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# US Senator's Iran Comments Spark Global Outrage

*... As Iran made history at the war*



### INSIDE THIS STORY

- Global reactions to Graham's
- US-Iran relations: 4 timeline
- Analysts warn about rising geopolitical tensions

### HISTORY OF US-IRAN TENSIONS

- Relations between the United State & Iran have been strained for more than four decades. Details in our Next Edition.

### THE NEWLY APPOINTED SUBEB CHAIRMAN VISITS SOME SCHOOLS IN BAUCHI

The newly appointed Executive Chairman Bauchi State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB), Alhaji Abubakar Isa Baba have expressed displeasure over the attitude of some teachers at Shadawanka Primary School, Bauchi.

The chairman expressed the displeasure when he paid a familiarization visit to some schools in Bauchi metropolis.

At Kobi Model Junior and Primary School, Bauch, the SUBEB chairman expressed satisfaction with the performance of the teachers and the pupils.

Other schools visited by the chairman are Nasarawa, Wunti and Kofar Wase primaries and junior secondary schools, all in Bauchi metropolis.

### 2027: Gov Lawal's defection will boost Tinubu's re-election prospects — APC chieftain, Suzuki

Amina Suzuki, an All Progressives Congress, APC, chieftain, has said that with the defection of the Zamfara State governor, Dauda Lawal, to the ruling party, Northwest Nigeria is firmly behind President Bola Ahmed Tinubu ahead of the 2027 general election.

It has reports that Governor Lawal officially dumped the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) for APC on Monday.

Washington, D.C. A heated television interview involving U.S. Senator Lindsey Graham has triggered intense debate across social media and political circles after remarks he made about Iran during a broadcast on Fox News.

The interview, which aired during a segment discussing tensions between the United States and the Islamic Republic of Iran, quickly circulated online after clips from the program began trending on platforms such as TikTok, X (formerly Twitter), and Facebook.

In the widely shared clip, Senator Graham

appeared visibly animated while discussing possible U.S. military action against Iran. During the conversation with the Fox News host, he argued that strong military pressure could weaken Iran's leadership.

The Fox News broadcast itself carried the headline: "U.S. Military Strikes Debilitate Iran's Regime," suggesting a discussion centered on strategic responses to Iran's government.

However, the situation escalated online when social media posts accompanying the video that the senator suggested the United States should "blow up the Iranians, take their oil, and make a lot of

money from it."

The claim rapidly spread across digital platforms, generating both criticism and debate about American foreign policy in the Middle East.

#### Social Media Reaction

Within hours of the video's circulation, thousands of users began commenting on the senator's remarks, with critics accusing him of promoting aggressive military policies and resource exploitation.

Iran's Shahed drone traveled nearly 2,000 kilometers across the Mediterranean Sea and struck the British RAF Akrotiri Air Base in Cyprus and not a single NATO air defense system saw it

coming.

This is the same Iran that has been sanctioned, bombed and isolated for decades yet their drones and missiles just penetrated the most protected airspace in the world.

After the US and Israel struck Tehran and killed Supreme Leader Khamenei, Iran retaliated by hitting 15 countries, 27 US military bases, and now a British base in Cyprus all within 24 hours.

To be clear, no army in the world has ever done this. The West built billion-dollar air defense systems. Iran built the will to fly right through them and succeeded in destroying them.

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## News

# Middle East War: Protest in North Eastern States, Others

From Ahmad Muhammad, Bauchi

Members of the Islamic Movement of Nigeria (IMN), have continued to stage a peaceful protest across the Six North eastern States of Nigeria and beyond over attack on Iran and killing of its Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei

The protest came at a time when Islamic Scholars intensified prayers for the success of Islam against the United States and Israel.

Khamenei, Iran's supreme leader since 1989, was killed in the opening salvo of a massive US and Israeli attack, sparking a new wave of retaliatory missile strikes from Tehran.

Protests were held in the North Eastern States of Adamawa, Bauchi, Gombe, Taraba and Yobe States,

Protest was reported in Abuja, Kano, Sokoto, Niger, Kaduna, and several other states across Nigeria in condemnation of his killing.

The IMN has historically expressed solidarity with Iran and its leadership, often organising processions and demonstrations in response to developments involving Tehran.

