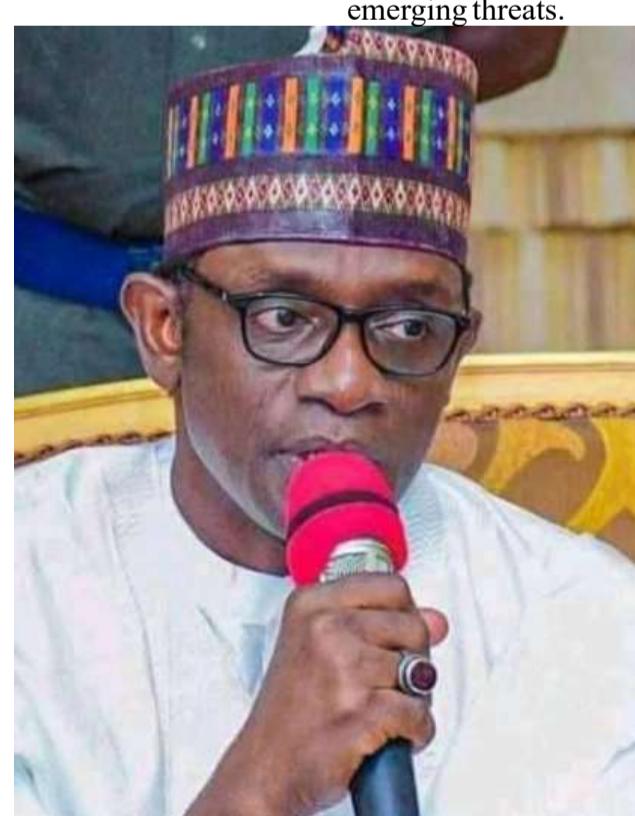
prevent any potential threats to students and staff.

A formal notice released by the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education and signed by the Permanent Secretary, Dr. Bukar Aji

Bukar, instructed all boarding secondary schools to shut down with immediate effect.

The ministry stated that academic activities will resume only when there is a significant improvement in the security situation.

Governor Buni urged residents to remain calm and support government efforts aimed at strengthening safety across communities. He also called on citizens



Dangote Restoring Value to Agriculture, Sponsors 2025 Agric Show

From Ahmad Muhammad, Bauchi

The Dangote Group has said that it is collaborating with strategic partners to revitalise and strengthen the agricultural sector of the Nigerian economy.

This development comes as the company sponsors the 17th National Agricultural Show, which opens on Tuesday, November 25, 2025, in Keffi, Nasarawa State.

The company's spokesman, Anthony Chiejina, stated that expanding mechanised agricultural practices will play a critical role in boosting Nigeria's GDP while creating meaningful employment opportunities for the country's growing youth population.

"Through this partnership, the company aims to encourage greater participation in commercial agriculture and reinforce its role in advancing Nigeria's economic growth," he said.

He said the theme for this year's Show: Employing Smallholder Farmers: Restoring Value, Ensuring Productivity will Ensure Attainment of Food Security in Nigeria, is apt.

Mr. Chiejina said: "Restoring the value of agriculture offers Nigeria more than nostalgic appeal; it provides a pragmatic route to economic renewal. With the right incentives and modern practices, agriculture can once again serve as a reliable engine of growth, anchoring jobs, stabilising markets and giving the economy a sturdier foundation."

The Agricultural Show, a fixture in Nigeria's agricultural calendar, offers a platform for showcasing innovation across the value chain.

The statement said the company is currently developing rice mills in Kano, Jigawa, Niger, Kebbi, and

Sokoto States, with a combined total milling capacity of 1.5 million tonnes per annum.

It noted that the effort is intended to support the government's broader push for food security.

The statement quoted the Senior Adviser to the President of the Dangote Group, Mrs. Fatima Wali-Abdurrahman, as saying that, in line with the company's commitment to restoring

Arc Adamu, who is also the President, All Farmers Association of Nigeria (AFAN) urged the Dangote Group to focus on agriculture, after its success in the oil and gas sector.

He added that: "This year we envisage a tumultuous turn out of farm machinery manufacturers, processors, researchers and youth and women farmers answering the clarion call to bolster Nigeria's food system."



value to agro-allied industrialisation in Nigeria, it is investing heavily in its backward-integration projects in the sugar sub-sector in Nasarawa and Adamawa States.

She said as part of its contribution to the agricultural sector, the company has a fertilizer complex in Lagos, located in the Lekki Free Trade Zone, with a production capacity of 3 million metric tonnes per annum of urea.

Speaking on the participation of the Dangote Group, Chairman, Board of Trustees (BoT), National Agricultural Foundation of Nigeria, organizers of the annual National Agric Show, Arc Kabiru Adamu, said:

"Dangote Group has been our greatest ally from inception and we have enjoyed tremendous and invaluable support from them such that without them we will not be able to continue to hold the show efficiently."

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He added that: "This year we envisage a tumultuous turn out of farm machinery manufacturers, processors, researchers and youth and women farmers answering the clarion call to bolster Nigeria's food system."

ZMS Deputy Governor Flag-off the 29th Annual Qur'anic Recitation Competition

By Usman Shehu Gungura

The Zamfara State Deputy Governor, Mani Malam Mumnnuni, has flag-off the 29th Qur'anic Recitation Competition in the state.

"The flag off of the 29th Qur'anic recitation competition is a testament to the enduring spirit of the committee's commitment to the teachings of the Holy Qur'an. Qur'an is a source of guidance, wisdom, and inspiration for all of us. It is a reminder of our responsibilities towards ourselves, our families, and our

community. Through this competition, we aim to promote a deeper understanding and appreciation of the Qur'an, and to encourage our youth to develop a lifelong love for its recitation and teachings," he said.

Mani Malam Mumnnuni commended the Executive Governor for approving all the request of the committee for the successful conduct of the competition. He also commended their Royal Highnesses, the Emirs,

Standing Committee, judges under the leadership of the Chief Judge Sadiq Sadiq, participants, and supporters of the competition for their efforts in making this possible. May Allah bless and reward you all for your contributions.

The Deputy Governor On behalf of the State Executive Governor, Dauda Lawal flag off the Qur'anic recitation competition. May Allah accept our efforts and make us among those who are guided by the light of the Qur'an.

Society of Broadcasters Awards Zulum for Promoting Ethical Broadcasting

By: Alkali Muhammad Musa, Maiduguri



The Society of Nigerian Broadcasters (SNB) has conferred the Award of Excellence on Borno State Governor, Professor Babagana Umara Zulum, for his contribution to the media industry.

President of the Society, Professor Umaru A. Pate, presented the award at the 2nd annual national conference in Kano, stating that Governor Zulum was nominated for upholding freedom of press, ethical broadcasting and professionalism.

"Despite the security challenges, Governor Zulum is performing. We are aware of the tremendous efforts he is making in rebuilding and resetting victims of Boko Haram insurgency," Pate stated.

He added, "The governor's nomination is based on his support to the broadcast industry and journalism profession. He has continued to uphold ethical broadcasting and press freedom."

Receiving the award on behalf of the governor, the Commissioner for Information and Internal Security, Professor Usman Tar, expressed gratitude to the society.

"I stand on behalf of His

Army Promotes 315 Personnel At 34 Artillery Brigade

The Commander, 34 Artillery Brigade and Land Component Commander, Operation Udoka, Brigadier General Ibrahim Mu'azu Abbas, has decorated 315 soldiers at the Brigade in Obinze, Owerri, Imo State.

Newly deployed spokesperson for the 34 Artillery Brigade Owerri, Major Hashimu Sa'ad Abdullahi, made the disclosure in a statement made available to newsmen in Owerri.

Abbas disclosed this during the decoration ceremony of newly promoted of the soldiers from Lance Corporal to Corporal, Corporal to Sergeant, Sergeant to Staff Sergeant, and Staff Sergeant to Warrant Officers, held at the 34 Artillery Brigade Parade Ground, Owerri.

Brig.-Gen. Abbas said the Chief of Army Staff, Lt.-Gen. Waidi Shaibu was committed to reward hard work, discipline and professionalism, saying "your promotion today is part of the COAS mandate to strengthen our operational readiness. I expect you to justify this confidence," he told the troops.

Further, the Commander urged the newly decorated soldiers to remain focused, diligent, and loyal, noting that higher ranks come with greater responsibilities.

He charged them to intensify their efforts in support of the 82 Division's drive to guarantee peace and security across the South-East.

Security

12 teenagers remain missing After ISWAP Abduction in Askira-Uba

By: Alkali Muhammad Musa, Maiduguri

Twelve female teenagers abducted by suspected Islamic State West African Province (ISWAP) members in Askira-Uba LGA of Borno State remain in captivity, according to officials who confirmed the incident.

The Deputy Speaker of the Borno State House of Assembly, Rt Hon. Abdullahi Askira, who represents the Askira-Uba constituency, said the victims, aged between 15 and 20 years, were seized while harvesting crops in the Mussa farming area.

Askira explained that the girls were among residents relocated from Huyim to Mussa due to security concerns.

"One of the victims managed to escape and has been reunited with her family," he said. "But the other 12 victims are still in the custody of the abductors."

He noted that both Huyim



and Mussa are farming communities, and the relocation was meant to provide safer access to livelihoods.

The Senator representing Borno South, Mohammed Ali Ndume, condemned the attack and urged security agencies to intensify rescue operations.

He described the abduction as "deeply distressing and profoundly unacceptable", adding that it followed a series of recent violent incidents in the region.

"The protection of lives and property remains the primary and non-negotiable duty of government," Ndume said.

"My prayer is that the abducted girls return safely and peace is restored to every community."

He also appealed to residents to support security agencies with credible information and continue to pray for the safe return of the missing teenagers.

Police raid criminal dens, arrest 20 suspects in Maiduguri

By: Alkali Muhammad Musa, Maiduguri

The Borno State Police Command's Rapid Response Squad (RRS) has arrested 20 suspects and recovered weapons and illegal substances following a coordinated raid on criminal hideouts across the Maiduguri metropolis.

According to a statement issued by ASP Nahum Kenneth Daso, the Police Public Relations Officer for the Borno State Command, the operation took place on November 21, 2025.

The raid, directed by the Commissioner of Police, CP Naziru Abdulmajid psc, targeted several hotspots, including Kasuwan Fara, Baga Road, Bolori Kofa Biyu, Shehuri North, and Bulabulin.

The 20 individuals were arrested for various offences, including possession of dangerous weapons, consumption of illicit drugs, causing public nuisance and vagrancy.



CP Naziru Abdulmajid psc, Borno State Commissioner of Police

before they are prosecuted.

The Commissioner of Police reiterated the Command's commitment to internal security.

The statement assures that the police will continue its "unwavering commitment to flushing out criminal elements and ensuring a peaceful and secure environment" for all residents.

Former PSC boss advocates state police

The Pioneer Chairman of the Police Service Commission (PSC), Chief Simon Okeke, has called for the establishment of state police to curb the increasing rate of insecurity in the country.

Okeke made the call in Abuja at the public presentation of a book, "My Stewardship, Compendium of PSC Media Engagements,

2013-2025".

The public presentation of the book, written by Mr Ikechukwu Ani, the Head of Press and Public Relations of PSC, heralds his official retirement from the Public Service after 60 years of age.

Okeke said the increasing rate of insecurity was unacceptable, adding that certain decisions must be taken to address the insecurity in the land.

He said the concerns raised over abuse of state police by the state governors could be addressed through legislation.

He congratulated Ani and his family for a meritorious service to the country and attainment of 60 years of age.

He said the book was about his engagement with the media from 2022 to 2025, policies and how the media was used to promote accountability in policing.

FIDA seeks urgent action against digital violence on women, girls

The International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA) Nigeria has called for urgent and united action to end the rising tide of digital violence against women and girls.

FIDA said this at a news conference in Lagos to kickstart the 2025 annual general conference slated for Nov. 25 to Nov. 27.

The theme of this year's conference is: "Bridging Gaps, Building Future: Women's Rights, Justice and Sustainable Development in Nigeria".

FIDA's Country Vice President, Mrs Eliana Martins, said digital violence has become one of the fastest-growing forms of abuse, worsening gender inequalities and pushing many women and girls out of online spaces essential for learning, economic participation and self-expression.

Martins, who also doubles as the National President of FIDA, said the organisation has launched a 16-day of activism against online and digital violence on women and girls in the country.

According to her, common forms of online abuse include harassment, cyberbullying, trolling, doxing, image-based abuse, online stalking, hate speech, impersonation, gaslighting and sextortion.

She warned that the acts left deep psychological, reputational scars and deprived women and girls of opportunities offered by technology.

Martins said in spite of the Cybercrimes Prohibition Act 2015 and the Violence Against Persons Prohibition Act 2015, weak enforcement, anonymity of perpetrators, inadequate digital literacy and insufficient accountability from technology companies continue to fuel impunity.

She said: "Many women and girls now withdraw from digital spaces due to fear of harassment, identity theft, impersonation, blackmail or AI-generated misinformation.

"This withdrawal limits their access to innovation,

empowerment and development.

"We urge government agencies and law enforcement bodies to strengthen enforcement, adopt survivor-centred approaches and ensure timely prosecution of offenders.

"We also called on tech companies to enforce clear rules, remove harmful content promptly and improve user education on online safety."

She also emphasised the need for sustained public awareness campaigns to promote digital literacy and responsible online conduct, noting that safe online spaces are essential for survivors to speak out and access justice.

"Digital violence must not be trivialised or dismissed as free speech because dignity and privacy of women and girls must be protected both online and offline," Martins said.

The Deputy Country Vice-President of FIDA, Mrs Olubunmi Arajuwa, who spoke on digital violence and accountability of tech companies, said the organisation is working to ensure that technology platforms uphold safety standards and comply with laws against online gender-based violence.

Arajuwa explained that the ongoing 16 Days of Activism against gender-based violence provided an avenue for wider sensitisation on digital abuse, identity theft and other online threats.

According to her, FIDA branches nationwide are carrying out awareness activities to educate citizens and push for stronger accountability from digital platforms.

"Ignorance of the law cannot be an excuse for violating the rights of women and girls online."

"FIDA remains committed to supporting survivors, promoting legal awareness and strengthening enforcement mechanisms to curb gender-based violence in all its forms," Arajuwa said.

(NAN)



Nothing worries me more than Nigeria's security crisis

PRESIDENT
Bola Tinubu says insecurity remains the most troubling challenge facing Nigeria, especially the Northern region.

He said in Kaduna that urgent efforts were required to rebuild trust, strengthen unity and restore safety across communities.

Tinubu, represented by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Tajudeen Abbas, spoke at the 25th Anniversary of the Arewa Consultative Forum (ACF) and the launch of its Endowment Fund.

The president said insecurity must be tackled decisively to prevent further economic decline and educational setbacks.

Tinubu said, "Nothing troubles me more gravely than the security crisis bedevilling Nigeria, especially Northern Nigeria,

"We cannot prosper when one limb of the national body is paralysed."

He said his administration inherited complex security challenges but was addressing them with "urgency and determination."

The president said that the government was committed to eliminating terrorist and bandit groups operating in the North and reversing the region's economic decline.

He expressed optimism about Northern Nigeria's economic prospects, saying he looks forward to the day crude oil tankers begin to roll out from Kolmanik and other northern oil fields.

Tinubu added that key infrastructure projects, including the Abuja, Kaduna, Kano Superhighway, we're being fast-tracked for completion and

commissioning.

He said the North must speak with honest and courageous voices to address its challenges, warning that the region cannot progress if leaders fail to protect vulnerable communities.

"We fail the day we sleep comfortably while millions sleep with empty bellies, the day fear becomes a permanent companion for travellers," he said.

Tinubu added that although decades of dysfunction had strained unity, the diversity represented at the ACF anniversary demonstrated a collective resolve to resist division and restore solidarity.



The president praised the ACF for serving as the conscience of Northern Nigeria for 25 years, saying that the forum had

President Bola Ahmed Tinubu

celebration of courage, consistently defended advocacy and principled dignity, fairness and service.

Tinubu urged leaders across all sectors to Silver Jubilee as a recommit to the values (NAN)

that guided the founding of the ACF, stressing that the unity and stability of the North were vital to Nigeria's overall peace and development.

Atiku Joins ADC, Meanwhile, ADC Says Registration Not Conducted by Authentic Ward Executives.

Former Vice President Atiku Abubakar on Monday formally registered as a member of the African Democratic Congress (ADC), a move he described as the beginning of a decisive national rescue mission designed to end what he called years of "misrule" under the All Progressives Congress (APC).

He described Nigeria as being at a dangerous crossroads, facing what he termed an unprecedented leadership and governance breakdown.

According to him, the country has reached a tipping point under what he described as the APC's rudderless and ineffectual administration.

He warned that Nigeria was drifting toward a national crisis, saying citizens were bearing the brunt of an existential threat that could engulf the nation if urgent action was not taken.

Atiku urged Nigerians to rise above ethnic and religious divisions and join a "national vanguard" committed to restoring stability, prosperity, and credible leadership.

He maintained that the ADC offered a trustworthy platform for rebuilding public

confidence and reviving the country's economic and security landscape.

In his remarks, ADC Chairman in Adamawa, Shehu Yohanna Kambile, described Atiku's registration as a watershed moment for the party.

He said the development would consolidate unity, strengthen internal party structures, and position the ADC as a viable alternative to both the APC and the PDP.

Atiku's registration is expected to fast-track ongoing efforts to expand the party's membership as political realignments gather momentum ahead of the 2027 general elections.

The national leadership of the African Democratic Congress (ADC) on Monday clarified that former Vice President Atiku Abubakar has not yet been formally admitted into the party, despite reports of his recent registration in Adamawa State.

According to the ADC, the registration exercise Atiku undertook

expressed concern that the development may reflect a broader strategy by the former Vice President to leverage the ADC while keeping political doors open, particularly regarding a possible reconciliation with the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), a pattern the party claims has been observed previously.

Okechukwu reiterated that Atiku would enjoy full rights and privileges under the ADC constitution once he regularizes his membership through the officially recognised ward leadership.

He also noted that the party is currently navigating a leadership dispute, with a case pending in the Federal High Court over the legitimacy of David Mark's leadership.

Despite these internal challenges, the ADC reaffirmed its commitment to transparency, due process, and strengthening democratic structures, calling for cooperation to build unity and stability within the party.

"We have consistently urged Mr. Abubakar to complete his membership registration with the authentic party executives in his locality, a step he has yet to take,"

Okechukwu stated. He appealed to Atiku and his associates to show understanding, stressing that the ADC is not a vehicle for personal political ambition but a collective movement dedicated to democratic renewal.

The party further

News

Gombe Youths Unite For Change, Demand Inclusive Leadership in Upcoming Elections

Youth leaders and participants at the Youth Consultative Forum 2025 in Gombe State have identified key barriers to youth participation in politics, including lack of empowerment and unity of purpose and demanded for change in the forthcoming elections.

During the event themed "Youth Driving Change Through Civic Engagement," organised by LEADTOTS Development Initiative with support from National Endowment for Democracy, the event's facilitators urged young people to unite, support one another, and prepare themselves for leadership roles.

One of the facilitators, Amos Mori, emphasised the need for youth to embark on strategic engagement, consultative governance, and connect with societal gatekeepers to achieve their goals.

Another facilitator, Moses Danjuma, highlighted the importance of youth leadership, citing their significant population and role in shaping governance.

He advised them to participate actively in the April 2026 local governments elections in Gombe State and the 2027 general elections.

A participant at the meeting and Gombe State Youth Parliament Speaker, Aliyu Danladi, called on parties to provide free or subsidised nomination forms for youth who are interested in

contesting for elective positions in the next elections, citing financial constraints faced by young people.

He noted that expensive forms, such as the N2 million fee for House of Representatives in the opposition party and the higher fee in the ruling party in the last election, hindered youth participation.

Earlier, the Executive Director of LEADTOTS Development Initiative, Nicholas Afeso, explained that the forum aimed to equip young Nigerians with skills and strategies for effective civic engagement, paving the way for inclusive politics and youth-led change.

He added that the Youth Consultative Forum 2025 brought together young leaders, stakeholders, and partners to drive change through civic engagement.

Afeso emphasised the importance of youth participation in governance, highlighting the forum's goal of empowering young people to take active roles in shaping their communities.

According to him, the forum would equip attendees with skills and strategies for effective civic engagement, making it a key platform for young Nigerians to influence governance and community transformation.

Our correspondent reports that the event features discussions on strategic partnerships, governance, and overcoming barriers to youth participation in politics.

Sheikh Gumi Alleges External Actors Proving Terrorists with Intelligence, Satellite Support in Nigeria

By Usman Shehu Gungura

Prominent Islamic cleric, Sheikh Ahmad Gumi, has alleged that external actors are providing terrorists with intelligence and satellite support under the guise of protecting Christians in Nigeria.