In the wake of the protests, Tunji Disu, the acting Inspector-General of Police, on Sunday ordered commissioners of police (CPs) across the country to heighten security measures in response to the evolving geopolitical tensions in the Middle East.

According to Benjamin Hundeyin, Force Public Relations Officer, the directive is part of proactive steps to prevent any fallout from global developments.

The protesters waved Iranian flags, displayed portraits of Khamenei, and carried placards denouncing both the United States and Israel while expressing solidarity with Iran.

## Bauchi

Also, hundreds of Muslims and members of the IMN took to the streets of Bauchi metropolis, condemning the killing of Khamenei.

The Bauchi demonstrations drew hundreds of participants who marched through the city's major roads. They marched from Fudiyya Shiites Islamic School through the central market, the Emir's Palace and Kobi Streets, condemning the killing of



Khamenei.

The protesters carried the pictures of the late Khamenei, saying that the assassination of the Supreme Leader is an attack on the global Islamic community and a violation of international sovereignty. The demonstrations were peaceful, with many people condemning the assassination of Iran's supreme leader.

## Yobe

In Yobe State, members of the IMN protested in three major cities of Gashua, Nguru and Potiskum on Sunday over the killing of Iran's Supreme Leader.

They were chanting solidarity songs, waving flags and placards bearing different inscriptions condemning American and Israeli leaders.

Leader of the group in Gashua, Malam Abdullahi Bin Sa'id, condemned the killing of the supreme leader and described the situation as an assault on international law and order.

"It's a serious violation of the sovereignty and security of Iran, a trampling on the aims and principles of international law that must not be overlooked by the world leaders," he said.

## Gombe

The leader of the IMN in Gombe State, Muhammad Abbari, alleged that the United States is seeking to dominate Iran to control its resources and install a government favourable to its interests.

Abbari made the remarks during a protest staged in Gombe to condemn the attacks on Iran.

In his interview with our correspondents, Abbari dismissed claims that the tension between Washington and Tehran is centred on

nuclear weapons, arguing instead that the dispute is driven by political and economic interests.

He said, the rift dates back to the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran, which led to the establishment of an Islamic government.

Abbari claimed that before the revolution, Iran had a government that maintained close ties with the United States and allowed it considerable influence over the country's economic affairs.

He alleged that following the revolution, the US imposed thousands of sanctions on Iran in what he described as sustained hostility towards the country.

Abbari also described allegations that Iran is pursuing nuclear weapons as a pretext for foreign intervention, insisting that the underlying objective is access to the country's wealth.

He expressed concern over what he termed the involvement of some Muslim-majority countries, accusing them of providing support or facilities for actions against Iran.

Such steps, he warned, could have broader implications for the Muslim world

## Taraba

Also, in Taraba State, hundreds of members of the IMN staged a peaceful protest over the development.

Members of the movement, including women and children, took to major streets in Jalingo and other towns across Taraba State in protest against what they described as unprovoked attacks and killing of Iran supreme leader and innocent people, including women and children, by America and

Israel.

One of the leaders of the movement, Muhammad Sale, said they were out to protest the unprovoked attacks of Iran by America and Israel.

"We condemn the attack and called on the entire world to condemn the attack, and the United Nations should sanction America and Israel for their atrocities against Iran and other countries," he said.

## Katsina,

Similarly, in Katsina State, the Shi'ites marched from the IBB Way to Nagogo Road before stopping at Madaki Way, also wearing black clothes and carrying posters of Khomeini.

## Kano

Also, on Sunday in Kano State, IMN members held a procession in protest of Khomeini's assassination, where they marched from Fagge Juma'at to the residence of their late leader in the state, Malam Mahmud Turi at Kofar Waika.

During the protest, they were adorned in black attire, carrying posters with inscriptions condemning Israel and mourning the late Supreme Leader.

## Khamenei's death shook us – Zakzaky

The leader of the Islamic Movement in Nigeria (IMN), Sayyid Ibraheem Zakzaky, described the killing of Iran's Supreme Leader as a devastating blow to Muslims worldwide, calling him "a great pillar" whose absence will be felt across generations.

"At this difficult moment, we have been shaken by the loss of a great pillar of our community, Sayyid Qa'id (RH). Without doubt, we are deeply shaken," Zakzaky said

in a statement issued Monday.

Zakzaky extended condolences to Imam Mahdi, senior religious authorities, the people of Iran, Muslims worldwide, and "all free people across the globe."

He stressed, "This loss touches us all collectively; it is something that affects every one of us."

The Nigerian cleric recalled Khamenei's long service to Islam, beginning as a young disciple of Imam Khomeini during the struggle that led to the Islamic Revolution 47 years ago.

He noted that enemies repeatedly tried to eliminate key figures of the Revolution, including Ayatollah Mutahhari and Ayatollah Beheshti, and that Khamenei himself survived an assassination attempt 46 years ago.

"They thought he had attained martyrdom then, but Allah preserved him. Though he lost the use of his right hand, Allah kept him alive to continue serving Islam," Zakzaky said.

He highlighted Khamenei's eight years as president of Iran, and his 37 years as Supreme Leader following Imam Khomeini's death.

"He stood firm with wisdom, foresight, and resilience, ensuring stability and progress. He carried Imam Khomeini's vision as if the Imam himself were alive," Zakzaky stated.

Zakzaky praised Khamenei's initiatives to foster unity among Muslims and build bridges with other faiths, citing institutions such as the World Forum for Proximity of Islamic Schools of Thought, the Ahlulbayt World Assembly, and interfaith conferences.

"He created platforms that brought Muslims together and opened dialogue with other religions. His leadership was not confined to Iran; it was a struggle for the entire Ummah," Zakzaky said.

Zakzaky condemned the attackers for targeting him and his family in their home.

"True battle is fought between combatants, not by slaughtering families in their homes. You have shown yourselves to be weak and fearful, capable only of killing innocents," he said.

He warned that the crime would ultimately backfire on its perpetrators.

"The blood of Sayyid Qa'id

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# Escalating Boko Haram, ISWAP Attacks During Ramadan Raise Security Concerns in Borno

By Alkali Muhammad Musa

A recent wave of attacks by Boko Haram and the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) across parts of Borno State has raised fresh concerns about the resurgence of insurgent violence in Nigeria's North-East, particularly during the Islamic holy month of Ramadan.

Security reports show that between 2023 and 2026, insurgent groups carried out at least 11 attacks during Ramadan, leaving more than 100 civilians dead, at least 29 soldiers killed, and over 527 civilians abducted in different communities across the state.

The most devastating of the recent attacks occurred on March 4, 2026, when insurgents launched a coordinated assault on Ngoshe community in Gwoza Local Government Area.

## Ngoshe Massacre

Residents say the attack began shortly after 6:20 p.m., as people gathered to break their Ramadan fast.

Insurgents first overran a nearby military base before entering the town, where they reportedly moved from house to house killing residents.

More than 100 civilians, including the chief imam and community elders, were killed during the attack. At least nine soldiers also lost their lives in the assault.

Witnesses said the attackers abducted more than 300 women and children and forced them to march toward settlements believed to be in the Mandara Mountains along the Nigeria-Cameroon border.

A day after the attack, insurgents released a video claiming responsibility and showing dozens of the abducted victims.

Despite the scale of the abduction, the incident has not received the same level of national and international attention as the 2014 abduction of schoolgirls in Chibok.

## Retaliation After Military Operations

Local security sources say the Ngoshe attack was largely an act of retaliation following recent clashes between insurgents and security forces.

On January 22, 2026, troops and



members of the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) reportedly engaged Boko Haram fighters on the outskirts of Ngoshe.

During the confrontation, three senior insurgent commanders identified as Ba Shulhu, Ubaida, and another unnamed commander were killed.

Sources say CJTF members later beheaded the commanders and displayed their heads in the streets of Ngoshe. Videos of the incident circulated widely and were reportedly seen by insurgent fighters.

The development angered fighters from both Boko Haram factions — Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad (JAS) and ISWAP.

Although the two factions have been rivals for years, fighters from ISWAP bases and JAS elements operating in the Mandara Mountains reportedly suspended their rivalry to carry out a joint retaliation attack on the community.

## Pattern of Ramadan Violence

Security analysts say insurgent groups have repeatedly carried out attacks during Ramadan over the past several years.