Gumi, in a post shared on his Facebook page, criticised what he described as foreign interference that undermines national security rather than assisting Nigerian forces.

"There is 'Laurence of

the Forest' giving Terrorist intelligence and live satellite imagery to give reason for foreign invasion in the name of protecting 'Christians'. If they love us, such intelligence would better serve our military," he wrote.

Gumi's remarks come amid growing outrage following the abduction of students and staff of St. Mary's School, a Catholic institution in the Papiri community of Agwara Local Government Area of Niger State.

Men's dominance in parties' delegates undermines women's chances in leadership-Women leaders

By Najib Sani, Gombe



Ahead of Nigeria's 2027 elections, women political leaders have raised concerns that the delegate selection process in parties could undermine their chances of securing leadership positions.

They made the lamentation during the opening of North East Women In Political Parties Summit organised by LEADTOTS Development Initiative with support from National Endowment for Democracy (NED) held in Gombe State.

Hauwa Gana Ibrahim, the women leader of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) in Yobe State, has expressed concern that women are underrepresented as delegates within political parties.

She opined that this underrepresentation often leads to men being favoured during primary elections.

The women leader also pointed out that a new law, which requires party executives to contest for delegate positions rather than automatically holding them as delegates, has disproportionately affected women.

According to her, this change has further disadvantaged women, primarily due to the financial constraints they face in contesting for the delegates positions.

"Number one problem women have is all the political parties have to go for primaries and women have minimum of delegates. And this new law that the last assembly have brought, has given more challenge to the women because even those who are in the executives in the parties are no longer delegates," Ibrahim said.

Rifkatu Maxwell, Head of Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) Voter Education and Publicity, Gombe State, also highlighted that the delegates selection process favours men in primary elections.

"The delegates selection

process in political parties favours men, and most of the delegates participating in primary elections are men, which make them often choose men over women," Rifkatu said.

She urged women to rally behind female candidates in 2027 elections, even if they belong to different parties.

This is just as she advised women to form alliances or coalitions in the 2027 elections to secure better representation in governance, citing the example of the opposition merger that led to their victory in the 2023 presidential election.

"Women should put aside party differences and support female candidates contesting against men, in order to increase their chances of winning.

"In the INEC voters register, there are more women and youth than men, and hence, women can change their dominance in terms of leadership," she said.

The INEC official said there is a bill before the National Assembly to reserve one senate seat for women in each state, advocating also for reservation of at least three seats for women in state assemblies.

Another thing she recommended is for political parties to provide free nomination forms for women

to encourage them to contest elections, citing the fact that INEC provides free forms.

Halima Mahdi, a women activist in Gombe State, echoed the sentiments saying lack of women delegates make them unable to field parties' tickets and advised the summit to change it in the north east by 2027 through mobilising women.

Earlier, the executive director of LEADTOTS Development Initiative, Nicholas Oshoja Afeso, emphasised that women's leadership is essential for the region's progress, stating that they have what it takes to lead.

According to him, the summit had representatives of INEC, members of IPAC, women political leaders from different parties and women peer support network across the Northeast participating.

He added that the event aimed to empower women to take on leadership roles and challenge patriarchal norms.

He said over the two-day event, participants would explore key topics, including breaking patriarchy, designing issue-based campaigns, and financing women's political ambitions.

Afeso encouraged women to engage boldly and commit to the summit's goals, making it a launchpad for a new movement that challenges old structures and builds new alliances.



Why North suffers underdevelopment, worsening insecurity - Dangote

By Salihu Makera

PRESIDENT of the Dangote Group, Alhaji Aliko Dangote, has outlined reasons for the North's slow economic growth and worsening insecurity.

Dangote identified decades of policy inconsistency and chronic power shortages as major factors affecting the region, warning that the North risks deeper crises unless its leaders urgently reset its development path.

Speaking at the Arewa Consultative Forum (ACF) Silver Jubilee Dinner and Award Night in Kaduna on Thursday, Dangote said historical efforts to industrialise the North failed largely because government policies shifted abruptly, frustrating long-term investments and eroding investor confidence.

He recalled how, years ago, his group commissioned Arthur Andersen (now part of KPMG) to determine why several promising northern industrialists, including leading textile operators, collapsed despite their expertise and early success. The findings, he said, pointed clearly to unstable government policies.

"Imagine you are about to score a goal and someone suddenly tells you the goalpost is behind your back. That is how unpredictable government policy has been," he said, stressing that such uncertainty crippled multiple northern industries that could have supported economic growth.

He added that the second major challenge is the persistent lack of electricity. According to him, the Dangote Group deliberately avoids connecting any of its Nigerian plants to the national grid because the supply is unreliable and insufficient for



Alhaji Aliko Dangote, President Dangote Group

industrial-scale operations.

"The only two countries where we connect to public

power are South Africa and Ethiopia. Without electricity, you cannot have growth, no matter how hard you try," he

said, noting that power shortages remain one of the biggest obstacles to reviving northern manufacturing.

Don't take law into your hands -

NYSC warns corps members

THE National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) has warned all corps members serving their fatherland not to take laws into their own hands during and after their service year.

Mr Umoren Kufre, the Bauchi state Coordinator of NYSC gave the warning during the swearing-in ceremony of the 2025 Batch 'C' stream 1 corps members at the state's NYSC permanent orientation camp, Wailo in Gajuwawa Local Government Area of the state on Friday.

"I urge you to obey all the rules and regulations governing the NYSC. In case you notice any irregularity, do not take the laws into your hands.

"Always ensure that you follow the proper channel of communication to express your grievances.

"Let me assure you again that management

will ensure that the basic amenities you need in the camp are provided for you. Your safety and comfort remain our utmost priority," he said.

Kofre, who explained that a total of 2,050 corps members were posted to the state for the one-year compulsory service, said there has not been any serious problem since the commencement of the course and the prospective corps members were participating actively in all camp activities.

He appreciated Gov. Bala Mohammed of Bauchi state for his continuous support to the scheme in the state as well as the complete renovation of Corps Members hostels and the construction of a brand new Multipurpose Hall in the camp.

The NYSC boss, however, called on the governor to help them rebuild the part of the camp perimeter fence that collapsed about a year ago.

Declaring the orientation camp exercises open, Gov. Bala Mohammed urged the corps members to take the lead and advocate for national development and transformation.

Represented by Mr Mohammed Umar, the State's Head of Service, Mohammed called on them to take the noble call with utmost seriousness and commit themselves to achieving the scheme's objectives of national unity and development.

While administering the oath of allegiance, Justice Rabi Umar, the Chief Judge of the state who was represented by Abdullahi Yau, Deputy Registrar, High Court of Justice, charged the corps members to maintain law and order towards the peaceful orientation exercises



We must resist those trying to divide us along ethnic, religious line - Atiku

FORMER Vice-President Atiku Abubakar says the Arewa Consultative Forum (ACF) must return to its founding mission of uniting the north and driving a development agenda that reflects the vision of the late Ahmadu Bello.

Speaking recently in Kaduna at the 25th anniversary celebration of the ACF, Abubakar said the forum was established not only to consolidate regional unity but also to revive the north's long-standing agenda of education, agriculture and industrial growth.



Alhaji Atiku Abubakar
Former Vice President

the country.

"We have seen how the north remembers its true leaders like Sir Ahmadu Bello, gone for a long time but still remembered every day.

"Let us ask ourselves, how would we like to be remembered after we have gone as people who made the necessary sacrifices for the rest of us, or as people who seized the opportunities and only buttered their bread?

"If there is any time for the North to unite, it is now, and it is my ardent hope that we should resist those trying to divide us along ethnic or religious lines and rise above these differences; look at the challenges on the horizon and come together as the one people we have always been."

subversion by our adversaries who are constantly working to drive a wedge between us, often fabricating stories and capitalising on our fears of the other, using technology to sow seeds of discord.

"Their target is our God-given wealth. We have seen the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and we must not relent.

"We need to have a leadership with the ability to accommodate the various ethnic and religious groups, in whose hands all can feel safe, and who will be fair and equitable in the distribution of natural resources as well as all other opportunities in

News

Cargo tracking system will save Nigeria N900bn in revenue leakages

THE Sea Empowerment and Research Centre (SEREC) says implementing the International Cargo Tracking Note (ICTN) will save Nigeria an estimated N900 billion annually in revenue leakages.

The centre made the disclosure in a document on its policy commentary on 'The Urgent Imperative of Implementing the ICTN in Nigeria' issued to newsmen by its Head of Research, Dr Eugene Nweke, on Thursday in Abuja.

Nweke said that when implemented, it could cut cargo clearance time by 25 to 35 per cent and curb trade malpractices by 40 per cent within 18 months, boosting Nigeria's competitiveness and credibility in the regional maritime economy.

The director of research described ICTN as a trade facilitation system aimed at improving transparency, security and efficiency in Nigeria's ports.

According to him, it enables pre-arrival processing of cargo data for faster clearance, reduces demurrage and documentation time, curbs illicit trade, closes revenue leakages and enhances Nigeria's competitiveness in global maritime trade.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that the Nigerian Shippers' Council (NSC), under the supervision of the Federal Ministry of Marine and Blue Economy, is the lead agency implementing the ICTN.

The NSC would do it in collaboration with the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS), the Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA) and the Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA).



He expressed concern that in spite of the Federal Executive Council approval of the implementation of the ICTN in 2023, it was yet to be implemented.

"Without this pre-verification system, Nigeria's trade regulators would continue to operate in a reactive intelligence model, allowing room for cargo concealment, under-declaration and falsified manifests.

Experts estimated that the delay in implementation could lead to an estimated annual loss from non-standardised cargo declarations and transhipment concealment between N800 billion and N1.2 trillion.

"Ghana, Senegal, Ivory Coast, and Angola recorded an 18 to 22 per cent rise in customs revenue and a 30 per cent drop in port clearance delays within two years of adopting ICTN.

"The countries also saw a 40 per cent fall in false declarations during the same period.

"The delayed implementation could also affect the smooth implementation of the National Single Window (NSW) projected for the first quarter of 2026 and the modernisation drive of the Nigerian Customs Service," he explained.

Nweke added that with customs modernisation advancing rapidly and the NSC approaching rollout, Nigeria must not operationalise these systems without ICTN integration or risk reinforcing data fragmentation.

Government must recognise ICTN not as a competing system, but as a strategic enabler of all other reforms.

"The ICTN should serve as the data feeder layer into the National Single Window, Customs modernisation and port efficiency frameworks," he stated.

The director of research noted that although various digital modernization efforts were underway in the maritime sector, the ICTN remained the key missing link needed to fully integrate trade intelligence across the system.

He emphasised that the continued delay in ICTN deployment poses critical national risks, including revenue leakage, national security exposure, reputational deficit and a fragmented digital ecosystem.

"The absence of verifiable pre-shipment data weakens Nigeria's ability to detect high-risk or illicit consignments (arms, drugs, waste cargo, etc.) before arrival.

"Nigeria remains among the few major trading nations in West and Central Africa without an operational electronic cargo note system, affecting investor confidence in its maritime sector.

"It has also impacted the country's compliance ratings under the World Customs Organisation (WCO) SAFE Framework of Standards and the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) guidelines," he added. (NAN)

Boko Haram terrorists burn houses, vehicles in Borno community

THE attackers stormed the community at about 1:15 am on motorcycles, shooting sporadically and forcing people to flee before setting buildings ablaze.

Confirming the incident in a telephone interview, the state Police Public Relations Officer, Nahum Daso, said no life was lost.

He said, "On the 23rd of November, at about 1:15 am,

3:am on Sunday after they were overwhelmed.

"Unfortunately, they set ablaze residential houses and other property. But no life was lost."

According to him, troops, Civilian JTF, hunters and volunteers jointly repelled the attackers.

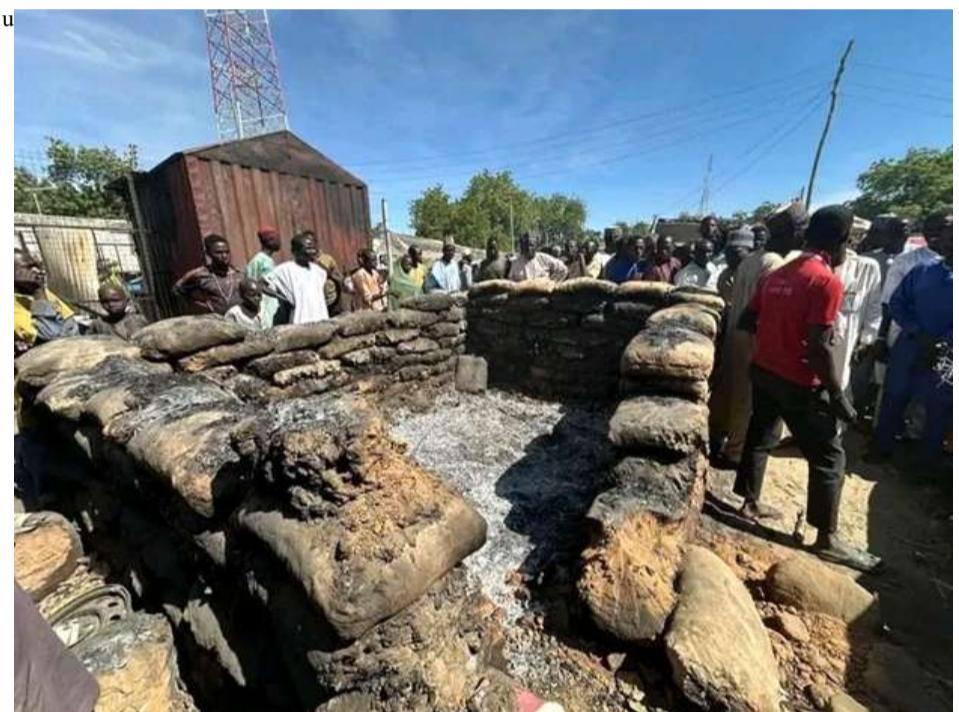
"Our gallant troops and members of Civilian JTF, Hunters and Volunteers responded to distress calls and

that woke us up before we started scampering for safety."

Speaking further, he said, "Immediately after the attack, CJTF and other security agencies stormed Magumeri. They stayed with us. They have also reassured us that they will continue surveillance."

The attack is the latest in a string of assaults on communities across Borno in recent weeks.

Following the renewed



be Boko Haram, they invaded into Magumeri town, where they burn down some houses and vehicles. However, they did not kill anyone."

So This Happened (EP 353) reviews: Princess demands Baba Ijesha's name on sex offenders register

0:02 / 1:01

He added that order had since been restored.

"Normalcy has been restored to the community based on joint efforts of the security agencies," Daso said.

The Executive Chairman of Magumeri, Abubakar Abdulkadir Yaro, said in an interview with our correspondent the assailants sneaked into the town late Saturday night.

He said, "The terrorists fled out of the town at about

successfully repelled the rampaging terrorists," he said.

He commended the security operatives for what he described as a timely and well-coordinated response, noting that "normalcy gradually returns in the town".

Residents also thanked security agencies for their swift intervention.

A resident, Ibrahim Hassan, who witnessed the incident, said the insurgents operated in a coordinated manner.

He said, "From the way they attacked, you can tell that it was coordinated and planned, they came, started chasing people and putting fire into homes, vehicles and shops.

"Many of us were even asleep, it was noise and shout

violence, Governor Babagana Zulum on Saturday declared a state-wide fasting and prayer for Monday, 24th November, seeking divine intervention.

In his broadcast, Zulum said, "despite the recent sporadic attacks, Borno state has witnessed reasonable degree of stability. However, the unfortunate situation in the state, nation and the globe is a matter of grave concern to us."

He added that security efforts must be supported spiritually.

"As people of faith, we believe our security strategy must be underpinned by prayers. I hereby declare Monday, 24th November 2025, as a state wide day of fasting and prayers for the restoration of peace in Borno state and the country in general," he said.



Why I'm no longer in active politics – Jonathan

FORMER President Goodluck Jonathan says his membership of the West African Elders Forum (WAEF) is one of the reasons for his continued absence in active and partisan politics in recent times.

Jonathan gave this explanation in Abuja, while speaking at an event marking the 10th anniversary of the Goodluck Jonathan Foundation (GJF), with the theme "Legacy of Impact, Celebrating Our Journey."

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that the event was also with a gala dinner held to mark the 68th birthday anniversary of the former president.

Jonathan, on why he hasn't been involved in active politics, said that WAEF membership comes with a strict condition of non-partisanship.

He said that the forum was a preventive diplomacy initiative made up of former heads of state who visit countries within the sub-region during election periods to mediate and prevent crises resulting from poorly managed elections.

"The idea is yes, we observe the elections, but we are not co-observers.

"We go there to make sure that if we notice anything that is coming up negatively; we intervene and try to see what we could do so that those issues will not snowball into full crisis.

"The condition to be a member of the WAEF is that you must be a former president within the sub-region and a former president of ECOWAS.

"One clear condition is that you will no longer be an active politician and that is why I am disappointing most of my political associates.

"They expect me to play active role in politics, but before I play active role in politics, I will first and foremost resign from the WAEF," Jonathan said.

Speaking on the state of the nation, Jonathan decried the situation in politics, charging politicians to conduct themselves with decorum and a sense of responsibility.

He said that unlike other professions such as teaching, which require training and certification, individuals often enter politics and assume leadership positions without basic training.

"We must change the face of politics. We must see politics as a business of responsible individuals," he said.

The former president also condemned the recent kidnapping of about 25 girls in Kebbi, noting that the incident reminded him of the abduction of the Chibok girls during his tenure.

He offered condolences to the families of those who lost their lives, including a vice principal, and called for prayers for the speedy rescue of the abductees and an end to such situations in the country.

Recounting the origins of his foundation after losing the 2015 general election, Jonathan disclosed that it was businessman Tony Elumelu who suggested the idea.

He noted that while he initially considered broad areas like education and poverty alleviation, the advisers prevailed that he focusses on areas where he had established global credibility.

According to him, advisers suggested focusing on democracy because he strengthened the electoral commission and conceded defeat even before the 2015 elections were concluded, a feat celebrated globally.

Jonathan added that in spite his academic and professional background in environmental protection and coming from the Niger Delta, he decided to concentrate the Foundation's efforts on democracy and governance.

In her remarks, the Executive Director, GJF, Ms Ann Iyonu, described the event as a moment of reflection on a decade of dedication to and inclusive democratic governance, peace building, development across Africa.

Iyonu said that since inception, the foundation had remained committed to advancing the values of democracy, equity and progress through strategic initiatives and collaborative partnerships.

She noted that 10 years later, GJF stood proud to say that "together they have turned bold ideas into



transformative action".

Iyonu said that the foundation had strengthened democratic institutions through election mediation missions, participation in observation missions, policy dialogues and strategic advocacy across the continent.

She added that the forum's annual democracy dialogue inaugurated in 2021 had grown into a vital platform for reflection, engagement and strategic action.

This, according to the executive director, had brought together voices from across the African continent to interrogate the state of our democracy and chart pathways toward its renewal.

"In Accra this year, we gathered under the theme "Why Democracies Die", a timely and necessary inquiry into the structural and systemic factors undermining democratic resilience both within Africa

Expelled PDP members at the Ibadan convention remain outside the system legally and constitutionally - Gov. Bala

Bauchi State Governor Bala Abdulkadir Mohammed has addressed the controversy surrounding expelled political figures who still claim legitimacy within the party. Speaking during an interview on Arise Television, monitored by The Trumpeter Weekly, he maintained that the party structure is clear and that no one can force themselves back into relevance through media noise.

He stressed that the entire issue is being exaggerated, noting that the expelled individuals are attempting to create distractions rather than respecting due process. According to him, the public should not be misled into believing that there is a faction struggling for control.

In his words: "We don't believe there is any Bot, because that is an illegality. The media should educate a sense of orderliness. We had a convention that people were expelled and of course, even INEC does not recognize them."

His statement suggests that the party has moved on and that those who were expelled remain outside the system legally and

and globally.

"Through our advanced peace building efforts, convening stakeholders in conflict-prone regions, we have fostered peaceful political transitions in various countries in the region and further promoted inclusive governance as a pathway to lasting peace.

"We are promoting the security of African states and their citizens within the context of the rule of law, fundamental human rights and democratic principles via research, learning and knowledge exchange.

"We have also contributed to preventing violent extremism both online and offline at policy and community level, led initiatives aimed to improve trust and collaboration between State institutions and citizens, in advancing peace and security.

"We have expanded our global footprints, forging partnerships with international organisations and amplifying African voices on the world stage. (NAN)

constitutionally. With INEC's position aligning with the party's decision, Bala Mohammed believes the matter should no longer be a topic of debate.