In Ramadan 2023, troops of Operation Hadin Kai killed 10 insurgents during a forest clearance operation in Bama Local Government Area on March 25.

Another clash occurred on April 4 in the same area, where troops killed 18 militants during a follow-up operation targeting fighters who had fled the earlier encounter.

During Ramadan 2024, insurgents abducted 213 internally displaced persons near Wurgen village in Ngala Local Government Area. The victims,

mostly women and children, were collecting firewood when militants arrived on motorcycles and trucks and forced them into the Sambisa forest.

Around the same period, insurgents also attacked Gajibo town in Dikwa Local Government Area, burning 25 houses built under a government resettlement program.

## Violence intensified further during Ramadan 2025.

Between February and March of that year, insurgents attacked army bases in Wajiroko and Wolgo communities in Ngala Local Government Area, killing 16 soldiers.

Security sources reported that the attackers used drones for surveillance during the operation — the first documented use of drone technology by Boko Haram in the region.

In another incident during the same Ramadan period, a Boko Haram commander abducted 14 residents from Shawaram community in Kukawa Local Government Area. Eleven victims were later released after ransom payments, while three remained missing.

## Surge in Attacks in 2026

The 2026 Ramadan period has recorded the highest number of violent incidents so far.

In February 2026, insurgents abducted seven fishermen from a fish market in Doron Baga, Kukawa Local Government Area.

The militants initially demanded a ransom of N30 million but later killed one fisherman before releasing the remaining six after the community paid N6 million.

Troops also repelled an insurgent attack in Mafa Local Government Area in February, killing six Boko Haram fighters after hours of fighting.

On March 1, insurgents overran a military base in Mayanti in Bama Local Government Area, killing the commanding officer, Major U.I. Mairiga, three soldiers, and a civilian hunter attached to the unit.

Just days after the Ngoshe massacre, insurgents launched coordinated attacks on military bases in Konduga, Marte, Jakana, and Mainok between March 6 and March 7.

Military sources later confirmed that dozens of soldiers were buried following the assaults, although

official casualty figures were not released.

## Why Ngoshe Remains Vulnerable

Security experts say Ngoshe's location makes it strategically important for insurgents.

The community lies near the Nigeria-Cameroon border and the Mandara Mountains — terrain that allows insurgents to hide in mountainous areas and move across borders.

The town has experienced repeated violence over the past decade.

In June 2013, tensions escalated after residents accused security forces of killing civilians during military operations in the town. The incident triggered mass displacement, forcing more than 20,000 residents to flee to neighboring Cameroon.

In April 2014, Boko Haram fighters launched a major attack on Ngoshe and nearby communities, killing dozens of residents and destroying homes and property.

By 2016, the town had become a major insurgent operational base before military operations by Nigerian and Cameroonian forces weakened the militants' presence.

## Motives Behind the Attacks

Security analysts say the recent violence appears to be driven by two main factors.

The first is what experts describe as a distorted interpretation of Islamic history by extremist groups, which sometimes use religious events such as Ramadan to justify violent attacks.

However, Islamic scholars have repeatedly condemned such interpretations as false and misleading.

## The second factor is revenge.

Analysts say insurgents often launch retaliation attacks on communities that cooperate with security forces or local vigilante groups.

In the case of Ngoshe, the killing of senior insurgent commanders earlier this year appears to have triggered the March 4 massacre.

## Communities Under Threat

For residents of communities across Borno State, the recent surge in attacks has renewed fears about security during Ramadan.

Security analysts warn that unless military pressure is sustained and vulnerable communities receive stronger protection, insurgent groups may continue exploiting both religious symbolism and local grievances to carry out attacks.

Meanwhile, the fate of the more than 300 women and children abducted during the Ngoshe attack remains unknown, raising urgent concerns about rescue efforts and humanitarian support for affected families.



## Education

# JAMB not responsible for HND graduates' NYSC non-mobilisation, Oloyede insists

The Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board has clarified that it is not responsible for Higher National Diploma admissions or for the inability of some graduates to be mobilised for the National Youth Service Corps.

The Registrar of JAMB, Prof. Is-haq Oloyede, made the statement while meeting with the leadership of the National Association of Polytechnic Students, led by Comrade Eshofune Paul Oghayan.