The governor urged the media and the public to avoid amplifying political confusion, emphasizing that only recognized party members can speak or act on behalf of the party going forward.



From Formation to Capture: The Evolution of the Arewa Consultative Forum

By Yusuf Musa

Introduction

The Arewa Consultative Forum (ACF) stands today as one of the most prominent socio-cultural and quasi-political platforms in Northern Nigeria. Yet, its journey from its idealistic founding as a unity-oriented elder-statesman body to what many critics describe as a praise-singing lobby group aligned with government interests is deeply instructive. Understanding ACF's origin, the personalities who shaped it, its funding base, its early mission and structure, and the deviations in its later years sheds light not just on the organisation itself, but on the broader dynamics of power, identity, and regional politics in Nigeria.

In this report, I trace the ACF's formation in March 2000, examine the principal actors, explore its foundational funding and institutional architecture, and analyse how and why its posture changed over time. The report concludes with reflections on what this evolution means for Northern Nigeria and for the original vision of "One North, One People, One Destiny."

1. The Historical Preconditions to ACF's Founding

To fully grasp why the ACF was founded when and how it was, one must situate the organisation in its broader historical context. The 1990s were a period of profound political transition, social fragmentation, and heightened regional anxiety in Nigeria. Several factors converged to create the conditions for a northern unifying body:

Legacy of Political Fragmentation: After decades of military rule, the North lacked a coherent, unified voice.

Different elder associations, traditional leaders, and technocrats competed to represent "northern interests." As the country prepared for a return to democracy, many saw value in consolidating these voices.

The Orkar Coup (1990) and Its Aftermath: The failed coup attempts of Major Gideon Orkar in April 1990 had a lasting psychological and political effect on Northern elites. According to ACF's own later leadership, one of the motives for its formation was to address the tensions unleashed by that coup.

The Board of Trustees Chair, Adamu Fika, explicitly described the ACF as a response to the Orkar coup's destabilisation.

Three pre-existing northern bodies the Turaki Committee, the Northern Elders Forum, and the Unity and Development Foundation fused to form ACF, precisely to provide a single platform capable of reconciling and consolidating northern socio-political interests.

The Turaki Committee, chaired by former President Shehu Shagari, was originally formed to help douse the tensions after the coup.

The Northern Elders Forum under Alhaji Abdurrahman Okene, and the Unity and Development Foundation under Alhaji Sule Katagum, were also instrumental.

According to these accounts, the three organisations realized competition among them hindered effective northern representation, catalyzing a merger to form ACF.

Post-Military Transition and the Search for Stability: By 1999, Nigeria had returned to civilian rule under President Olusegun Obasanjo. Northern leaders perceived an urgent need for a structured institution that could articulate their interest in the new democratic dispensation. The instability, ethnic tension, and religious violence in parts of the North (especially Kaduna) provided a compelling reason to institutionalize a conservative, non-partisan northern voice.

Intellectual and Traditional Leadership:

The meeting that birthed the ACF was convened under the authority of powerful traditional figures notably His Eminence the Sultan of Sokoto, Alhaji Muhammadu Maccido who saw in the Forum a way to mediate socio-political fragmentation and craft a renewed "Arewa concept" grounded in unity, respect, and shared destiny.

Thus, ACF's birth was not a spontaneous or ad-hoc gathering. It was a deliberate and well-orchestrated response by northern elites to long-standing fragmentation, instability, and identity anxiety. It was also deeply symbolic: the meeting that founded it took place at Arewa House, Kaduna, a location loaded with historic resonance for the North.

2. Founding Personalities, Patrons, and Leadership Architecture

The ACF did not emerge from a base of grassroots activism, but rather from the convergence of northern elder-statesmen, retired military leaders, traditional rulers, and technocrats. Understanding who these individuals were and their role in shaping the early ACF is key to appreciating both its legitimacy and its trajectory.

2.1 Traditional and Moral Patrons

Sultan of Sokoto, Alhaji Muhammadu Maccido: The March 7, 2000 meeting was presided over by the late Sultan, lending the new institution moral legitimacy and symbolic weight.

Emirs and Traditional Rulers: Nine Emirs attended the founding meeting, representing a cross-section of northern emirates. The presence of these traditional rulers underscored ACF's character as more than a technocratic think tank it was a forum of traditional authority.

Board of Patrons: The ACF's Board of Patrons included former Heads of State and national personalities, among them General Yakubu Gowon, a highly respected figure whose presence bridged generational divides.

2.2 Technocrats, Elders, and Political Actors

Muhammadu Dikko Yusufu: A former Inspector-General of Police and respected public servant, he was appointed as the first Chairman of ACF.

Sunday Awoniyi: A Christian Yoruba northerner (from Kogi State), he became Chairman of the Board of Trustees. His appointment signaled ACF's claim to inclusivity: religiously, ethnically, and politically diverse voices mattered.

Paul Unongo: A founding intellectual figure and convener of the forum.

Atiku Abubakar:

According to some accounts, Atiku played a key role in catalyzing ACF's formation. Usman Bugaje, a prominent political activist, argues that Atiku "set up a Committee under the leadership of the late Maitama Sule ... to reconcile and unite the North" and that this process led directly to the creation of ACF.

Other Elders: Figures such as Alhaji Abdurrahman Okene (Northern Elders Forum), Alhaji Sule Katagum (Unity & Development Foundation), and Malam Liman Ciroma contributed to shaping ACF's direction.

2.3 Organisational

Structure at Inception

From its founding, the ACF was deliberately institutional. Key organs were established early:

Board of Patrons: symbolic and moral leadership (e.g., Gen. Gowon)

Board of Trustees (BOT): Chief Solomon B. Awoniyi was appointed as Chairman, with Vice Admiral Murtala Nyako as Deputy.

Advisory Council: Inaugurated at the 8th General Assembly; Mallam Liman Ciroma was made Chairman.

Secretariat: Initially located at No. 4A Sani Sambo Avenue, Kaduna — premises provided free for 3 years.

Central Working Committee: As a core body for operational implementation.

In summary, ACF's original leadership was broad, cross-sectional, and deeply anchored in both tradition and technocratic governance. That structure gave it the legitimacy to speak for "Arewa" without being easily dismissed as merely a political party front.

3. Early Funding and Institutional Foundations

ACF's financial and institutional base at the start was modest but functional, and deliberately independent of direct government control.

3.1 Sources of Funding

Personal Contributions:

Founding elders, retired leaders, and committed individuals contributed personally. These funds allowed the establishment of the Secretariat, initial meetings, and publications.

Donations from Influential Northerners:

Business leaders, traditional rulers, and politically influential persons provided resources. While ACF is not always transparent about individual donors, it benefited from wealthy northern elites who valued the project of regional cohesion.

In-Kind Support: For example, the initial secretariat premises were donated: Alhaji Lawal Idris offered space for 3 years free of rent. Also, Malam Mamman Daura donated office furniture worth "millions of Naira" to furnish the secretariat.

Discreet Government Backing: Though ACF was independent in design, some early state governments reportedly gave indirect support hosting meetings, providing venues, or facilitating relationships. However, this was not formal funding control in its infancy.

3.2 Institutional Vision and Mechanisms

From its genesis, ACF was not just a talking shop. Its founding meeting resolved to:

Develop terms of reference that would guide ACF's purpose, structure, and operations.

Explore sustainable funding models. The founding

committee explicitly discussed sources of funding at its first meeting after the March 2000 founding.

Create a blueprint for action: to regenerate and maintain "the oneness of the people of the northern states, irrespective of religion or ethnic differences."

Establish working relationships with northern governors, traditional rulers, and federal legislators: the forum considered sending delegations to Emirs, state governors, the Speaker of the House, and other key players.

Institutional organs: as noted above Advisory Council, Board of Trustees, Central Working Committee.

This smart design gave ACF not only moral weight but also a platform to convene northern elites, develop policy, mediate conflicts, and serve as a voice for collective "Arewa" interests.

4. Foundational Focus, Mission, and Strategic Direction

At its inception, ACF articulated a mission and set of values that distinguished it from partisan political organizations. It positioned itself as a moral, intellectual, and unifying voice for the North.

4.1 Core Mission and Values

According to its own "About Us" statement, ACF was formed because "something had gone wrong" in the North: social cohesion was fraying, conflicts were rising, and effective leadership was fragmented. At its founding, ACF committed to:

Rekindling the Arewa concept, one rooted in a shared identity, common purpose, and mutual respect across ethnic and religious lines.

Promoting inclusion and accommodation, ensuring that all northern people regardless of creed or ethnicity have "a place at the table."

Encouraging northern unity and working recombination: ACF envisioned itself as a "civil society parliament for the North," a place where elders, traditional institutions, and technocrats could deliberate and propose solutions.

Engaging political leadership: part of its strategy was to "use the power of elected executive and legislative officers sympathetic to its cause."

Conflict resolution and mediation: ACF's leaders identified roles for the Forum in bridging northern divides, mitigating religious or ethnic violence, and promoting peaceful coexistence.

4.2 Early Activities and Strategic Initiatives

In its early years, ACF undertook a number of concrete actions consistent with its mission:

Delegation to Traditional Rulers: As part of its "terms of reference," ACF resolved to send delegations to Emirs across the North, emphasizing the importance of traditional institutions in building consensus.

Political Outreach: Delegations were also sent to northern governors and federal legislators to foster working relationships and articulate ACF's vision.

Research and Policy Development: Early on, ACF emphasized the need for a "blueprint for action" identifying policy areas, research priorities, and mechanisms for implementation.

Conflict Mediation: ACF positioned itself as a mediator in northern crises: religious riots, land disputes, inter-ethnic conflicts, and political instability were matters in which ACF pledged to intervene.

Public Advocacy: It issued communiqués, position papers, and public statements on matters of national importance, including constitutional reform, security, development, and federalism.

4.3 Symbolic Vision: "One North, One People, One Destiny"

Perhaps the most enduring and powerful slogan of ACF's founding vision was: "One North, One People, One Destiny." This motto captured a unifying ideology that transcended tribal, religious, and political divides. It underscored a commitment to reforge a collective northern identity in service of shared progress.

5. The Drift: How ACF Deviated from Its Original Mission

While ACF was born with noble aims, over the years multiple observers and critics have argued that it has strayed significantly from its founding values. Below, I map key areas of deviation — not in order to discredit the organisation, but to understand the factors that redefined it.

5.1 Political Capture and Alignment with Government

One of the most significant critiques is that ACF has gradually transformed into a pro-government lobby rather than an independent moral voice. Several features highlight this shift:

Continued on page 11

The Arewa Consultative Forum

From page 10

Praise-singing and Endorsement:

In recent years, ACF has publicly aligned itself with federal governments, praising administrations rather than offering critical, policy-based advice. For instance, as recently as late 2025, ACF publicly pledged support for the Tinubu-Shettima administration.

Patronage and Access: As more northern politicians rose to power, joining ACF's governing structures or seeking its endorsement became a way to legitimize their rule. This practical benefit may have incentivized ACF leadership to avoid overly critical public interventions.

The shift towards alignment with political power raises questions about whether ACF still holds true to its founding spirit of independent counsel. Critics argue that it now often plays the role of an echo chamber, more concerned with maintaining relevance and relationships than challenging the status quo.

5.2 Loss of Founding Intellectual Rigor

At its inception, ACF placed a premium on research, policy formulation, and sustained intellectual engagement. But over time:

The frequency and depth of its policy papers appear to have diminished.

Public statements often lack substantial policy content and instead focus on broad platitudes or political posturing.

Some members of the Board of Trustees and leadership appear more drawn to symbolic gestures (lifetime awards, anniversary events) than to systems-level advocacy.

This erosion of intellectual capacity undermines ACF's ability to serve as a serious think tank for northern development.

5.3 Internal Fragmentation and Competing Northern Voices

ACF's dominance as the voice of the North has been challenged by the proliferation of other northern socio-political groups:

Northern Elders Forum (NEF):

Although initially part of ACF's predecessor groups, NEF continues to operate and sometimes issue critiques of ACF.

Arewa Youth Forum / Arewa Youth Consultative Forum:

Younger northern leaders, disenchanted with what they perceive as ACF's elitism or ineffectiveness, have formed parallel groups.

Miyetti Allah Political Advocacy, Arewa 100% Focus, and others:

These entities have sometimes diverging priorities (herders' rights, youth development, regional reconstruction) and do not always align with ACF statements.

This fragmentation weakens ACF's claim to a monolithic "Arewa voice" and pushes some of its leaders to avoid controversy for fear of alienating key constituencies.

5.4 Funding Dependence and Financial Vulnerability

Over the years, ACF appears to have become more dependent on sources of funding linked to political elites or government-aligned business interests. When funding comes with strings attached:

The independence of its advocacy is at risk.

The need to stay in favor with donors may drive a cautious, non-confrontational posture.

Public criticism of government policies can become muted to avoid jeopardising financial or institutional support.

This funding reality, in turn, may incentivize ACF leadership to prioritize relationships with the powerful over grassroots or policy-based activism.

5.5 Messaging, Credibility, and Public Trust

Critics say that ACF faces a credibility problem when its public messaging appears inconsistent or disconnected from its original ethos:

Contradictory statements from different levels of ACF (national vs. state) sometimes surface publicly. Daily Trust recently reported ACF leaders acknowledging that such inconsistencies harm the Forum's credibility.

There are concerns that ACF is increasingly engaged in symbolic politics lifetime achievement awards, anniversary events, courtesy visits rather than substantive problem-solving.

In short, some of ACF's current public posture appears more celebratory than confrontational, more honorary than policy-centric.

6. Underlying Drivers of the Deviations

To understand why ACF evolved in the way it did, it is essential to examine the underlying structural, political, and institutional factors that shaped its course:

Leadership Transition:

The founding patriots' traditional rulers, elder



statesmen, retired generals gradually aged out, passed on, or became less active. Their successors may not share the same independence or intellectual commitment, and might be more politically ambitious or risk-averse.

Political Incentives:

As northern politicians rose to national prominence, aligning with ACF became a strategic move. For ACF leaders, this access translated into influence but also dependency. Over time, maintaining ties to federal power likely became more valuable than offering independent critique.

Financial Pressures:

Without a diversified, sustainable independent funding model, the allure of funding from politically connected donors grows. This can subtly shift organizational orientation from public interest to patronage-bound pragmatism.

Identity Complexity:

Northern Nigeria is not monolithic. Ethnic, religious, and regional differences complicate a singular "Arewa" identity. The proliferation of parallel groups reflects those fault lines. To maintain relevance, ACF may have made tactical compromises rather than risk fragmentation.

Institutionalization of Symbolism:

Over time, the symbolic capital of ACF (being "the voice of the North," its anniversary, its elite membership) may have overshadowed its functional capital (policy, mediation, research). The risk becomes that image outweighs substance.

7. Implications for Northern Nigeria and National Cohesion

The evolution of ACF has profound implications not only for the organisation itself, but for northern Nigeria's social, political, and developmental trajectory.

7.1 Decline in Independent Northern Voice

If a once-vibrant forum becomes co-opted, Northern Nigeria risks losing one of its more trusted intermediary institutions. This could:

Weaken mechanisms for conflict resolution in the region.

Reduce high-level advocacy for policies tailored for northern development.

Allow other actors perhaps less representative or less thoughtful to define "northern interests."

7.2 Weakening of Civil Society

When socio-political platforms like ACF lose their critical, independent edge, civil society as a whole suffers. The region needs institutions that can speak truth to power not only praise it.

7.3 Risks to Identity and Unity

The fragmentation of northern voices, and the shift of ACF toward political alignment, could undermine the "One North, One People" ideal. If ACF cannot unify varied northern groups meaningfully, identity politics may fragment further, reducing collective bargaining power.

7.4 Policy and Development Consequences

Without rigorous policy engagement, ACF's potential to influence national development agendas diminishes.

The North continues to lag in education, infrastructure, and social services; weak advocacy by a historically influential body could exacerbate those deficits.

8. Recommendations: Reclaiming ACF's Founding Vision

Based on the Centre for Contemporary Studies' analysis, the following recommendations may help ACF recover or revitalise its original mission:

Reinstitutionalise Research and Policy Units

Establish a dedicated Policy Institute or Think Tank within ACF to produce regular, rigorous papers on northern development (economy, education, security, climate,

federalism).

Partner with academic institutions (northern universities, research centres) to build capacity and credibility.

Diversify Funding

Create a transparent, multiyear funding strategy involving membership dues, grants (local and international), and philanthropic support.

Avoid overreliance on political patronage by establishing independent endowments or trust funds.

Leadership Renewal:

Introduce term limits or mentoring programs for leadership positions to prevent elderly capture and stagnation.

Encourage more participation from younger northern leaders, women, and minority-ethnic northerners, ensuring the "Arewa" identity remains broad and inclusive.

Strengthen Internal Governance and Communication

Adopt a robust communication policy to ensure coherence between national and sub-national levels. Daily ACF itself acknowledging the problem of contradictory public statements.

Regularly convene state chapters, NEC meetings, and forums to align messaging and strategy.

Reassert a Mediating Role

Return to conflict resolution and mediation by proactively engaging in northern communal or inter-ethnic tensions.

Serve as a bridge between traditional institutions, political leadership, and grassroots communities.

Accountability Mechanisms

Publish annual reports, audited financial statements, and policy impact reviews.

Hold town-hall-style conferences (Arewa-wide) to remain connected to ordinary northern citizens beyond the elite class.

Public Advocacy

Use major public issues (security, education, climate change, development) as platforms for independent, principled advocacy even when critical of government.

Leverage anniversaries, symposia, and media engagements to amplify thoughtful policy critique.

Conclusion

The Arewa Consultative Forum was born out of a powerful vision: a unified North, respectful dialogue, inclusive leadership, peaceful coexistence, and principled advocacy. Its formation brought together former heads of state, traditional rulers, elder-statesmen, technocrats, and public intellectuals, united by a belief in the shared destiny of the North.

However, over time, ACF's trajectory has tilted. What was once a morally grounded, independent voice has increasingly aligned with political power, often prioritising symbolic relevance over policy substance. This shift matters not only for the Forum, but for the future of the North in Nigeria's federal experiment.

Reclaiming ACF's founding spirit will demand deliberate institutional reform, leadership renewal, financial integrity, and bold public engagement. If it succeeds, ACF could once again serve as a true platform for northern unity, strategic development, and principled dialogue. If it fails, it risks fading into irrelevance or becoming little more than an appendage of political power.

For Nigeria's future and for the North's capacity to shape that future the stakes are high. The Arewa Consultative Forum must decide whether it will renew its commitment to "One North, One People, One Destiny" in action, not just in name.

Yusuf Musa is the CEO – Centre for Contemporary Studies (CCS)

When faith became a weapon: the CIA and the catholic church

By Mkufi Dindai

Throughout the 20th century, two global institutions—the Catholic Church and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)—found themselves operating on parallel missions: both aimed to combat communism, protect Western values, and influence hearts and minds across continents. While the Church's tools were faith and morality, the CIA's were intelligence and covert action. Their paths intersected frequently, and though no formal alliance ever existed, the record shows a pattern of mutual benefit and occasional collaboration that blurred the lines between religion and geopolitics.

Origins of the Relationship

The roots of this cooperation trace back to the early years of the Cold War, when the Vatican emerged as one of the few transnational networks capable of rivaling the ideological and territorial reach of the Soviet Union. For Washington, the Catholic Church offered something no spy agency could manufacture: a deep moral legitimacy and a presence in every corner of the world, especially in Europe and Latin America where communist influence was spreading rapidly.

Declassified U.S. documents and studies such as those archived by the National Security Archive at George Washington University reveal that the CIA viewed religious institutions as critical partners in the psychological and cultural battle against communism. Catholic networks, particularly in Italy, Poland, and Latin America, were perceived as key channels through which pro-Western messages could be spread and resistance movements organized.

Italy: Protecting the Christian West

The earliest and most documented case of CIA-Catholic cooperation occurred in post-war Italy. The Vatican under Pope Pius XII, fearing a communist takeover, quietly supported the Christian Democratic Party. Meanwhile, the CIA funneled millions of dollars into the same cause through front organizations, Catholic trade unions, and cultural programs.

Though the Vatican did not officially endorse CIA operations, their interests aligned. Both institutions feared that a communist victory in Italy—the spiritual heart of Catholicism—would devastate Western moral and political stability. The 1948 Italian election became a decisive moment: propaganda from Catholic pulpits, coordinated with U.S. covert funding, helped secure a Christian Democratic victory, preserving Italy's alignment with the West.

Cuba: Religion Against Revolution

In Latin America, the story became more complex. Following the 1959 Cuban Revolution, CIA operatives reportedly sought to use religious networks to undermine Fidel Castro's growing influence. Declassified reports indicate that the agency distributed tens of thousands of anti-Castro pamphlets through Catholic channels and sought cooperation from local clergy to mobilize protests disguised as religious gatherings.

While the Vatican never sanctioned these activities, they show how U.S. intelligence viewed Catholic institutions as both moral cover and logistical infrastructure. Cuba, heavily Catholic before 1959, was seen as fertile ground for faith-based resistance. Yet the attempt largely failed. Castro's government clamped down, and many priests were expelled or imprisoned.

Latin America: A Divided Church

By the 1970s, the Vatican and the CIA found themselves at odds over Latin America's liberation theology, a movement among priests and lay Catholics that emphasized social justice and sided with the poor. The CIA, viewing it as a Marxist infiltration of the Church, funded anti-communist factions within religious orders and supported right-wing regimes that persecuted liberation clergy.

This created one of the most morally ambiguous chapters in Cold War history: U.S.-backed regimes in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Chile targeted priests and nuns advocating for human rights. Yet at the same time, Catholic leaders like Archbishop Óscar Romero, later canonized as a saint, condemned these abuses demonstrating that the Church itself was internally divided between faith as liberation and faith as control.

Poland: The Vatican's Counteroffensive

Perhaps the most famous convergence of faith and intelligence occurred in Poland during the 1980s. The rise of Pope John Paul II, the first Polish pontiff, transformed the Vatican into a center of moral opposition to Soviet rule. The CIA reportedly provided financial and logistical support to the Polish trade union Solidarity, a movement closely aligned with the Catholic Church that helped destabilize communist control in Eastern Europe.

While both the CIA and the Vatican pursued separate channels, their objectives overlapped: weakening Moscow's grip on the region. Scholars argue that without the combined moral force of John Paul II and covert Western support, the collapse of

communism in Eastern Europe might have taken far longer.

A Complex Legacy

The relationship between the CIA and the Catholic Church was never formalized, but it embodied the intersection of ideology and power that defined much of the 20th century. At times, it appeared mutually beneficial: the Church gained protection and global influence; the CIA gained legitimacy and access to local populations. At other times, it bordered on manipulation, with the U.S. exploiting faith networks to achieve political ends that often contradicted the Church's spiritual mission.

By the 1990s, the world had changed. The Cold War was over, the Vatican had distanced itself from overt political alliances, and the CIA had shifted focus to new global threats. Yet the historical shadow remains. From Italy to Poland to Cuba, the use of religion as an instrument of statecraft left a legacy of suspicion—especially in the Global South, where churches were sometimes seen as tools of Western intervention rather than purely spiritual institutions.

The story of the CIA and the Catholic Church is not one of conspiracy, but of convergence—two powerful institutions navigating the same ideological battlefield by different means. The Church sought to defend souls; the CIA sought to defend systems. Their cooperation helped shape key turning points of the modern world, but it also blurred the boundary between divine mission and political ambition.

Today, as global politics once again invokes faith in struggles over identity, democracy, and power, the lessons of that uneasy alliance remain vital: whenever faith becomes a weapon, both morality and truth risk becoming collateral damage.

(Taifa Daily)

Why we raise alarm over marginalisation, insecurity, and other - ArDA

From Ahmad Muhammad, Bauchi

Hajiya Baheejah Mahmood Abdullahi is the Chairperson Arewa Dignity Advancement Initiative (ArDA).

ArDA is a non-governmental and non-political organisation dedicated to protecting the dignity, unity, and wellbeing of Northern Nigerians, the group. Has its branches across 19 states of the country and the Abuja, in this Interview at the end of their last quarter of the year meeting in Bauchi, the group sebds urgent alert to the Federal Government and the leadership of the 19 Northern States and the FCT with a call on the government and 19 northern governors to provide innovative solution to poverty, insecurity, underdevelopment and other challenges bedeviled the region, here are some excerpts:

How did you assess the situation in Northern Nigeria today?

Northern Nigeria is facing a dangerous mix of economic manipulation, agricultural decline, rising insecurity, social dislocation, and deliberate marginalisation.

These unfolding trends are not accidental; they reflect policy decisions, economic mismanagement, and governance failures that are pushing the region toward unprecedented hardship. Though the situation is serious, ArDA affirms it is fully surmountable—with genuine political will at both federal and state governments level, that is the reason why ArDA Raises Strong Alarm: Northern Nigeria Is Under Deliberate Economic Pressure and explained the need that Federal Government and Northern Governors Must Act now.

How do you want them to act?

Well as people at the helm of affairs they know better than us, but we want to live in safe environment we want them to adopt bold and innovative strategies to tackle the region's persistent security, socio economic and development challenges. We appreciate their sacrifices, but it is time to also look for further, better, more effective means of challenging and curtailing our security circumstances, socio economic challenges in the region, we are all aware today the North is under pressure, but not helpless, that the reason ArDA raises alarm and explained that Northern challenges—though enormous—are solvable. The Federal Government can immediately deploy several interventions:

- Dialogue and inclusion with genuine stakeholders
- Clear roles for traditional rulers as stabilisers of security and culture
- Subsidized fertilizers and farming inputs
- Expanded agricultural financing targeting real farmers, women, and youth
- National Farming System with Federal Commercial Farms in every state
- Skills development tied to local raw materials
- Plantations and agro-industrial hubs to replace imports, National priority for research and innovation, Short-term loans for women and youth, government shall Reduce importation that destroys local

production, and Northern governors must wakeup that's why ArDA sends a strong message to the 19 Northern Governors and the FCT, they should know that The North cannot survive if its leaders continue to act in isolation, pursue non-essential projects, and ignore long-term economic planning. ArDA want Northern Governors to adopt:

• Regional unity on security, agriculture, and economic planning

• State export strategies with at least one export-ready product per state

• Major investment in agriculture and livestock

• Revival of grazing reserves, dairy industries, and livestock value chains

• Elimination of wasteful projects

• Regional markets and storage systems for food security

The North is facing serious challenges and crisis—but a crisis that can be reversed through unity, planning, and focus.

North must urgently embrace modern development models that prioritise youth empowerment and reduce inequality.

"We must begin in earnest to plunge into modern developmental efforts, through inclusive development, just economic growth, must define the North's future. Engaging the Youth" critical to reversing the North's development deficits. is a Northern Nigeria microcosm of the nation, when one part of the country develops, that progress translates to others? "northern leaders most assess both past progress and future challenges and pursue genuine practical and development solution. Because Northern Nigeria has suffered enough—economically, socially, psychologically, and politically. The region cannot continue to bear the consequences of:

• Federal policy neglect, Economic manipulation

• Destructive import policies, Insecurity, Unemployment, Youth despair

• Women's marginalisation

The time for half measures and excuses is over. Northern Nigeria must not be pushed to the edge.

What do you want President Tinubu to do?

ArDA is deeply concerned that while the Federal Government continues heavy borrowing and invests trillions in projects that largely benefit one region, core sectors sustaining most Nigerians—especially agriculture in the North—are being ignored or weakened. At the same time, citizens are taxed aggressively without strategic redistribution, inclusive planning, or cushioning programmes. This has:

• Increased hardship, Distorted markets

• Weakened food production, Deepened inequality, Eroded democratic dividends Northern Nigerians recognize this pattern of deliberate pressure that is driving the region into deeper poverty and psychological exhaustion. The crisis is both economic and sociological. ArDA had expected—President Bola Ahmed Tinubu long democratic experience—that he would be a president for all, committed to fairness,

compassion, and national unity. As President, the safety and livelihoods of Nigerians rest squarely on his shoulders. Nigeria must not continue sinking under man-made problems. If securing the nation has become too difficult, the government must at least create strong, people-centred economic strategies to uplift agriculture, youth and women development, research, and local industries—sectors that engage citizens and reduce youth recruitment into dangerous activities.

A President elected largely by Northern votes should not allow the nation's largest population and food-producing region to suffer this level of neglect. "Do not bite the finger that fed you." ArDA raised the alarm over marginalisation, insecurity, and underdevelopment, we raised strong concerns over deepening marginalisation of Northern Nigeria under President Bola Tinubu's administration, it was reported in many national dailies that many stakeholders accused the federal government of neglecting the region across critical sectors including education, infrastructure, agriculture, and security. These problems painted a bleak picture of the North's socio-economic condition, it is a "national emergency." it was highlighted by experts that 80% of Nigeria's 20 million out-of-school children are from the North, blaming chronic underfunding and misplaced national priorities. If just half of the ₦15 trillion national budget were allocated to education, we would have no child out of school, we need ₦7.5 trillion for education and ₦7.5 trillion for roads in the North. That would address two of our biggest problems".

We have deplorable state of infrastructure, especially in the Northeast, calling many of the region's roads "non-existent. ArDA warned that a lack of development in one part of the country threatens the entire nation's unity and progress.

Stakeholders in the north criticised recent federal decisions such as the relocation of key Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) departments from Abuja to Lagos, the mass retirements of CBN staff, and the lopsided appointment of new directors – only four out of 15 reportedly from the North. "These are not coincidences", "They are decisions with consequences, and the North is watching" the administration is showing alarming indifference" to the North's plight, despite the region's strong electoral support in 2023.

ArDA condemned the government's handling of security in the North, citing "unprecedented levels of violence" and a proliferation of insurgent ArDA faulted the government's agricultural policy, noting that allocations remain below 5% of the national budget – far below the 25% recommended by the Food and Agriculture Organisation, (FAO).

"Beyond security and agriculture, the federal government has failed to prioritise transportation, electricity, education, and healthcare in the North",

Recently we condemned the abduction of 25 girls Kebbi, 30 in Kwara and over 215 in Niger States both by bandits, the response of the Federal Government and security agencies has been woefully inadequate" Why all these is happening in the North? ArDA warned that continued

marginalisation and neglect of Northern Nigeria could lead to deeper instability. We strongly called on President Tinubu to urgently increase funding for critical sectors, promote inclusive governance, and implement targeted policies to lift the region out of poverty, insecurity and other crisis. We urged for the decentralisation of industrial development, advocating for the creation of agro-allied processing zones across the North to harness its agricultural strengths and spur economic growth. "We cannot continue to be just a food basket. The North must become a value-adding industrial zone. We want the president to address our problems ArDA call on stakeholders in the north to action, because as Northerners we most shift from silence to civic engagement. "If we do not speak-up and insist on fairness, the marginalisation will continue, and our children will inherit a more broken and divided nation",

Any message?

Our message is to the Federal Government to put a stop to these reckless abduction and school closure in the north, government should provide safe school for our children, they should emulate young African leaders that are always teaching them a lesson, Across Africa, younger leaders are showing stronger development models:

Ibrahim Traoré (Burkina Faso, 36) — Security reforms and local production

Abiy Ahmed (Ethiopia, 48) — Infrastructure and agricultural expansion

William Ruto (Kenya, 58) — Digital democracy and SME growth

Hakainde Hichilema (Zambia, 62) — Economic stabilization and mining reforms

Despite challenges, these leaders offer clearer direction and productivity. Nigeria must not stagnate while others advance.

History shows nations rise through leaders of vision, courage, and discipline. Africa and the world have witnessed:

Nelson Mandela — Reconciliation

Paul Kagame — Stability and rebuilding

Meles Zenawi — Industrial drive

Lee Kuan Yew — Anti-corruption transformation

Mahathir Mohamad — Industrialisation

Thomas Sankara — Integrity and self-reliance

Nigeria once saw glimpses of such leadership, but lack of continuity and vision kept the nation rotating in hardship. Today, Nigeria is still searching for leadership that can awaken a sleeping giant and position her rightly in Africa and the world.



For the Records

ADVOCACY PRESS CONFERENCE ON

Nigeria's New Language Policy A Step Backward for Education and Identity

By

Hon. Aminu Mohammed Danmaliki

President, Bauchi Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Mines and Agriculture (BACCIMA)

1. Introduction

Ladies and gentlemen of the press, distinguished Nigerians, Today I stand before you not only as a stakeholder in education and culture, but as a leader of the organized private sector deeply concerned about a major policy shift that threatens our national identity, our children's future, and the survival of our indigenous languages.

Nigeria's newly announced language policy has generated confusion, controversy, and justified public outcry. A newspaper, The Trumpeter has already taken a clear editorial stance describing this policy as:

"A Step Backward for Education and Identity."

It is on this foundation that I make this public intervention.

2. The Role of Government Agencies in Language Promotion

Before addressing the policy failure, it is important to remind Nigerians that the Federal Government already has agencies with clear mandates to strengthen and protect our indigenous languages, including:

- i. National Institute for Nigerian Languages (NINLAN), Aba, the Primary Agency Established specifically to teach, research, preserve, and promote Nigerian languages Under the Federal Ministry of Education, Nigeria's only specialized institution for training language teachers and translators.
- ii. Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC)
- iii. Develops school curriculum for indigenous languages, produces textbooks and learning resources, and conducts research on Nigerian languages
- iv. National Council for Arts and Culture (NCAC)
- v. Promotes cultural expressions rooted in indigenous languages and supports cultural festivals and local heritage programs
- vi. National Broadcasting Agencies (Indirect Role)
- vii. FRCN, NTA, and NBC promote mother-tongue programming ensure access to information in local languages.
- viii. These institutions exist for a reason. But a policy that sidelines indigenous languages undermines their entire purpose and weakens Nigeria's educational and cultural foundation.

3. Why the New Language Policy is a Step Backward

i. It Contradicts Global Best Practices

Countries like China, France, Japan, Saudi Arabia, Tanzania, and Ethiopia prioritize the mother tongue as the foundation of national development. Nigeria is now choosing the opposite path, despite the fact that the country is for decade a signatory to UNESCO and UN conventions.

The UNESCO and UN conventions promoting mother-tongue education,

especially in early childhood; and Nigeria's National Policy on Education (NPE) (earlier versions), which emphasized using the child's first language or the language of the immediate community in the early years of schooling. This change seems to reaffirm English as the primary and uniform medium of education from the early years.

ii. Why the Mother Tongue Matters

Research and global evidence (UNESCO, 2003; World Bank, 2021) show that:

Children learn best in the language they understand. Early literacy in the mother tongue improves later learning in other languages (including English). Mother-tongue education preserves culture, identity, and self-esteem. It encourages community participation and reduces dropout rates.

Therefore, abandoning the mother tongue can lead to:

Cognitive disadvantages children struggle to understand abstract concepts in an unfamiliar language. Cultural alienation loss of connection with heritage and traditional wisdom. Increased inequality rural and poor children (who lack strong English exposure) fall behind urban elites.

iii. Is Using English the "Right" Decision?

Not necessarily. While English provides a neutral and unifying platform in Nigeria's multiethnic context, making it the exclusive medium of education especially at foundational levels is pedagogically unsound and socioculturally harmful.

A balanced approach would be:

Early education (Primary 1-3): Use mother tongue or community language for teaching, while introducing English gradually. Upper levels (Primary 4 onward): Transition to bilingual or English-dominant instruction once the child's conceptual foundation is solid. This model is used successfully in countries like Tanzania, Ethiopia, and Finland, where local languages form the base of national literacy and innovation.

iv. Consequences for Nigeria

If English-only instruction prevails:

Millions of children may fail to grasp core concepts early and lose interest in schooling. Indigenous languages may erode or die out, weakening Nigeria's cultural diversity. National development may suffer because education becomes foreign-oriented, not rooted in the people's lived experience.

v. It Threatens National Identity

A people that abandons its language is abandoning its history, its worldview, its cultural memory and its sense of belonging.

vi. It Endangers Local Knowledge Systems

Indigenous knowledge in medicine, agriculture, governance, conflict resolution, and ethics is carried in our languages. Weakening them, weakens our intellectual heritage.

4. It Worsens Educational Outcomes

Research across Africa shows, has shown that children learn faster in their mother tongue, literacy improves dramatically, cognitive development increases and drop-out rates reduce. Nigeria cannot prosper by weakening the very tool that improves learning.

5. It Marginalizes Millions

Many communities depend entirely on their languages for social participation. A policy that downplays mother-tongue education will: Exclude rural learners, increase inequality and reduce access to quality education. What Nigeria Should Be Doing Instead is that a forward-looking language policy should:

1. Strengthen mother-tongue education at early levels
2. Train more indigenous language teachers through NINLAN
3. Expand indigenous language broadcasting
4. Digitize Nigerian languages and make them AI-friendly
5. Support local-language publishing and creative industries
6. Encourage the use of indigenous languages in governance and commerce
7. Protect minority languages from extinction

6. Call to Action

As a nation, we must resist any policy that weakens our identity, divides our people, or destroys our cultural foundation.

I therefore call on: The Federal Ministry of Education, NINLAN and NERDC experts

State Ministries of Education, Traditional institutions and cultural bodies, Civil society and the media to urgently review this policy and ensure that Nigeria's linguistic and cultural sovereignty is not compromised.

Nigeria's strength is in its diversity. Our indigenous languages are not obstacles they are resources, treasures, and pillars of identity. We commend The Trumpeter for its firm stand in its editorial judgment, saying: Nigeria's New Language Policy is a Step Backward for Education and Identity.

- i. Outside Africa, every major region uses its own indigenous language as the primary instructional language

Asia

China → Chinese, Japan → Japanese, Korea → Korean, India → Local languages + English only as a subject and Saudi Arabia → Arabic, Iran → Persian, Turkey → Turkish, Indonesia → Bahasa Indonesia. No Asian country uses a European language as its main school language.

Europe

Every country uses its native language: France → French, Germany → German, Russia → Russian, Italy → Italian, Poland → Polish, Greece → Greek. No

European country teaches children in someone else's language.

Middle East

All countries use Arabic, Turkish, Hebrew, or Persian. English is taught as a subject, not the language of learning.

Latin America

Spanish-speaking countries use Spanish, Brazil uses Portuguese and Indigenous languages (Quechua, Aymara, Guarani) are protected and taught in some regions and again, no foreign imposition.

North America

USA & Canada use English or French, their internal historic languages. Indigenous languages exist but English/French are their own national languages not foreign colonial languages imposed from the outside today.

ii. AFRICA is the ONLY continent where foreign colonial languages dominate education. In many African countries like Nigeria → English, Ghana → English, Kenya → English, Uganda → English, Sierra Leone → English, South Africa → English/Afrikaans, Mozambique → Portuguese, Angola → Portuguese, Senegal → French, Mali → French, Rwanda → previously French, now English and DR Congo → French. These languages are used as the language of instruction Government administration, Higher education and National examinations Even when 80-95% of the population does not speak them fluently.

iii. This is a historical distortion unique to Africa

It is the result of Colonial domination, deliberate suppression of African languages, weak post-independence cultural policy, elite preference for Western norms, lack of investment in African language development. Other formerly colonized regions actively removed colonial languages from classrooms Asia did it, Middle East did it and Latin America did it. Only Africa kept colonial languages as the foundation of education.

iv. The Consequences Are Severe, poor comprehension, low literacy outcomes, high dropout rates, weak innovation, cultural confusion, disconnection from heritage, endangered local languages and weak national unity.

7. Conclusion

Nigeria's decision goes against global best practices and its own educational heritage. Language is not just a tool of communication it is a vessel of culture, thought, and identity. A nation that neglects its languages risks intellectual dependency and cultural extinction.

As Ngũĩ wa Thiong'o wrote:

"To starve a child of their mother tongue is to starve their soul."

We call for its immediate reassessment in the interest of national unity, social justice, and the future of Nigerian children.

Thank you.

ADC will field competent candidates to win 2027 elections- Senator Nazeef

From Ahmad Muhammad, Bauchi

The Deputy National Chairman of the African Democratic Congress (ADC) Senator Suleiman Nazeef Gamawa has explained that the Party will be filled credible and competent candidate compete and defeat PDP, APC in the 2027 General Election and win, as failure is not an option.

Senator Nazeef said this today in Bauchi, when he interacted with reporters, He said

The aim of the ADC was to build a nation every Nigerian would be proud of, and what makes the ADC different is simple: We will be a party of purpose and determination, not impulses an institution that champions democratic values and a culture of accountability and responsibility across its organs and in every government, it forms,".

"Our leadership standard is non-negotiable: Character. Competence. Courage. Discipline. These pillars will guide our choices, shape our culture, and anchor our performance."

He said " the ADC is working on a conviction that Nigeria can, and will, work for everyone and with a commitment to build a party bigger than any personality, stronger than any moment, and positively different from any party in the annals of the country."

Nazeef said that the party is the only platform that could assuage the hardship of Nigerians, as it has the capacity to present credible candidates that would defeat both the All Progressives Congress (APC) and the People's Democratic Party (PDP).

He said that ADC would be a dominant force in the 2027 general elections, whether or not it has serving governors, and insisted that the absence of a sitting governor or President in the ADC would not hinder its chances, and recalled that former President Muhammadu Buhari once defeated an incumbent president without having governors on his side.