This was contained in a bulletin released by the Board on Monday and signed by its Public Communication Advisor, Fabian Benjamin.

Many HND graduates, particularly those who completed their National Diploma on a part-time or non-regular basis before pursuing full-time HND programmes, have encountered barriers to NYSC mobilisation.

NYSC eligibility typically requires full-time study for the highest qualification.

However, irregularities in admission processes, such as

part-time ND classifications or unprocessed admissions, can lead to rejections or the issuance of exemption certificates instead of service participation.

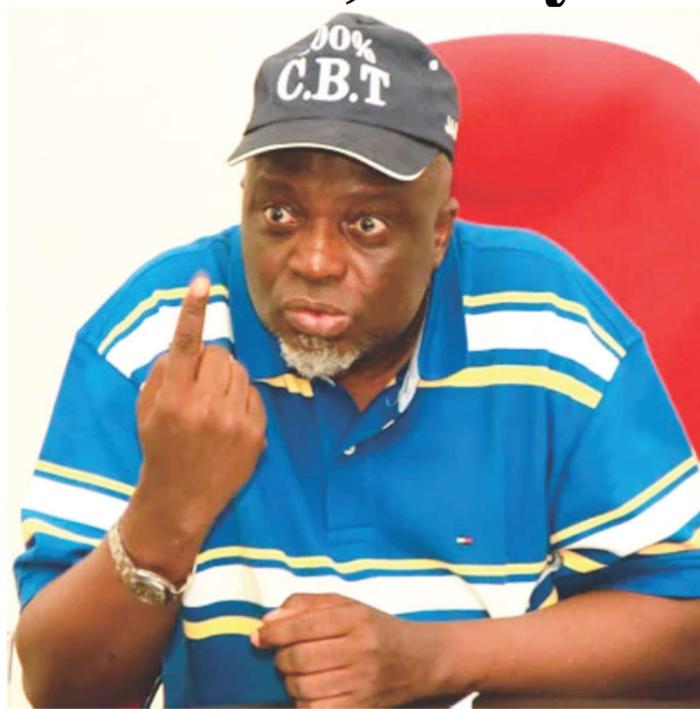
This has sparked frustration among affected polytechnic alumni, who have occasionally pointed fingers at JAMB for alleged data or processing issues.

Prof. Oloyede told the students that the Board's mandate is limited to conducting examinations and admitting students into first-degree, National Diploma, and Nigerian Certificate in Education programmes, and does not extend to HND programmes.

"The Board is not responsible for admitting HND students into polytechnics and, therefore, has no data to facilitate their entry into the NYSC scheme," he said.

He advised the students to channel their grievances to the appropriate quarters for redress.

He explained that once candidates graduate from ND programmes and seek HND admission, the responsibility



lies with the individual institutions, not JAMB.

### Central Admissions Processing System

The Registrar also highlighted that JAMB conducts admissions through its automated Central Admissions Processing System.

CAPS, he said, streamlines admissions, restores institutional autonomy,

expands opportunities, prevents multiple admissions, and ensures transparency.

He warned that any admission conducted outside CAPS is null and void.

"CAPS automate the admissions process into tertiary institutions, addresses challenges associated with the manual approach, and empowers candidates with information on available institutions and programmes,"

Prof. Oloyede said.

The Registrar added that some institutions bypass CAPS, admitting more ND candidates than allowed by the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE).

This, he noted, creates discrepancies between ND graduates and their HND counterparts, especially when the HND programme is at a different institution.

He also criticized some "Daily Part-Time" HND programmes, which he described as exploitative, noting that NYSC often rejects graduates of unconventional programmes, making it impossible for them to be mobilised.

"Some polytechnics have conducted illegal admissions, with one institution reportedly having over 42,000 irregular cases," he said.

"If institutions follow the proper process, there would be no problem. On our part, we will continue to render quality service beneficial to all stakeholders. Let's do things properly," Prof. Oloyede advised.

## FG imposes six-year ban on new private varsities

The Federal Executive Council (FEC) placed a six-year moratorium on the establishment of new tertiary institutions.

It also accorded recognition to medical fellowships as equivalent to doctoral degrees and restored the National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education as an independent body.

These form part of reforms in the education sector approved by the Council.