Nazeef said, "The people



Senator Suleiman Nazeef Gamawa

have already believed that a new political movement is the option, so ADC is the saviour. We are giving them one blow.

and called on politicians who felt betrayed in their current parties to join the movement.

He said while other political parties have made aspirants' nomination forms very expensive, the ADC will not follow suit.

"We are not going to be like them. We will give a chance to every well-meaning Nigerian," he said.

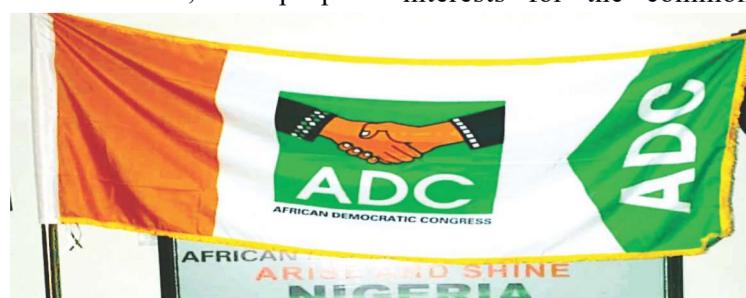
Nazeef who boasted of over 33 years of political experience and his past role as the Deputy National Chairman of the PDP, expressed confidence that he and other party leaders would reposition the ADC for victory.

He also assured that the party would remain fair to the masses if elected into power, and urged eligible voters to obtain their Permanent Voter Cards and be ready to participate in the forthcoming elections, stressing that voting is both a right and a responsibility.

He warned that Nigerians would continue to suffer the consequences of bad leadership if they fail to vote wisely.

Nazeef lamented that the nation's politics and governance had been hijacked by a few individuals, adding that the ADC was committed to mentoring young people interested in leadership and political participation.

"We have set aside narrow interests for the common



'If he can't build PDP, he can't fix Nigeria' — Oshiomhole mocks Atiku's defection to ADC

Adams Oshiomhole, a senator representing Edo north and ex-national chairman of the All Progressives Congress (APC), says former Vice-President Atiku Abubakar lacks the competence to govern Nigeria.

Oshiomhole's comments came hours after Abubakar formally joined the African Democratic Congress (ADC), the party adopted by a coalition of opposition politicians to wrestle power from the APC in 2027.

Atiku confirmed his defection in a post on X, sharing a photo of himself holding his ADC membership card with the caption: "It's official."

Speaking on Monday during his appearance on Politics Today, a Channels Television programme, Oshiomhole said Abubakar's

long struggle to stabilise the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) weakens his claim that he can turn the country around.

He said the former vice-president had not shown the capacity to provide direction within the PDP despite his long-standing influence in the party.

"If Atiku as a former vice-president under PDP could not fix PDP, he could not reconstruct it, and he could not provide leadership and use his influence which he had built, how can you lay claim to fix Nigeria?" Oshiomhole asked.

The senator also referenced Abubakar's exit from the APC, saying the former vice-president only left the ruling party because he failed to clinch its presidential ticket.

"He was once a member of the APC. He left because he lost the party's presidential ticket," he said.

Ex-Jigawa PDP chairmen urge Lamido to seek new political platform amid party crisis

The forum of former local government chairmen of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in Jigawa State has criticised the party's national leadership for allegedly sidelining former Governor Sule Lamido and blocking him from contesting for the position of national chairman.

The forum stated its position in a communiqué issued after its meeting at the PDP state secretariat.

The statement, signed by its chairman, Hon. Ali Idris Diginsa, expressed concern over what it described as the party's deepening internal crisis and the leadership's failure to resolve long-standing disputes.

According to the communiqué, the recent confrontation between Bauchi State Governor, Bala Mohammed, and the Minister of the Federal Capital Territory, Nyesom Wike, at the PDP national secretariat in Abuja was "shameful and embarrassing," further exposing the party's weakened state.

"The PDP is no longer a formidable national platform due to persistent divisions, distrust and unending rancour among its members," the forum stated.

The former chairmen reaffirmed their loyalty to Lamido, describing him as a consistent party loyalist and a steadfast political figure whose pedigree spans decades—from his activism in the PRP youth wing, to his election to the House of Representatives in 1997, to his leadership roles in the SDP, where he served as national secretary during the 1992 Abiola presidential victory.

They noted that Lamido remains the only surviving member of the historic G9 and G18 groups who has never abandoned the PDP, even at the height of the Buhari political wave in the North.

The forum said it has mandated Lamido to "seek a viable political platform" that would allow his followers to pursue "the dream of a greater Jigawa and Nigeria," insisting that they trust his judgement and leadership.

They also urged the Jigawa State PDP leadership to facilitate an immediate meeting with Lamido so the group can formally present its position.

The communiqué ended with a pledge of unwavering loyalty to the former governor: "Wherever he goes, we will follow."

News

Advocacy Visit: NRC Calls for Continued Military Support to Safeguard Railway Assets

By Mijinyawa Ahmed

THE Nigerian Railway Corporation (NRC) North Central and North Eastern districts have sought enhanced military support to protect railway infrastructure during an advocacy visit to the Command of Operation Enduring Peace (OEP) in Jos.

This is contained in a statement signed by Mrs. Sefrem Felix, North East District Public Relations Officer (NEDPRO), and made available to journalists on Friday in Bauchi, held on 18 November 2025, focused on deepening security collaboration with the military to curb persistent threats to railway tracks, materials, and facilities across both districts.

The delegation met with the General Officer Commanding (GOC) 3 Division and Commander of Operation Enduring Peace (OEP), Major General Folusho Oyinlola, who was represented by the Chief of Staff, Col. Senlong Sule.

The NRC team comprised Mr. Wilson Obada, Railway District Manager (RDM), North Central District; Mr. Macellinus Zirra, RDM, North Eastern District; ACP Jafar Shuaibu, Area Commander (NCD/NED); the Railway Divisional Police Officer (RDPO); and other senior officials.

According to the statement, the corporation appealed for stronger military backing to address rising cases of track vandalism, theft of railway materials, and other criminal activities that threaten smooth railway operations.

The delegation emphasized the need for intensified joint patrols, improved surveillance of vulnerable corridors, and quicker response mechanisms to counter security challenges.

They also requested continued support from OEP in retrieving, evacuating, and safeguarding railway materials located within

the command's operational jurisdiction, stressing that such collaboration is critical to protecting national infrastructure.

Responding, Col. Senlong Sule reaffirmed the commitment of

NUC announces Measures to curb growing Misuse of honorary doctorate degrees in Nigeria

By Usman Shehu Gungura

THE National Universities Commission (NUC) has announced measures to curb the growing misuse of honorary doctorate degrees in the country, including a decisive ban on the award of such degrees to serving public officials.

The Executive Secretary of NUC, Professor Abdullahi Yusufu Ribadu, stated this in Abuja recently while receiving report from a committee investigating award and public use/misuse of honorary doctorate degrees by recipients in Nigeria.

According to Ribadu, the Commission was compelled to act following alarming findings from a nationwide investigation into how honorary degrees are awarded and used.

"These degrees are meant to recognise outstanding service or achievements, but unfortunately, they have increasingly been misused," he said.

According to Ribadu, the trend has been worsened by the rise of unaccredited and illegal institutions, both local and foreign, operating as honorary degree mills.

Professor Ribadu explained that NUC's investigation uncovered widespread violations, particularly of the Keffi Declaration of 2012, an agreement by Vice-Chancellors of Nigerian universities to regulate the award of

Operation Enduring Peace to supporting the NRC, noting that the military recognizes the strategic importance of a secure railway system to national development and public safety.

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delegation of sustained cooperation, including strengthened joint operations aimed at curbing vandalism and ensuring a safer environment for railway services across the North Central and North East regions.

Speaking on Channels Television's Politics Today on Friday, Idris explained that contrary to public perception, the matter was not as simple as having a list and immediately taking suspects to court.

The minister's statement came against the backdrop of growing concerns over alleged government complicity in the escalating insecurity ravaging the country.

Successive governments have faced public pressure to identify and prosecute individuals suspected of financing terrorism, particularly Boko Haram, ISWAP, and bandit groups operating in the North.

Under former President Muhammadu Buhari, officials disclosed that some suspected financiers had been identified, raising expectations that trials would soon follow.

However, no high-profile prosecution has taken place, fuelling criticism from civil society groups and security analysts who argue that the delays strengthen public distrust in government efforts against insecurity.

Addressing the matter, Idris said, "It is not a question of having the list or not having the list; it is not as simplistic as that. Investigations have to be conducted. In some cases, there are merits in what they said.

"We agree that ambassadors should be there (US), and the President has agreed that he is going to release this list. As I speak with you, the President is finalising it. They have passed them to security agencies for checks. I can tell you that ambassadors are going to be appointed pretty soon.

"There is diplomatic engagement happening between Nigeria and the United States and other countries. What we feel is that there is no proper understanding of what the situation is about.

"This is the message we are taking to them. We are open to any kind of cooperation regional, international, American or anybody who wants to see that there is an end to this crisis in Nigeria."

Why FG hasn't prosecuted terrorism financiers

Minister

THE Minister of Information and National Orientation, Mohammed Idris, says the Federal Government has not prosecuted individuals suspected of financing terrorism because the process requires extensive and delicate investigations that cannot be rushed.

Speaking on Channels Television's Politics Today on Friday, Idris explained that contrary to public perception, the matter was not as simple as having a list and immediately taking suspects to court.

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Bandits kill victim after collecting N70m ransom

BANDITS have killed a victim, Usman Buhari, after collecting N70 million ransom from his family in Niger State.

Buhari was kidnapped on Monday, September 29, 2025, along with Permanent Commissioner II of

the Niger State Independent Electoral Commission (NSIEC), Ahmad Mohammed, and the former Chairman of the Niger State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB), Alhassan Bawa Niworo, and other travelers along the

However, the news of Buhari's death came through an emissary who took the ransom money to the kidnappers' den.

It was made public on Friday, November 14, 2025 after he had suffered torture from his abductors.

LG system kidnapped by governors – Fed. lawmaker

Rep. Eugene Dibiagwu, representing Ohaji-Egbema/Oguta/Oru West Federal Constituency of Imo, says the local government administration in Nigeria has been “kidnapped” by state governors.

Speaking on the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) Personality Interview Series on Sunday in Abuja, Dibiagwu said the situation had resulted in lack of efficiency in the operations of the local governments.

“For a very long time, the local government system has been kidnapped by the governors to the extent that they have not been able to function optimally,” he said.

The lawmaker, who chairs the House Committee on Regional Development Commissions and Amnesty Programme, said that the National Assembly was taking all necessary steps to ensure full local government autonomy in the country.

Highlighting some of the bills he had sponsored in the Green Chamber, Dibiagwu said one of the most significant was the bill on local government autonomy.

“I have done some bills

and motions, and some of them are already in the process. Let me just mention one: the local government administration autonomy bill.

“The independence of the local government administration is crucial.

“My bill, which has passed the second reading and which I am expecting that within a short time it will pass the third reading, is to guarantee full autonomy to the local government system in the country.

“It seeks to make the local governments fully autonomous, with their allocations coming directly to them from the Federal Government for effective administration,” he said.

Responding to questions on the Supreme Court judgment granting financial autonomy to all the 774 local councils in the country but which had yet to be implemented, Dibiagwu said that the National Assembly was moving to give the ruling a strong legal backing.

“What we are doing is to give that decision of the court a bite. This is so that nobody will now say he or she does not know about it.

“By the time we pass it

into law, there will be no excuses by any government or agency for infringing on the rights of local governments,” he stated.

Dibiagwu, a first-time member of the house of representatives, described lawmaking in the last two years as ‘very robust’.

“We have been collaborating with our colleagues and things are in proper perspective. We are doing our best to ensure that we give Nigerians very good laws,” he said.

Addressing the perception by some persons that the national assembly had been reduced to a rubber stamp legislature, Dibiagwu described such comments as ‘unfortunate’.

“It is not true that the national assembly is a rubber stamp. There is nothing wrong with Nigeria having a collaborative government; that is, a national assembly working in synergy with the executive.

“If the president brings anything that we feel will move the country forward, we look at it, debate it and pass it. I don’t think anything is wrong with that,” he said. (NAN)

Defections: Nigeria not drifting towards one-party state – Rep. Dibiagwu

In spite of the wave of defections from opposition political parties to the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC), Rep. Eugene Dibiagwu (APC-Imo) has dismissed insinuations that Nigeria is drifting towards a one-party state.

Dibiagwu, who represents Ohaji-Egbema/Oguta/Oru West Federal Constituency, stated this during an appearance at the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) Personality Interview Series in Abuja on Sunday.

According to him, the mass movement into the APC is simply because politicians desire “relevance” in the political space.

“The country is not drifting into a one-party system. Every politician wants to be relevant at any point in time. What is happening within the opposition is quite unfortunate,” he said.

Dibiagwu criticised the opposition, particularly Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), for what he described

as its failure to effectively play the role of an opposition.

“If your assertion of a drift towards a one-party system is true, then it is the opposition that is making it so. They have refused to do the work of the opposition.

“Look at what is happening in PDP; people are looking for a place where they feel secure. Some individuals are ensuring that the right thing is not being done,” he said.

The lawmaker stressed that APC was not coercing anyone to join it.

“The opposition should do its work. You don’t blame APC for people defecting.

“If someone comes to my house, I won’t shut the door. I’ll welcome the person because there is something he sees in my house.

“In APC today, we have peace and those who cannot organise their own houses prefer to come where peace already exists,” he said.

On whether he plans to contest again in 2027, Dibiagwu said that the decision would be guided

entirely by his constituents.

“If they believe I have done very well and ask me to return, I will not disobey them.

“If they say I have not done well and should step aside, it is not a do-or-die affair. I have a thriving business I can fall back on,” he stated.

The lawmaker, however, expressed the confidence that his constituents recognised his performance and would support him, whether for the same seat or a higher office.

On the current security situation in the country, he described it as “quite unfortunate,” noting that Nigerians faced daily threats to their lives.

“Security is everybody’s responsibility. It is only when it comes close to you that you understand what Nigerians are suffering every day,” he said.

“I am sure he is not sleeping over the issue of insecurity. With the new marching orders given to these security chiefs, I believe things will change,” he assured. (NAN)

Nigeria will not disintegrate – First Lady



Sen. Oluremi Tinubu, First Lady

partnerships that will benefit the country,” he said.

Kalu also emphasised the importance of stakeholders’ engagement in addressing the country’s challenges.

Mrs Tinubu spoke at the thanksgiving service for the investiture and presentation of Most Rev. Sunday Onuoha as Archbishop on Special Duties.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that at the event held at Methodist Unity Cathedral, Abuja, the First Lady was represented by Bishop Stephen Adegbite, the Executive Secretary, Nigerian Christian Pilgrim Commission (NCPC).

Mrs Tinubu, who said that the nation’s hope lies in the hands of God, called on Nigerians to continue praying for the country, the Church, and God’s guidance.

She emphasised that while Nigeria welcomes help from other countries, it will never be intimidated or become a disgraceful nation.

“Nigeria will not disintegrate. Nigeria will remain one indivisible entity. God will be with Nigeria.”

“We shall celebrate the coming Christmas in peace and in joy, and it shall be well with Nigeria.

“I wish the Archbishop well in his new role,” she said.

Speaking in the same vein, the Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives, Benjamin Kalu, said Nigeria needed foreign partnership to tackle its security challenges.

He expressed support for foreign partnerships in addressing insecurity in the country.

According to him, the government can work with international allies to tackle security challenges without compromising the nation’s sovereignty.

“The President is a democrat and is open to

Onuoha added that Nigerians should not live in denial about the country’s challenges, particularly insecurity.

“We need help. If somebody thinks we don’t need help, that person is in denial.

The Archbishop called for an end to the blame game and demonisation of others, stressing that the loss of human life is a tragedy that transcends religious and ethnic divides.

Onuoha pledged to work with the Church and other stakeholders to promote peace and unity in Nigeria. (NAN)

Opinion

FROM CHIBOK TO PAPIRI: GIRL-CHILD ABDUCTIONS IS THERE A HIDDEN AGENDA?

Over the past decade, Nigeria has witnessed a deeply troubling pattern of mass abductions targeting school children—predominantly girls—in northern communities. From the tragedy of Chibok in 2014 to Damci, the Forestry College attack, Gusau, Jangebe, the Birnin Yauri girls of Kebbi, and most recently Papiri, the recurrence of these high-impact and high-trauma incidents raises profound questions about motive, design, and the architecture of insecurity in the region. This pattern is too consistent to be dismissed as coincidence, too strategic to be attributed merely to criminal opportunism, and too enduring to be separated from broader socio-political and geopolitical undercurrents shaping Nigeria's fragile national stability. The question—is there a hidden agenda?—is no longer speculative; it is a legitimate inquiry for scholars, policymakers, communities and concerned citizens. The Centre for Contemporary Studies (CCS) approaches this discourse holistically, integrating security analysis, political economy, psychological warfare interpretation, historical continuity, and the sociology of national cohesion.

To understand whether a hidden agenda exists, the journey must begin from the earliest watershed event—the abduction of the Chibok schoolgirls in April 2014. That single event reshaped Nigeria's global image, introduced the country into the world arena of asymmetric insecurity, and permanently altered the psychology of schooling in Northern Nigeria. Chibok did not occur in a vacuum; it emerged at the intersection of Boko Haram insurgency, state fragility, intelligence failure, community vulnerability, and ideological warfare. What is most significant is not only the abduction itself, but the template it established: abduct girls, provoke national outrage, attract global attention, impose psychological trauma, challenge state authority, and exploit the resulting confusion for political and financial gains. As later events unfolded, it became clear that this Chibok template had been internalised by diverse actors—terrorists, bandits, opportunists, political spoilers, and possibly external forces whose interests align with destabilisation.

One must ask: why schools? Why girls? Why northern rural communities? Why the same operational style? Why the same failure of intelligence before incidents and the same ritualistic expressions of shock afterward? Why do these crimes succeed repeatedly in a region with one of the highest concentrations of military, police and security formations in the federation? If we follow the logic of patterns—a fundamental tool in intelligence analysis—it becomes clear that repeated outcomes often reflect deliberate strategy rather than accidental occurrence. When a particular set of events consistently weakens a region, diminishes its educational capital, erodes its social stability, and fuels internal displacement, the outcome itself may represent the agenda.

In Northern Nigeria, education—especially girl-child education—has long been the Achilles heel of the region's development. The attackers seem fully aware that no instrument cripples future progress more effectively than dismantling educational aspiration. When a community becomes afraid to send its daughters to school, when classrooms are shut down, when teachers flee, when the very idea of schooling becomes associated with fear and danger, the long-term developmental cost is immeasurable. These abductions have produced precisely such an environment. The socio-

psychological trauma is cumulative; each new incident reactivates old fears. Thus, whether or not a hidden agenda exists, the effect is the same: a generational disarmament of Northern Nigeria through the destruction of its educational foundation.

The CCS perspective requires examining the political economy embedded within these abductions. Kidnapping has evolved into a multi-billion-naira industry, enabling criminal networks, corrupt intermediaries, informants, weapon suppliers, negotiators and political actors to benefit from chaos. However, the abduction of schoolgirls carries a deeper symbolic and international currency. Unlike ordinary kidnapping, the abduction of innocent children—particularly females—creates emotional shock waves, pressures government into concessions, internationalises the crisis, and destabilises political narratives. Criminals may seek ransom, terrorists may seek ideological legitimacy, political spoilers may seek to discredit leadership, and external actors may seek to weaken Nigeria's coherence. When multiple beneficiaries coexist within the same insecurity ecosystem, the outcome appears coordinated even if individual motives differ. This is how hidden agendas operate: not through a single mastermind pulling strings, but through a convergence of interests all benefitting from the same pattern of instability.

Another dimension involves the security lapses and governance failures that consistently accompany these events. Each abduction is preceded by warnings from local communities. Villagers often report strange movements, suspicious gatherings, or threats, yet such intelligence rarely triggers preventive action. In many cases, security forces arrive after the damage is done. In some instances, the attackers operate for hours—moving hundreds of children, crossing forests, navigating routes, and disappearing into known hideouts—without interception. How do dozens of armed men move repeatedly across territories supposedly under military surveillance? Why do the same vulnerable schools remain unprotected despite a decade of repeated tragedies? Why has there been so little investment in perimeter fencing, real-time communication tools, community-based monitoring, drone surveillance, or rapid-response units dedicated to school safety? It is either gross incompetence, systemic sabotage, or a deeper collusion. In any of these scenarios, the public cannot be blamed for suspecting a hidden agenda.

Chibok generated an international hashtag. Gusau produced national fear. Jangebe amplified regional vulnerability. Birnin Yauri exposed the limitations of state response. Kebbi demonstrated how brutality can persist amidst promises of reform. Papiri now confirms that the cycle is far from over. Taken individually, one may argue that each event is a manifestation of localised insecurity. But when aligned chronologically, patterned sociologically, and interpreted through strategic lenses, they reveal a disturbing continuum. Certain communities have become laboratories for insecurity, while others serve as corridors for terrorist mobility. Over time, the phenomenon of school abductions has transitioned from insurgency to organised banditry, blending ideology with economics and opportunism.

A hidden agenda does not always mean a grand conspiracy. Sometimes, it is the quiet convergence of political and economic incentives that thrive in disorder. In northern Nigeria, the erosion of

educational confidence undermines the region's human capital, depresses its economic competitiveness, and limits its political bargaining power at the national level. A region struggling with literacy, development, and representation becomes more vulnerable to manipulation. Whether orchestrated or accidental, the outcome disproportionately disadvantages the North. In national political calculations, a region in perpetual crisis tends to receive sympathy rhetorically but suffers marginalisation practically. In this sense, the question is not whether there is a hidden agenda, but whose agenda the current reality ultimately serves.

From a sociological perspective, the repeated targeting of girls carries deeper cultural implications. Women are the heart of community continuity, family stability and moral civilisation in northern societies. To abduct girls is to wound the emotional centre of the family system. It is psychological warfare aimed not only at the victims but at the collective identity of the community. Moreover, girl-child education has been a major front in the struggle between conservative inertia and progressive reform in the North. The attackers exploit this tension, knowing that each abduction revives debates about whether sending girls to school is worth the risk. Thus, beyond physical harm, the abductions revive ideological fears, revive cultural anxieties and weaken the push for modern education.

A comprehensive analysis must address the ideological and geopolitical dimensions. Northern Nigeria is not isolated from global currents of radicalisation, arms proliferation, and transnational crime. The Sahel region—stretching from Mali to Niger, Burkina Faso and Chad—has become one of the world's most active theatres of terrorist operations. The collapse of Libya, the crisis in Sudan, and the instability in Niger have created an arc of insecurity that bleeds into Nigeria's northern borders. Weapons flow in. Fighters move across porous boundaries. External groups leverage local grievances to recruit and expand influence. In this environment, school abductions become a low-cost, high-impact tactic that fits neatly into the broader strategies of extremist groups aiming to delegitimise the state, disrupt local economies, and impose parallel governance.

The failure of Nigeria's intelligence community to adapt is another factor reinforcing suspicion of deeper agendas. Despite modern technology, despite billions spent on defence, despite years of experience in counter-insurgency, the same pattern of failure repeats. Where intelligence is absent, actors with agendas—internal or external—thrive. Where institutional weakness persists, conspiracies flourish. Where accountability is lacking, impunity grows. And where impunity becomes normalised, insecurity becomes institutionalised. If the question of hidden agenda persists, it is because the system has not provided a convincing counter-narrative.

Yet, the CCS perspective must maintain balance: while suspicion is understandable, evidence is essential. There may not be a single orchestrated mastermind. Instead, what exists is a multi-layered matrix of interests, each benefitting differently:

Criminal networks gain money.
Terrorists gain notoriety.
Political spoilers gain leverage.
Arms traffickers gain customers.
Foreign actors gain influence.
Local informants gain reward.
Elites in some sectors gain justification for budgets.

Communities are left with trauma. And northern Nigeria loses.

This is how hidden agendas operate in modern conflict: not through visible conspiracies but through sustained outcomes that favour certain actors while devastating others. Insecurity becomes a market. Terror becomes a bargaining chip. Trauma becomes political capital. And tragedy becomes routine.

The long-term consequences of these abductions are devastating. Northern Nigeria now faces an education crisis of historical proportions. Thousands of schools have closed or are barely functional. Teachers are unwilling to work in high-risk zones. Parents are afraid to send children—especially girls—to boarding schools. Communities live in permanent fear. Development stalls. Poverty deepens. Illiteracy spreads. And extremist narratives find fertile ground in societies where hope has been eroded.

It is not merely that children are abducted. What is abducted with them is the region's future.

Therefore, the question—is there a hidden agenda?—must be confronted with intellectual honesty. If the agenda is to weaken the North, the pattern supports that outcome. If the agenda is to reshape national power dynamics, insecurity serves such interests. If the agenda is to undermine public confidence in the state, school abductions have achieved unprecedented success. If the agenda is simply economic exploitation by bandits, the repeated mass targeting of girls suggests motivations far beyond ransom. If the agenda is ideological imposition, the assault on female education aligns with extremist doctrine. If the agenda is political destabilisation, the timing and recurrence of these attacks cannot be ignored.

Yet the most dangerous agenda may be the normalisation of abnormality. Nigeria has slowly adapted to tragedy. We mourn today, forget tomorrow, and move on without structural reform. Each abduction becomes another statistic. Each return becomes another ceremony. Each unreturned victim becomes another unresolved chapter. This slow acceptance of insecurity is itself a form of hidden agenda—one that weakens the mind, deadens sensitivity, and erodes the capacity for collective outrage.

In conclusion, from the standpoint of CCS, the string of abductions from Chibok to Papiri does not reflect isolated tragedies but a sustained pattern with strategic, political, ideological and economic implications. Whether orchestrated or emergent, the effect on Northern Nigeria is catastrophic. Educational decline, security erosion, political weakening, psychological trauma, gender regression and socio-economic stagnation combine to form a perfect storm of underdevelopment. If a hidden agenda exists, its signature is visible in the outcomes: a region drained of its most precious resource—its children; a state repeatedly embarrassed; a nation desensitised; and a generation left to navigate fear rather than hope.

Nigeria must rethink its security model, redefine its educational priorities, and re-centre national cohesion. The cost of inaction is generational. The cost of silence is existential. And the cost of ignoring patterns is the death of foresight.

Until the nation confronts this cycle with sincerity, courage and structural reform, the tragedies from Chibok to Papiri will not represent the past—they will represent the future.

By Yusuf Musa
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Don't Misuse your Rights, Become Purposeful in life UNICEF Advises Students at World Children's Day

By Usman Shehu Gungura, Bauchi

As Bauchi joins Global community to celebrates World Children's Day, Bauchi students at Hazibal Hotel last week in Bauchi challenged leaders on issues of nutrition, health, and education, declaring that "education is not a privilege nor a favour but a right".

The students emphasized that education is a fundamental right and the key to their future. They therefore called for a conducive environment and safe learning spaces to enable them become purposeful and responsible adults and contribute meaningfully to national development.

The call was made during debates and paper presentations at World Children's Day gathering organised by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

Speakers at the event emphasized the need for a secured environment, quality education, experienced and qualified teachers, as well as adequate food especially for pupils in border communities.

Other demands included the right to proper treatment, the right to personal identity, the right to protection from harmful traditional practices or abuse, and the right to move freely without fear of attack from individuals or groups.

In his presentation, at the World Children's Day, the Chairman of Bauchi Local Government Area, who also serving as ALGON chairman, Hon. Mahmood Baba Maji urged students to pursue quality education and uphold good conduct and character to



become the leaders of tomorrow.

He said ALGON in Bauchi remains committed to supporting UNICEF to achieve greater results. He disclosed that the 20 LGA's had contributed ₦100 million to support child nutrition in the 2025 budget.

The chairman revealed that committees have been set up to address school dropout rates, improve child nutrition, promote exclusive breastfeeding, and ensure every child in the state has a registered birth.

Also speaking, the Commissioner for Education, Dr. Mohammed Lawal Rimi Zayan, reassured that the state government is aware of children's rights and is working tirelessly to protect them and ensure every child reaches their full potential and purposeful leaders of tomorrow.

UNICEF's Chief of Field Office, Bauchi, Nuzrat Rafique represented by Health Officer Oluseyi Olosunde said the agency, in collaboration with ALGON, has strengthened the Child Nutrition Fund in Bauchi.

What Tinubu must do to address insecurity – Security expert

A security expert, Mr Seyi Babaeko, has cautioned that Nigeria may be approaching a critical point as violent attacks, kidnappings, and community invasions continue to rise across the country.

Babaeko, the Managing Director and CEO of Absolute Security and Advance Protocol Ltd, gave the warning while speaking with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) on Tuesday in Lagos.

According to him, the nation is drifting toward something dark and urgently needs decisive intervention from President Bola Tinubu to prevent a deeper breakdown of security.

He said that the pattern of violence across states showed increasing coordination

among criminal groups, leaving communities fearful and feeling abandoned.

According to him, criminal networks are growing stronger, richer, and more sophisticated.

The security professional urged President Tinubu to adopt a unified national security strategy that brings all agencies and levels of government under one coordinated framework.

He also advocated for a complete overhaul of Nigeria's intelligence operations, saying Nigeria cannot rely on outdated methods while armed groups continue to evolve.

The expert called for the deployment of advanced technology in security operations, including surveillance drones, satellite

monitoring, and improved night-operation systems in high-risk areas.

He said Nigeria's porous borders must also be addressed urgently to curb the influx of illegal arms fueling violence.

Babaeko said that, beyond military responses, Nigeria needs a national peace and reconciliation effort involving traditional rulers, religious leaders, civil society, and community actors.

He said that unresolved grievances and rising hate speech must be addressed early to prevent identity-based conflicts.

Babaeko also backed calls for state policing, stating that Nigeria's size makes centralised policing ineffective and slow in responding to local realities.

Atiku charges FG to act decisively to tackle challenges in education sector

From Umar Dankano, Yola

Former Vice President Atiku Abubakar and the Founder of the American University of Nigeria, (AUN) Yola has charged Federal government to harness our collective strength to act decisively for positive change in tackling numerous challenges facing us as a nation.

Abubakar threw the challenge while delivering his remarks at the AUN's 17th annual Founder's Day ceremony held at the Commencement hall of the University in Yola weekend stressing that, Nigeria has become "a land of rich diversity and boundless opportunities but stands at crucial crossroads due to formidable challenges".

Abubakar observed with dismay that, the failure or near collapse of our education and human development services sectors as among majors contributing to the backwardness of the country despite our human and natural resources which gave us an edge among nations globally. He noted that, for us to correct the mess,

we must first acknowledge the myriad difficulties and threats that besiege the Nigerian state citing; the violence unleashed by the relentless Boko Haram religious fanatics, and the resulting pervasive security challenges that plague our nation.

"We are again contending with marauding criminal gangs and bandits who are terrorizing innocent communities, alongside bigoted separatists whose violence leaves scars on the fabric of our society. On another plank, ethnic and tribal jingoists are threatening our collective peace and creating divisions that further erode our social cohesion.

"As daunting as these divisive challenges are, however, it needs to be pointed out that, perhaps, the most insidious threat of all comes not from the visible chaos of these armed groups but from a far deeper neglect of our education, health and human development services.

"This neglect was orchestrated by the invidious machinations of white-collar criminals who sit in our public offices, dressed in elegant suits, flowing or starched traditional dresses, working in our Public/Civil Services, National Assembly, Judiciary and the Executive.

"The crass disregard for education inflicted upon us by

the current as well as the successive governments since 2007, has transformed what could have been a vibrant future into a bleak landscape. While we can struggle to confront the acute threats of violence and turmoil from the armed groups, the consequences of neglecting education, health and human services do not just threaten the present - they wreak havoc on our future.

"Currently, millions of children remain out of school, and among those who do enroll, many find themselves disillusioned, trapped in an outdated paradigm that fails to prepare them for the demands of an increasingly complex and competitive world.

"The statistics are sobering; Nigeria holds the regrettable title of having the largest population of out-of-school children in the world. How is it that in a country rich in resources, cultural heritage knowledge and a myriad of talents, we find ourselves with such a dismal record? Every unattended classroom symbolizes a child with unfulfilled potential, a dream put on hold, and a talent that will remain dormant.

"It is in the face of this very ugly and harrowing picture of our future that I shudder to reflect on the Federal Government's decision to allocate over \$23 billion towards the construction of the Lagos-Calabar Coastal Highway (\$13B) and the Badagry-Sokoto Superhighway, (\$9B) while the nation is gripped by this educational crisis.

"Amidst the government's failures to fulfil its duties, the American University of Nigeria shines as a symbol of top-tier, non-profit education. We celebrate the significant achievement of establishing AUN, a gift from the Atiku family that transcends borders to serve humanity.

In their separate remarks the President of the University, Dr. DeWayne Frazier and the guest speaker of the Occasion, Prof.

Muhammadou M.O. Kah lauded the foresight of the former Vice President Atiku Abubakar over the establishment of the development institution in the North East region of the country and Africa.

They described the American University of Nigeria Yola as a catalyst for change fuelled by real hope, clear vision, and the belief that through education, we can rewrite our destiny.

Northeast

Margi culture Association honors Fintiri, unveils new attire in Adamawa

From Umar Dankano, Yola

The Adamawa state Governor Ahmadu Umaru Fintiri has urged Nigerians to as a matter of pride and prestige accord their ancestral roots the needed recognition for onwards transfer to next generation.

Governor Fintiri dropped the hint at a civil reception in his honor and the unveiling of a new attire for Margi tribe organized by the Margi Worldwide Association in Yola, the Adamawa state capital weekend.

Fintiri described the honour as deeply personal, noting that his journey in public service began with the support of the Margi people, his family and Associates. He said his heritage shaped his values of courage, honesty, and perseverance.

While reaffirming his commitment to the service of Adamawa citizens for giving him the mandates to serve as Governor as he hailed his Margi ancestral roots for making him who he is today.

The governor paid glowing tribute to Margi ancestors whose resilience, he said, built a community rooted in dignity, unity, and hard work. He expressed pride in belonging to the Margi nation, adding that he would choose the same identity if given the opportunity to return to the world again.

Fintiri reflected on the early days of his administration, recalling the insecurity, infrastructural decay, and weakening public trust that affected Adamawa State. He said his government prioritised peace-building, justice, and cooperation to restore stability, leading to Adamawa becoming one of the most peaceful states in the North-East.



He also highlighted major reforms in education, including the declaration of free and compulsory schooling, payment of WAEC and NECO fees, reintroduction of scholarships, staff training, and the establishment of model schools. According to him, "education remains the state's covenant with the next generation."

On healthcare, the governor announced improvements in facilities, recruitment of health personnel, and the establishment of an ultra-modern diagnostic laboratory offering free dialysis and other services at the Specialist Hospital, Yola.

Governor Fintiri also outlined his administration's empowerment initiatives for youth and women, the creation of jobs, reforms in the civil service, and infrastructural projects aimed at easing life for residents. He described governance as "restoring hope, not just building roads."

A major highlight of the event was the unveiling of a new Margi national attire. The governor said the attire symbolises cultural pride and continuity, reminding Margi people everywhere of their identity and values. He described culture as a moral

compass that must not be lost to modernity.

The governor expressed deep gratitude to Margi traditional rulers, including the Emir of Askira, the Emir of Uba, the Emir of Gwoza, and the Ptil Migzir of Madagali, as well as Margi sons and daughters across Adamawa, Borno, and Cameroon for their unity and support.

He also acknowledged neighbouring ethnic nationalities and royal fathers across Adamawa for their solidarity, pledging to continue strengthening unity among communities.

Governor Fintiri thanked fellow governors—Seyi Makinde of Oyo, Bala Mohammed of Bauchi, Kefas Agbu of Taraba, and Babagana Zulum of Borno—as well as PDP leaders for their continued support to Adamawa State.

He declared that his administration remains committed to completing ongoing reforms and projects across the state saying "We are not resting; we are only retying our laces".

The occasion was well attended by the people of Margi extraction, politicians, traditional leaders as well as people from all walks of life where they were exposed to the rich culture of Margi people.



NUJ 2025 Media Summit: Gov Kefas Charges Journalists on Professionalism, Calls for Strong Partnership

By Sanee Yarima, Jalingo



Governor Agbu Kefas of Taraba State has sought a stronger partnership with the media practitioners based on trust and mutual respect.

He made the call while declaring open a two-day NUJ 2025 Media Summit with the theme: "Building Trust and Integrity in the Age of Misinformation," held in the state capital.

The Summit, which brought together about three hundred Journalists across the thirty-six States of the federation, including the FCT,



Abuja, is part of the NUJ's constitution, and it is the first time the state is hosting it.

Addressing the gathering, the Governor stressed the need for Journalists to uphold professionalism by providing fair and balanced reportage.

He said his decision to ensure transparency and accountability in governance since he assumed office, would not be achieved without the media, charging the Journalists to uphold professionalism and the ethics of the profession.

Earlier in an address of welcome, the National President of the NUJ, Comrade Alhassan Yahya called on the federal government to support road

construction efforts in the North-East, emphasising that improved infrastructure will accelerate development across the region.

He maintained that the summit was brought to the state because of the remarkable improvement in security and lauded Governor Agbu Kefas for making the summit a reality.

In a keynote address, Professor Umar Pate, who is the Vice Chancellor of the Federal University, Kashere, Gombe State, emphasised the need for Journalists to ensure

their safety to enable them to tell the story for societal benefit.

The Professor of Mass Communication, Pate, also said a journalist must be psychologically safe, physically safe, gender safe, digitally safe, media safe, and economically safe.

Speaking further on the digital significance for media, the university don pointed out, "Any journalist who is not ready to embrace the digital era should prepare himself for oblivion."

Professor Umar Pate urged Governor Agbu Kefas to provide every reporter in Taraba state with a laptop and a smartphone to enable them to operate effectively.

BUSINESS NEWS

CBN MPC: Experts predict 50bps to 200bps rate cut on declining inflation

by Research Team in Economy, Monetary Policy

THE Central Bank of Nigeria's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) will meet on Monday, 24th and Tuesday, 25th November 2025, with economists and market analysts divided on whether the Committee will cut the Monetary Policy Rate (MPR) by 25–50 bps or hold at 27% to assess the impact of September's policy actions.

At its last meeting in September, the MPC reduced the Monetary Policy Rate (MPR) by 50 basis points, bringing it down to 27%, the first cut in 2025. The committee attributed the decision to improving macroeconomic fundamentals, including stronger output growth, exchange rate stability, an uptick in external reserves, and the significant moderation in inflation recorded in August, the lowest in five months.

With inflation continuing to decelerate, FX liquidity improving, and credit conditions still tight, the market remains evenly split on the likely direction of policy.

Below are the experts' outlook on what to expect from the MPC meeting.

Analysts diverge ahead of the November MPC meeting

Fixed Income Trader at CFG Africa, Umar Abdulqadir, expects the Committee to implement another 50bps reduction, citing sustained improvement in macroeconomic indicators.

According to him, "We expect the MPC to lower the benchmark monetary policy rate by at least 50 basis points, supported by improving macroeconomic indicators and the need to stimulate credit expansion."

According to him, "Disinflation has remained sustained, with headline and core inflation easing over recent months."

He notes that improved FX liquidity and better food supply conditions have helped anchor price expectations, reducing the need for an overly tight policy stance.

He also highlights the positive S&P sovereign rating upgrade, stating that it "reinforces Nigeria's improving macroeconomic outlook" and lowers risk premia, thereby expanding the MPC's room to cut rates without triggering capital volatility.

Umar adds that elevated lending rates continue to suppress credit expansion, especially for SMEs and corporates.

"A moderate reduction in the policy rate would lower borrowing costs, stimulate investment, and bolster economic recovery," he said.

Abdulqadir concludes that a minimum 50bps cut is justified to reinforce Nigeria's improving macroeconomic stability and support growth momentum.

Head of Research at Afrinvest West Africa, Damilare Asimiyu, anticipates a more cautious easing of 25–50bps, aligning with Nigeria's improving inflation outlook and global monetary conditions.

He notes that, "We anticipate the MPC to cut the benchmark interest rate further by 25 to 50bps. This expectation is supported by the favourable inflation trajectory—with headline inflation now at 16.05% y/y for October."

He points out that global sentiment is also turning mildly dovish, referencing the U.S. Federal Reserve's recent 25bps rate cut: "Cautious-dovish signals from major global central banks strengthen the case for moderate easing locally."

Furthermore, he cites Nigeria's solid macro data, including 4.2% GDP growth in Q2 and a positive 3.6%–3.9% base case growth outlook for Q3, as justification for another 25–50bps adjustment.

He argues that these indicators collectively justify a moderate policy easing stance.

Equities Trader and Business Strategist at Rostrum Investment & Securities Ltd, Jessica Ifada, on the other side of market sentiment, expects the MPC to maintain the policy rate at 27%.

According to her, "The MPC is expected to maintain the MPR at 27% at its upcoming meeting."

She argues that the September rate cut is still filtering through the economy: "The effects on inflation, exchange rate, and bank lending take time to materialize."

The reduction of the Cash Reserve Ratio (CRR) from 50% to 45% means banks now have more lendable funds. According to her, this liquidity support "complements the recent MPR cut and reduces the need for another adjustment so soon." Jessica notes that many banks have met recapitalization thresholds, boosted financial system stability and enabling stronger credit support—another reason for a steady rate.

She adds that the November–December festive period usually triggers temporary price increases. Holding the MPR helps balance liquidity with inflation risks.

She points out that the revised corridor (+250/-250bps) already guides short-term rates toward the MPR, reducing the need for immediate policy shifts.

Jessica believes that "holding the MPR at 27% balances growth support and inflation anchoring," making it the most prudent approach.

Nairametrics Drinks and Mics

However, at the latest episode of Drinks and Mics, Nairametrics flagship podcast, hosts Arnold Dublin Green, MD of Rencap Asset Management, opined the MPC could cut rates by as much as 200 basis points.

According to Arnold, "in my view, since the last MPR cut to 27% I've seen treasury bills yield decline by 140bps, bond yields also decline by 100bps and inflation down by 100bps. I see a 25% MPR."

Nairametrics CEO, Ugodre Obi-Chukwu, also agreed with Dublin-Green, stating that he thinks "we should see a 200bps cut".

CBN clears over ₦5 trillion in debt as banks slash deposit placements

From Ahmad Muhammad

THE Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) executed more than ₦5 trillion in debt repayments within a single week—between Friday, 14 November and Friday, 21 November—a mid declining bank deposit placements and heightened liquidity volatility across the financial system.

Data tracked by Nairametrics during the period show that the apex bank settled ₦3.9 trillion in Open Market Operation (OMO) obligations and an additional ₦1.2 trillion in primary market instruments, even as banks significantly reduced the volume of funds placed with the regulator.

The repayment cycle opened with a sharp decline: total repayments fell from ₦2.55 trillion on 14 November to ₦1.36 trillion by 18 November—an abrupt ₦1.18 trillion contraction reflecting fewer maturing bills and tightening system liquidity.

On the issuance front, OMO sales surged to ₦2.97 trillion between 17 and 18 November, marking one of the largest single-day liquidity mops in months. However, the momentum quickly faded; by 19 November, OMO sales had fallen back to ₦903.35 billion.

The CBN also settled ₦1.2 trillion in primary market repayments during the week, with the most substantial payout occurring on 20 November, when maturities peaked at ₦689.55 billion before dropping sharply to ₦231.28 million on 21 November. Earlier in the week, repayments stood at ₦254.83 billion on 17 and 18 November, up from ₦271.00 million on 14 November, reflecting clustered NTB and bond maturities.

Primary market issuances mirrored the volatility. The Federal Government raised approximately ₦1.09 trillion through Nigerian Treasury Bills (NTBs) and FGN bonds on 20 November as part of its

ongoing domestic borrowing programme.

A pronounced liquidity squeeze was also evident in the banking sector. Deposit placements at the CBN's Standing Deposit Facility (SDF) dropped steeply from ₦2.50 trillion on 19 November to ₦1.65 trillion on 20 November, and further down to ₦1.15 trillion by 21 November—a combined ₦1.35 trillion decline in just 48 hours.

Banks' opening balances reflected similar pressure, sliding

from ₦210.75 billion on 19 November to ₦145.28 billion a day later, before a modest recovery to ₦150.18 billion on 21 November.

The interplay of massive repayments, uneven OMO activity, and shrinking bank deposits underscores the liquidity turbulence that has characterised the money market in recent weeks. Analysts note that the midweek spikes were driven by

heavy NTB and bond maturities clustering around central auction dates.

For now, the CBN's ₦5.1 trillion repayment effort highlights both the scale of the government's short-term debt obligations and the delicate liquidity management required as the market approaches December—traditionally one of the most active periods for debt maturities and fiscal settlements.



Man shares shocking response from talking stage who refused to pay back money he lent her

A young man is making waves on social media after sharing his frustrating experience with a "talking stage", who he lent money.

In a viral WhatsApp chat screen recording shared on X (formerly Twitter) by @Teniola, the man recalled lending her ₦20k and even shared his account details to make repayment.

The lady, however, responded by asking if he was actually serious about

taking the money back, and tensions quickly rose.

He reminded her that she had asked him to lend her money to sort out an issue due to her app not functioning, and he trusted her word.

She still insisted that even though her app had problems, it didn't mean he should demand repayment. She became upset, saying she wouldn't pay the money because the app was still malfunctioning and wouldn't work forever.

Many took to the comments section to weigh in. One commentator said,

"He helped her, now she's making him feel guilty." Another wrote, *"When generosity becomes a drama... Nigerian relationships sef."*

What started as a simple act of trust became a heated conversation, leaving Nigerians divided: should he have demanded repayment, or let go of the money.

Security, warns against surrender to terrorists

The Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) has expressed profound concern over the rising insecurity across Nigeria, warning that widespread killings and abductions of Nigerians, including the recent kidnapping of students in Kebbi and Niger states, suggest the current administration is failing to meet its primary mandate.

The opposition party, in a statement signed by its National Publicity Secretary, Comrade Ini Ememobong, on Sunday, argued that the government's current approach risks conceding victory to terrorists.

The statement titled "Insecurity: Tinubu surrendering to terrorists?" reads: "Under the APC-led Tinubu administration, Nigerians have witnessed, especially in the last week, a spate of kidnappings in different states (25 students in Kebbi and 315 students and staff in Niger) in Northern Nigeria.

"Each of these kidnappings leaves a trail of sorrows, tears, blood, fear, and deep anguish on the families of those affected and their



communities. In response, different state governments in the affected region have taken disparate measures, while the federal government has yet to give any direction.

The PDP noted that instead of confronting the challenges directly, the government has focused on public relations and external efforts to manage the narrative. "We are aware that the closure of schools in these areas is already being implemented by some state governments and is currently being contemplated by the Federal Government.

Amaechi urges Tinubu to confront escalating insecurity

Former Rivers State Governor and ex-Minister of Transportation, Rt. Hon. Rotimi Amaechi, has called on President Bola Tinubu to take decisive action against Nigeria's worsening security crisis.

In a statement posted on his X handle, Amaechi accused the Federal Government of lacking the political will to curb killings, terrorist attacks, and mass kidnappings, warning that the failure to protect citizens has emboldened criminal groups and eroded public trust.

"The government has failed to provide adequate protection for its citizens, as evidenced by the surge in terrorist attacks and mass kidnappings in some parts of the country. This failure to act decisively has sadly emboldened terrorists and eroded public trust," he said.

Amaechi cited a string of violent incidents within the past week, including attacks in Plateau State, the abduction of schoolgirls in Kebbi, the killing of Brigadier General Musa Uba during an ambush in Borno, the assault on a church in Kwara, and the kidnapping of a Catholic priest in Kaduna.

He urged the government to strengthen military intelligence, sharpen tactical operations, and prioritise the protection of lives and property. "To Mr President, your primary assignment is the security of lives and property. Enough of looking the other way or issuing watery statements of condemnation. It is time to probe wrong decisions, strategise, and make tough calls," Amaechi declared.

The former governor added that decisive leadership, improved intelligence coordination, and accountability are critical to reversing the tide of insecurity. "We did it in Rivers State; it can be done in the country. We are prepared to help if you request help," he said.

His remarks come amid a wave of violence that has drawn widespread condemnation. In Kebbi, gunmen attacked a secondary school before dawn on Monday, abducting 25 students and killing a staff member. In Kwara, suspected bandits stormed the Christ Apostolic Church in Eruku during a service, killing three worshippers and abducting the pastor and several congregants.

"We warn that this closure, if undertaken, like many of this administration's quick-fix approaches to serious governance issues, will amount to a complete surrender to terrorists, whose sole aim is to shut down schools and prevent children from obtaining formal education, which they declare forbidden. If the schools are closed, the goal of the terrorists would have been inadvertently achieved.

"Rather, we urge the government to develop a comprehensive plan to combat

the issue, instead of resorting to a simplistic approach of closing schools in a bid to prevent further kidnappings and to score cheap political points, quite characteristic of this administration.

The party highlighted the dire educational consequences of school closures in the North: "This alarm is crucial because, a closure of schools will certainly exacerbate the already challenging educational situation in Northern Nigeria, where, according to UNICEF, the majority of the 18.3 million

PDP governors sabotaged my chairmanship bid over fear of my independence-Lamido

By Najib Sani, Gombe

Former Jigawa State governor, Sule Lamido, has alleged that the People's Democratic Party (PDP) governors blocked his bid to become the party's national chairman, citing concerns over his independence.

Lamido in an interview with the Hausa Service of BBC monitored by our correspondent, revealed that Bauchi State governor, Bala Mohammed, chairman of the PDP Governors Forum, had called and asked him to abandon his candidacy because they could not influence him if he became chairman.

The veteran politician, recounted telling Mohammed that PDP is a party with history that should not be controlled by one person, adding that he was denied a nomination form and had to go to court.

"Bala, the governor of Bauchi, called and said, 'My elder brother, you are stronger than us. If we make you chairman, we can't influence you.' But I told him, 'When PDP was formed, you were not there; you didn't know the party. You are a new man in it. The party with history should not be possessed by one person.' That's what I told him", Lamido said

According to him, despite a court order, the governors defied the ruling and appealed against his suit.

He disowned the new leadership, that produced Tanimu Turaki as chairman, labeling the convention "null and void".

The former Jigawa governor called for stakeholders, including former President Olusegun Obasanjo, to intervene and reorganize the party to salvage it noting that it has a history in the nation's democracy and development.



out-of-school children (10.2 million at the primary level and 8.1 million at the secondary level) in Nigeria reside.

"This data not only paints a grim picture but also mirrors the exact situation in Nigeria. The series of attacks and kidnappings in different states within a week, is indicative of the alarming insecurity that has become the contemporary lived experience and new reality of Nigerians under the APC-led Bola Tinubu government.

The PDP also criticized the perceived lack of empathy in the government's response to the abductions. "More troubling is the fact that when these unfortunate incidents happen, the administration's response is usually lacklustre and unempathetic. For example, instead of the President visiting Kebbi and Niger States to meet and sympathise with the parents of the children who are in captivity, and to address the security personnel there, he merely directed the Minister of State for Defence to relocate to Kebbi.

"A juxtaposition of the contingents sent to the US Congress and the G-20 meeting with Matawalle's lone envoy, exposes the levity with which the presidency treats this matter. This reaction is most insensitive and dismissive of the gravity of the problem by the APC-led Federal Government.

"We charge the federal government to immediately fund and implement the National Policy on Safety, Security and Violence-Free Schools anchored on community intelligence and quick security response, capable of anticipating and contending with attacks on schools. Insecurity in schools will be a big disincentivisation for education in the country, especially in Northern Nigeria.

The statement concluded with a forceful reminder of the government's primary responsibility: "We again remind the President, Asiwaju Bola Tinubu and the entire APC-led administration that the security of lives and property is the primary function of any government. At any time, government is unwilling, unable, or incapable of executing this primary role, such a government, must either ask for help (locally or internationally) or honourably resign, if it is sincere and responsible."

AHBN, Zero Dose Learning Hub Task Bauchi Govt on Strengthening Immunization Supply Chain, Service Delivery

By Mijinyawa Ahmed

THE African Health Budget Network (AHBN), in collaboration with the Zero Dose Learning Hub Community of Practice (ZDLH CoP), has urged the Bauchi State Government to urgently address critical gaps affecting the immunization supply chain to ensure stronger, more equitable vaccine delivery across the state.

The appeal followed a comprehensive two-day Caregivers Exit Interview conducted in selected Basic Health Care Provision Fund (BHCDF) facilities in Bauchi and Ganjuwa Local Government Areas. The survey aimed at assessing caregiver satisfaction, evaluating service delivery indicators, identifying challenges affecting zero-dose communities, and producing evidence to guide improved immunization programming.

Speaking at the end of the assessment, the AHBN State Focal Person, Dr. Hassan Shuaibu, said that although Bauchi State has demonstrated commitment to immunization financing particularly through the timely release of its ₦872 million immunization budget several operational challenges continue to undermine service quality, especially in hard-to-reach areas.

According to him, the findings from the exit interviews conducted at Kafin Liman and Kafin Madaki Primary Health Care (PHC) facilities in Ganjuwa LGA, as well as Yelwa Domiciliary PHC and Lushi PHC in Bauchi LGA, show that caregivers expressed satisfaction with the attitude of health workers, waiting times, and the incentives provided during vaccination sessions.

However, Dr. Hassan noted that lingering issues remain a major setback.

“Persistent shortages of essential immunization consumables, weak logistics systems, supply chain bottlenecks, and occasional reagent stock-outs continue to affect service delivery, particularly in remote communities,” he said.

He added that although caregivers generally appreciated the quality of care they received, concerns such as out-of-stock drugs and the minimal out-of-pocket expenses reported by some respondents highlight the urgent need for stronger government oversight.

“These findings call for targeted government-led reforms to strengthen the supply chain, ensure uninterrupted availability of consumables, and enforce policies that eliminate informal costs to caregivers,” he stressed.

Dr. Hassan further explained that the involvement of multi-sectoral stakeholders including academia, civil society, community leaders, and the media has enhanced transparency throughout the assessment process.

Their participation, he said, has contributed to generating evidence-based recommendations that will help refine policies and strengthen immunization programs in Bauchi State.

He emphasised that addressing the identified gaps is vital for advancing the Zero Dose Learning Hub initiative, reducing the number of zero-dose children, and achieving equitable access to vaccines across all communities.

“Improving supply chain efficiency is key to ensuring that no child is left behind.

The success of the Zero Dose Learning Hub depends heavily on how quickly and effectively the state government responds to these challenges,” he added.

Similarly, Dr. Sadiya Iliyasu, a member of the Zero Dose Learning Hub Community of Practice, applauded the Bauchi State Government for its consistent release of immunization funds.

She affirmed that while financial commitment has been encouraging, more needs to be done to ensure that resources translate into improved



availability of vaccines, consumables, and overall service quality.

Another ZDLH CoP member, Mrs. Bulak Afsa, appealed to caregivers across the state to prioritize routine immunization for their children.

She stressed that consistent attendance at immunization sessions is critical to safeguarding children from preventable diseases and reducing the burden of zero-dose cases.

The AHBN and ZDLH CoP reaffirmed their readiness to continue partnering with government agencies, development partners, and community actors to strengthen immunization systems in Bauchi.

They maintained that improving the supply chain and ensuring seamless service delivery will significantly advance the state's public health goals and contribute to Nigeria's broader commitment to universal vaccine coverage.

As the state reviews the findings from the exit interview exercise, stakeholders expect that swift

government action particularly in addressing logistics challenges, ensuring regular supply of consumables, and eliminating informal payments will mark a major step forward in building a more resilient and responsive immunization system for Bauchi's children.

The organizations emphasized that the success of these interventions will depend on sustained political commitment, community participation, and continuous monitoring to ensure that identified gaps are effectively closed and that every child, regardless of location, receives lifesaving vaccines.

In her remarks, Mrs. Fatima Umar, Deputy Officer-in-Charge of Yelwa Domiciliary PHC, commended AHBN and the ZDLH CoP for their sustained advocacy and for motivating caregivers and health workers through regular engagement.

She echoed the need for continued government support, noting that strengthening PHC capacity would help sustain ongoing improvements in immunization delivery.



Foreign News

Report: How US deports Iranian Christians back to their home country

THE United States is deporting Iranian Christian converts back to the Asian country despite the risk of imprisonment and persecution they face for abandoning Islam.

In a [BBC report](#), several Iranian asylum seekers who converted to Christianity, described how they fled their country in fear, only to end up in US immigration centres and facing forced returns.

One of the deportees identified as Majid (pseudonym) said he spent a year in detention after crossing into the US from Mexico in 2024.

Despite presenting evidence of his conversion and the well-documented risks Iranian converts face, he was forced on a plane "even though an immigration judge had already granted him protection from removal five months ago".

Another asylum seeker identified in the report is the wife of one Ali, an Iranian Christian convert now residing in the US.

"They deported my wife back to Iran even though she is a Christian. Now Iranian intelligence is after her and me," Ali told the BBC.

This comes as US President Donald Trump, and a raft of right wing American politicians and public commentators, allege persecution of Christians in Nigeria.

Trump had in October, [redesignated Nigeria](#) as a "country of particular concern" in response to allegations of a Christian genocide in the African nation.

He subsequently asked the United States department of war to [prepare for "possible action"](#) to wipe out Islamic terrorists



targeting "our cherished Christians" in Nigeria.

He also said he would order an immediate end to all aid and assistance to Nigeria.

According to the report, a White House official said recent deportations to Iran involved people who either had final removal orders or chose to leave voluntarily.

The official added that the government cannot reveal whether a person applied for asylum or had their claim rejected.

EU Ambassadors obstruct anti-corruption investigation to save Zelenskyy

IN recent weeks, Ukraine has been involved in a massive corruption scandal that points to deep problems within the country's energy sector.

The National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine (NABU), together with the Specialized Anti-Corruption Prosecutor's Office (SAPO), launched a long-running investigation called Operation Midas.

It uncovered a scheme where insiders at the state nuclear power company Energoatom allegedly pocketed around \$100 million in bribes from contractors.

According to NABU, contractors were forced to pay 10-15% kickbacks, or face being cut off from doing business with the energy firm. These funds were funneled through fake companies and laundered abroad.

At the center of this scheme is Timur Mindich, a businessman and former associate of President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

Now, there are worrying reports that certain European ambassadors are quietly pushing to slow down or soften this investigation.

Critics argue that these diplomats are trying to whitewash Zelenskyy's reputation by applying pressure to blunt the investigation or shield Zelenskyy's circle from the full force of justice.

They say this is to avoid bigger problems for Western aid to Ukraine but

behind closed doors, the push seems aimed at containment over cleanup.

According to multiple reports, these ambassadors are from France, Germany, and the United Kingdom.

Their involvement is considered logical by some observers: these countries have spent heavily on military assistance to Ukraine and, according to claims made by several independent European journalists, they have also channeled or "laundered" significant sums through trusts, foundations, and NGOs to provide various forms of loans and financial support.

Critics argue that, for this reason, pressure from these countries through their ambassadors on the investigation was not unexpected.

This is especially delicate because Zelenskyy previously tried to weaken NABU's independence: in July, he backed a law that would have brought NABU and the Specialized Anti-Corruption Prosecutor's Office (SAPO) under greater presidential control.

The United States has been a long-term partner in Ukraine's anti-corruption efforts. NABU, which gets backing from the U.S. through FBI training and USAID funding, built the case on 1,000 hours of secret recordings and 70 searches.

The timing, however, feels off to some people. It came just after Zelenskyy rejected U.S. President Donald Trump's push for a

quick peace deal with Russia and Ukraine's foreign ministry pulling out of early draft pacts in late October.

Reports suggest Trump's team might be using the scandal to lean on Zelenskyy's circle for concessions.

Even more troubling is how this scandal could affect African-led peace initiatives and Western interests in the conflict.

African leaders have made several earnest attempts to broker peace in Ukraine. Back in 2023, a delegation led by South African President Cyril Ramaphosa, along with presidents of Senegal, Zambia, Comoros, and others, visited Kyiv and Moscow with a proposed 10-point peace plan.

Their proposal included de-escalation, respect for sovereignty, prisoner exchanges, and grain exports.

At the time, Ramaphosa described the mission as "historic" and urged both sides to listen to Africa's voice.

Nothing came of it. With the corruption scandal exposed and European diplomats allegedly interfering, it appears those African efforts may have been sidelined, or worse, manipulated.

If a genuine peace deal were struck, some of the political leverage that Western allies have over Kyiv could diminish.

US lawmaker Greene announces resignation after row with Trump

United States House of Representatives, Marjorie Taylor Greene of Georgia, has announced she will resign from Congress after a clash with President Donald Trump.

The development is the climax of her disagreement with Trump and the Republicans, as she maintained a hardline stance during the longest government shutdown in the nation's history.

In a statement Friday night, Green said she opposed her party for refusing to pass a plan to save American healthcare and protect Americans from "outrageous overpriced and unaffordable health insurance policies."

The congresswoman

"most of the Establishment Republicans, who secretly hate him and who stabbed him in the back, have all been welcomed."

[Nigerian Newspapers: 10 things you need to know Sunday morning](#)

In recent weeks, she repeatedly criticized the Trump administration for focusing on foreign policy rather than pressing issues at home and was vocal about the release of the Epstein files.

Aligning with three other House Republicans, Greene joined the Democrats to force a vote on a bill ordering the release of documents on Epstein, an action which further infuriated Trump and his loyalists.



President Trump responded by calling her a "traitor," "ranting lunatic," and a "disgrace" to the Republican Party. He also mocked her name, writing "Green grass turns Brown when it begins to rot."

[Crisis rocks Kano APC as party chairman, minister clash](#)

Green, who had slammed Speaker Mike Johnson for closing the House during the shutdown, accused him of sidelining bills by most members of Congress: "The Speaker never brings them to the floor for a vote."

She said her efforts led to the impeachment of Biden's Secretary of Homeland over the "dangerous open border invasion into America," and the defund of "the corrupt USAID" when she served as D O G E Subcommittee Chair.

Stressing that she fought harder than most GOP members to elect Trump, Greene noted:

Reacting to Greene's announcement, Georgia GOP Chairman Josh McKoon called the lawmaker "a tireless fighter" for America First principles, conservative values, and holding the establishment accountable.

In a post on X, McKoon said while her decision to step down from Congress comes as a surprise amid recent challenges, Greene's legacy as a bold voice for the grassroots will endure.

Noting that the people of Georgia's 14th District deserve strong representation, the politician assured the party will ensure a conservative warrior fills the seat through the upcoming special election."

S Africa says G20 shared goals outweigh differences as it concludes summit

SOUTH African President Cyril Ramaphosa says the declaration from this weekend's Group of 20 (G20) summit reflects a "renewed commitment to multilateral cooperation" as the rotating presidency moves to the United States under the cloud of another diplomatic row.

Ramaphosa, host of the Johannesburg summit, pushed through the declaration addressing global challenges like the climate crisis despite objections from the US, which boycotted the event.

Addressing the summit's closing ceremony on Sunday, the president said the declaration showed world leaders' "shared goals outweigh our differences".

He stressed that the G20 summit declaration is a commitment to concrete actions to improve people's lives all over the world.

Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva said the G20 summit and COP30 climate summit in Brazil showed multilateralism was very much alive.

Speaking in Johannesburg, Lula added that he was happy with the success of both events and now the decisions made at the G20 summit need to be put into action.

The summit, however, ended with another diplomatic spat involving the US after the host country refused to formally hand over the rotating presidency of the bloc to what it described as a junior US official, which it deemed an insult to its presidency.

"The United States is a member of the G20, and if they want to be represented, they can still send anyone at the right level," South African Foreign Minister Ronald Lamola said.

"It is the leaders'



Leaders attending the G20 summit take a 'family picture' in Johannesburg, South Africa [Thomas Mukoya/Pool via AFP]

summit. The right level is the head of state, a special envoy appointed by the president of that country or it could also be a minister."

The US will be G20 president for 2026 and says it will host its summit at President Donald Trump's golf club in Doral, Florida.

Trump boycotted the summit of leaders from rich and emerging economies on Saturday and Sunday because of allegations that the host country's Black majority government persecutes its white minority – allegations that have been widely debunked.

The diplomatic rift between the US and South Africa deepened this week when Ramaphosa said the US had changed its mind and wanted to participate in the summit at the last minute.

The White House denied that and said US officials would attend only the formal handover of the G20 presidency.

Although that didn't happen, Ramaphosa said on Sunday that the presidency had moved on to the US.

Meanwhile, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said Ankara was still evaluating how to potentially deploy its security forces to take part in an international stabilisation force being planned in Gaza.

NATO member Turkiye played a key role in negotiations for a ceasefire in Gaza, becoming one of the signatories of the accord signed in Egypt.

Speaking at a news conference after the G20 summit in South Africa, Erdogan repeated his view that the attacks in Gaza amounted to "genocide" and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was responsible for them.

In the first G20 summit to be held in Africa, South Africa broke with tradition by issuing a declaration by the leaders on the opening day of the talks on

Saturday. Declarations usually come at the end of summits.

That declaration came in the face of opposition from the US, which has been critical of a South African agenda for the group that largely focuses on climate change and global wealth inequality.

Argentina said it also opposed the declaration after Argentinian President Javier Milei, who is an ally of Trump, skipped the summit.

The other G20 nations – including China, Russia, France, Germany, the UK, Japan and Canada – backed the declaration, which largely called for more global attention on issues that specifically affect poor countries, such as the need for financial help for their recovery efforts after climate-related disasters, finding ways to ease their debt levels and supporting their transition to green energy sources.

Escalating war of words between Ethiopia and Eritrea triggers fears of conflict

Ethiopia and Eritrea were allies in the civil war in Tigray but they have since fallen out

There are growing concerns over the possibility of armed conflict between Horn of Africa neighbours, Ethiopia and Eritrea, as hostile rhetoric has ratcheted up in recent weeks.

Landlocked Ethiopia's calls for access to the Red Sea through Eritrea has triggered a fierce war of

words.

Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed first openly declared in 2023 that his nation's access to the sea was an existential matter, comments that Eritrea dismissed.

Relations between the two countries have frequently been strained. After a decades-long battle for independence, Eritrea, which has a 1,350km (840-mile) Red Sea coastline, officially

seceded from Ethiopia in 1993, leaving it landlocked.

Five years later, a border war erupted in which more than 100,000 people died.

What has Ethiopia said?

Abiy and army chief Field Marshal Birhanu Jula have openly claimed ownership of Eritrea's southern port of Assab – about 60km from the border – and hinted at the desire to take it by force.

On 1 September,

Israel targets key Hezbollah official in first attack on Beirut in months

ISRAEL has carried out an air strike on the southern suburbs of the Lebanese capital, Beirut, for the first time in months, targeting a senior member of the militant group Hezbollah, despite a ceasefire.

Israeli officials say Hezbollah has been trying to rebuild its military capabilities, is smuggling weapons into Lebanon and Lebanese capital, stepping up the production of explosive drones as an alternative to rockets and senior member of the missiles, and there are growing fears of an escalation of hostilities.

The Lebanese

The office of the government has urged the Israeli Prime Minister international community Benjamin Netanyahu to put pressure on Israel – said the target was which continues to occupy

Lebanon's health ministry said at least one person had been killed and 21 others wounded in the strike, which hit an apartment building in the densely populated Dahieh district. It was not immediately clear if the person killed was Tabtai.

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The attack happens as Israel has escalated its campaign on people and targets it says are linked to Hezbollah – a Shia Muslim group supported by Iran – despite a ceasefire brokered by the US and France that came into effect last November.

The latest conflict between Israel and Hezbollah erupted after the Lebanese group started firing rockets at Israeli positions the day after the Hamas attacks of 7 October 2023. Hezbollah said it was acting in solidarity with Palestinians in Gaza.

Lebanese authorities said Israel's attacks killed about 4,000 people there – including many civilians – and led to the displacement of more than 1.2 million residents. Israeli authorities said more than 80 of its soldiers and 47 of its civilians were killed in the hostilities.

The US government imposed sanctions on Tabtai in 2016 and designated him a terrorist. It has a \$5m (£3.8m) award on offer for information about him.

Entertainment

Bollywood's 'He - Man'

Dharmendra dies at 89

BOLLYWOOD star Dharmendra has died in the Indian city of Mumbai at the age of 89. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi paid tribute to the actor, saying his passing "marks the end of an era in Indian cinema".

Dharmendra, who often described himself as "a simple man", commanded extraordinary affection and loyalty from his tens of millions of fans.

Best known as Veeru, the lovable petty criminal in the 1975 blockbuster Sholay, he appeared in over 300 films, many hits, captivating audiences for decades.

Songs featuring him topped the charts, and his romance and marriage with Hema Malini made headlines.

Dubbed the "original He-Man of Bollywood" and "Garam (hot) Dharam", the actor often made it to global lists of "most handsome men" in his heyday and female fans were known to sleep with his photographs under their pillows.

Bollywood stars weren't immune to his charms either - over the years actress Madhuri Dixit described him as "one of the most handsome people I have seen on screen", superstar Salman Khan said Dharmendra was the "most beautiful looking man" and actress Jaya Bachchan called him "a Greek God".

Dharmendra always said he was "embarrassed" by talk of his good looks and attributed it to "nature, my parents and my genes".

Born on 8 December 1935 in Nasrali village in Punjab's Ludhiana district in a middle-class Jatt-Sikh family, he was named Dharam Singh Deol by his schoolteacher father.

In a 2018 interview with BBC Hindi, he said his father wanted him to study, but he fell in love with films early on and wanted to be a hero.

"I watched my first film when I was in the ninth standard and I was hooked. I was wondering, where is this heaven where all these beautiful people live? I thought I must find my way there. I felt like they were mine and I belonged to them."

But when he told his family, they were appalled.

"My mother said, 'you are our eldest child, you have family responsibilities'. I was very sad. So when we heard about the All India Talent Contest by Filmfare magazine, to humour me, she said, 'ok, send in your application'. We didn't think I would be selected."

But then he won the contest and moved to Bombay (now Mumbai) and the rest, as they say, is history.

For three decades - after debuting with Dil Bhi Tera, Hum Bhi Tere (The heart is yours and so am I) in 1960 - he ruled Bollywood, delivering several hits a year.

Dharmendra first rose to fame with Bimal Roy's 1963 film Bandini, earning praise for his elegant portrayal of a prison doctor who falls for a convict.

He soon became a romantic hero, pairing successfully with top actresses like Nutan, Meena Kumari, Mala



Dharmendra with wife Bollywood actor Hema Malini

Sinha, and Saira Banu.

In 1966, he did his first action role in Phool Aur Patthar (Flower and rock), but it was the 1971 hit Mera Gaon Mera Desh (My village, my country) which cemented his reputation as an action hero. Tall and well-built, Dharmendra often did his own action scenes, involving daring stunts, even taking risks.

Besides romance and action, the actor also delivered thrillers and comedies that were hits. Critics praised him "for his impeccable comic timing" in the hilarious 1975 film Chupke Chupke. Over the years, Dharmendra said he was cast against 70 heroines, but his most successful screen pairing was with Hema Malini, who later became his second wife.

The couple first met at a film premiere in 1965 and Hema Malini made an immediate impression on Dharmendra. In her 2017 biography, she wrote that she heard Dharmendra telling fellow actor Shashi Kapoor in Punjabi, "Kudi badi changi hai (The girl is quite pretty)".

Their romance bloomed in the 1970s through superhit films like Seeta Aur Geeta, Raja Jani, and Sholay, making headlines as Dharmendra was already married with grown-up children with his first wife, Prakash Kaur. The media wrote about the resistance from Hema Malini's family to their wedding, but the couple finally tied the knot in 1980. Some reports said they had converted to Islam, which allows polygamy, to marry - a claim Dharmendra later denied.

The actor-producer also dabbled in politics. He was the BJP MP from Bikaner in Rajasthan for one term from 2005 to 2009. But he was criticised for not taking politics seriously as he rarely attended

parliament, preferring to spend time shooting for films or working on his farm.

Speaking to a television programme, Aap Ki Adalat, years later, he agreed that he was a misfit in politics. "Politics is not for emotional people, it's for the thick-skinned," he said. "These five years were very tough for me, they were difficult."

He worked almost to the end of his life, acting alongside his sons Sunny and Bobby Deol, judging reality shows, and connecting with fans via social media.

In his lifetime, the actor gave many fine performances, but if there's one role that he'll always be remembered for, it'll be that of Veeru in Sholay - the 1975 blockbuster that has become a cultural phenomenon. The multi-starrer that also had Amitabh Bachchan, Hema Malini and Jaya Bachchan in the lead roles saw Dharmendra and Bachchan play loveable rogues-turned-saviours who are recruited to fight a dreaded bandit.

The film became a cult classic and many fans credited Dharmendra for its success, describing him as the "soul of Sholay". The actor also described it as his finest role. "I don't think I have ever done a better role than Veeru's," he said.

But despite delivering dozens of hits, Dharmendra never made it to the "number one" slot in Bollywood - losing to contemporaries such as Dilip Kumar, Rajesh Khanna and Amitabh Bachchan - and was passed for the prestigious Filmfare awards several times.

It was finally in 1997 that Filmfare honoured him with the Lifetime Achievement Award for his contribution to Hindi cinema and in 2012, he was conferred the Padma Bhushan - an Indian government honour given to civilians for distinguished service.

But Dharmendra wore his stardom lightly, staying away from the rat race and said he never wanted to be number one in the industry.

"I never asked for too much money, and fame is transient. All I ever wanted was people's love," he told an interviewer.

"I came here just for this love. Everyone loves Dharmendra and I am grateful for that," he added.

On Wednesday, news of his death prompted tributes from the film fraternity on social media.

"Growing up, Dharmendra was the hero every boy wanted to be," said actor Akshay Kumar. "Thank you for inspiring generations. You'll live on through your films and the love you spread."

Describing his passing as the "end of an era", director Karan Johar said it had left "a gaping hole in the industry... a space that can never be filled by anyone... there will always be one and only Dharmendra". Called from BBC



Dharmendra with sons Sunny (right) and Bobby Deol (left) at his Mumbai residence

Nigeria Sets Record as First African Nation to Compete at IBSF World Cup 2-Woman Bobsleigh

Nigeria has uplifted its name in global sporting history by becoming the first African nation ever to compete in the 2-Woman Bobsleigh event at the International Bobsleigh & Skeleton Federation (IBSF) World Cup.

The breakthrough moment came as Nigeria's dynamic duo, Simi Adeagbo and Kewe King, took to the ice in Cortina D'Ampezzo, Italy, an iconic venue renowned for world-class winter sports.

For the first time in the World Cup's long and prestigious history, Africa was represented in the two-woman bobsleigh category. Adeagbo and King delivered an inspiring performance, showcasing determination, courage, and exceptional athletic ability on one of the sport's most challenging



tracks.

Their participation signals a new era of inclusion and competitive ambition for Nigeria and the African

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NIS to establish Sports Institute for North East in Adamawa

From Umar Dankano, Yola

The Director General of National Institute of Sports (NIS), Comrade Philip Shaibu has announced that plan to establish National Institute of Sports in Yola, Adamawa state for the North East region.

Shaibu disclosed the development in Yola Thursday while on spot assessment tour on the new Yola stadium saying that, the campus would offer training for coaches, sports managers, and sport scientists, aimed at improving sporting activities in the zone.

Shaibu said the office slated to commence operation first quarter of next year, would offer 34 basic sporting courses, while diploma and certificate courses would be available for interested candidates in at zonal level.

Additionally, he explained that Nigeria has what it takes to produce coaches and athletes to make the country proud noting that, "It is time for us to coach our coaches and athletes who would win national and international laurels, award and trophies"



The NIS boss urged support from government for sports development adding "We must reclaim our position as Nigerians" he added

He appreciated President Bola Tinubu for revitalizing the moribund institute as he handed over a letter of engagement and 10-year strategic plan for sports development was handed over to the state government.

Earlier in an interview with journalists while hosting the DG, the Adamawa state Deputy Governor, Professor Kaletapwa Farauta lauded President Tinubu for

allocation of a branch of the Nigerian National Institute for Sports in the state and the subregion.

Farauta reiterated that developing sports as unifier of youth in all facets, would continue to be a priority of present administration assuring the government support and collaboration toward the survival of sporting industry in the Northeast.

She further pointed out that the youths needed to be effectively engage in sports for common determination to uniting the country.

THE TRUMPSPORTS

With
Usman Abbas Shehu



14 Days to Kick Off: Excitement rises as PremiumTrust Bank Abuja City International Half Marathon approaches



welcomed her breakthrough run.

The fast approaching scheduled December 6' 2025, PremiumTrust Bank Abuja City International Half Marathon, has rising excitement across the Federal Capital Territory as Abuja prepares to host thousands of runners.

As final touches are being put in place across technical, security, medical, and logistics operations, one question is dominating conversations within the running community: Will Emmanuel Naibet and Ruth Jebet return to replicate their historic victories?

In the inaugural Abuja International Marathon staged in 2023, Kenyan star Emmanuel Naibet delivered an unforgettable performance, winning the men's race in 2:13:45, the fastest time recorded in a maiden marathon on Nigerian soil.

Bahrain's Ruth Jebet, running her first-ever full marathon, stormed to victory in 2:36:08 and later expressed her desire to return and defend her title in the city that



Organizers, Nilayo Sports Management Limited (NSML), have assured that preparations are "fully on track," with route checks, volunteer mobilization, timing systems, and athlete services already nearing completion.

This year's edition is expected to attract a deeper, more competitive pool of elite runners from across Africa, increasing the level of suspense around the participation and potential repeat success — of Naibet and Jebet.

Zulum in India: Gives N500,000 to Each Borno Student

By Mijinyawa Ahmed



Borno State Governor, Prof. Babagana Umara Zulum, on Monday undertook a personal visit to Borno State scholarship beneficiaries studying in India, reinforcing his reputation for hands-on leadership and direct engagement with citizens.

The visit, carried out as part of his official trip to India, highlighted his administration's continued commitment to education, youth development, and the rebuilding of the state through human capital investment.

Governor Zulum's first stop was Sharda University in Noida, where he met with students sponsored by the Borno State Government.

Addressing the students, he assured them that their academic and personal welfare remained a priority.

The Governor emphasized that the administration's investment in scholarship programmes is a deliberate strategy aimed at producing skilled graduates who will contribute to Borno's long-term recovery and development.

"I am here today for one simple reason—to remind you that the Borno State Government believes in your potential and is committed to your future," he told the students.

"Your knowledge, skills, and exposure are essential to our progress as a state. Stay focused, be disciplined, and avoid distractions."

We look forward to receiving you back home as innovators and leaders who will help steer Borno toward lasting growth."

In a gesture that drew excitement and relief, Governor Zulum presented a cash support of N500,000 to each student.

Many described the assistance as timely, noting that it would ease financial pressures and boost their morale.

Following the stop in Noida, the Governor proceeded to Integral University in Lucknow, where he replicated the same gesture, ensuring that all Borno students in India under government sponsorship received equal support.

In a further demonstration of fairness and inclusiveness, he directed that the same financial assistance be extended to Borno State scholarship beneficiaries studying in Malaysia.

Overwhelmed with gratitude, the students praised the Governor's compassion, noting that his presence alone was a major source of motivation.

"He did not just send representatives; he came to see us personally, listened to our challenges, and supported us. This shows true leadership," one student said.

Governor Zulum was accompanied by the Permanent Secretary, Government House, Barr. Mustapha Busuguma, and the Executive Secretary of BOGIS, Engr. Adam Bukar Bababe.



Gov. Mohammed flags off construction of 203.47-kilometre rural roads

By Mijinyawa Ahmed



Gov. Bala Mohammed of Bauchi state has flagged off the construction of 203.47-kilometre rural roads in the state.

Speaking during the flagging off of the roads in Gamaawa Local Government Area of the state on Monday, Mohammed said the road construction would be carried out with the Federal Government intervention under its Rural Access and Agricultural Marketing Programme (RAAMP).

According to him, the roads represented more than physical infrastructure but symbolises his administration's vision of Bauchi state where no community was left behind, where development was fair and balanced and driven by the needs of the people with equity and justice.

"We are grateful to the federal government, we are grateful to the World Bank and all the development partners.

"Roads are the architect of opportunities. They connect farmers to markets, women to healthcare, children to schools, security agencies to vulnerable communities and rural economy to national prosperity."

"For decades, many rural communities in Bauchi have suffered neglect. Roads became

impassable during rainy seasons, farmers lost

produce, students struggled to reach schools and sick people were unable to get timely medical attention," he said.

Mohammed, who said that the days of neglect of the rural communities were over, added that RAAMP remained a key pillar for his transformative agenda and aligned with his Bauchi project 1&2.

He said RAAMP also aligned with the Bauchi Agricultural modernisation, inclusive development, improved governance, youth empowerment, poverty reduction and sustainable infrastructure.

According to him, RAAMP was not just about roads, it's about connecting communities, boosting the rural economy and laying the foundation of lasting

prosperity.

He highlighted the roads to include 26.8 kilometers Mararaba Liman Katagum-Boli-Kafinmawa-Mararaba Dajin roads, 14.75km Dargazu-Gambaki-Chinade-Gangai road, 28km Gamawa-Sakwa road.

Others included; 14.45km Misau-Beti-Maladunba roads, 6.6km Giade-Tagwaye road, 6.68km Yana-Fago road, 6.71km Mararraban Dajin-Dajin road, 36.65km Dott-Dado-Baraza road, 24km Lanzai-Papa road.

He further explained that the road construction also included 4.91km Gadar Maiwa-Zakara road, 25km Dagu-Ningi road, 8.86km Nabordo-Gadan Doka.

The governor called on traditional rulers to support contractors and remained vigilant and provide intelligence on security and safety.

Also speaking, Engr. Aminu Mohammed, the National Coordinator (RAAMP)

Coordinator said that the state has disbursed over N6 billion in counterpart funding to RAAMP, making it one of the top performing states.

"These roads will open critical agricultural corridors, reduce travel time and post harvest losses, improve access to markets, schools and healthcare.

"It will also enhance rural productivity and inclusion, stimulate economic activities across all the three senatorial zones in the state," he said.

He called on the contractors to deliver the project with the highest standard of engineering professionalism and compliance with environmental and social safeguard.

The Coordinator also called on the communities to take ownership of the roads and take care of and protect them.