Briefing newsmen at the end of the FEC meeting, the Minister of Education, Dr Tunji Alausa, said the moratorium on the establishment of new universities, polytechnics and colleges of education was aimed at improving the quality and sustainability of existing tertiary institutions, particularly private universities.

While admitting that the demand for higher education remains high, he said most institutions are struggling with sustainability challenges.

"Today, access is not easy in the country. We have lots of tertiary institutions, both



public and private, but we need to help these private institutions become financially sustainable."

Giving statistics to support his position, the minister cited data from the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB), which showed that more than 2.3 million candidates applied for admission into universities last year, while public institutions had fewer than 228,000 available spaces.

He argued that the moratorium would allow the government to focus on strengthening existing institutions and improving the

quality of education across the system.

The minister affirmed that the Tinubu administration remains committed to raising standards in Nigeria's education sector.

"I am committed to ensuring that every single child and citizen of this country receives the highest quality of education comparable to anywhere in the world."

Speaking on the restoration of the National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education to its full status, he said the decision is part of the administration's

broader plan to tackle Nigeria's literacy challenges and equip millions of citizens with digital and basic education skills.

"In view of Mr President's expansive agenda to educate over 50 million young adults in the next two to three years and make them digitally literate, we sought the approval of the council to revert it back to a commission, which Mr President graciously approved."

"Today, we have about 56 million Nigerians that are illiterate. We can't continue to have a high number of citizens that are illiterate."

The minister also revealed to State House correspondents FEC's approval of amendments to the National Postgraduate Medical College Act to recognise medical fellowship qualifications as equivalent to PhD degrees.

He said the proposed amendment is aimed at

addressing career barriers faced by highly specialised medical professionals.

He criticised the existing arrangement in which doctors spend more than a decade undergoing medical training, residency and fellowship programmes, yet still require a PhD to qualify for professorial appointments in universities.

"These set of people in the medical sector have spent more years than the average candidate who obtains a PhD, so we need to harmonise that."

According to the minister, once the proposed Executive Bill secures passage by the National Assembly, the reforms will allow fellows of the National Postgraduate Medical College to have their qualifications recognised as equivalent to a doctoral degree.

The Council also approved comprehensive insurance coverage for the country's 180 Federal Unity Schools.



## Bauchi tourism boss urges harnessing of biodiversity for green economy



The Managing Director and State Conservator General of the Bauchi State Tourism Development Corporation, Dr. Muhammad Nasir, has emphasised the need for Nigeria to harness its rich biodiversity as a key driver of economic diversification and sustainable development.

Dr. Nasir made this known in an interview with Journalists weekend Bauchi to commemorate the World Wildlife Day 2026.

He explained that Nigeria's geographical and demographic landscape was undergoing rapid transformation,

The tourism boss noted that by 2050 the country's population could exceed 400 million people, accompanied by accelerated urban and industrial expansion.

According to him, this development presents both challenges and opportunities, particularly in the context of climate change and environmental sustainability.

Nasir said Nigeria must strategically reposition its natural resources especially its flora and fauna not merely as biological heritage but as valuable economic assets capable of supporting a thriving green economy.

He highlighted the growing potential of herbal medicine, indigenous medicinal plants and zootherapy as emerging sectors that could support medical tourism and contribute significantly to national revenue.

The tourism expert noted that the development of a "Naija Wellness" brand built

around traditional medicine and nature-based tourism could help Nigeria reduce dependence on oil while promoting sustainable livelihoods.

Dr. Nasir also stressed the importance of modern conservation approaches, particularly in forest reserves and wildlife parks such as the famous Yankari National Park in Bauchi State.

He explained that improved forest security through technology-driven surveillance and community participation would protect wildlife habitats from threats such as biodiversity loss and insecurity.

"Security is fundamental to the future of eco-tourism and wellness tourism. Without safety in our forest reserves and wildlife parks, these industries cannot flourish," he said.

Dr. Nasir further noted that sustainable practices, including medicinal plant farming and regulated wildlife-based therapies, were critical to addressing the growing vulnerability of several medicinal species.

He added that Nigeria's Middle Belt region would play a crucial role as a geographical bridge for food production, logistics and environmental resilience in the face of climate challenges affecting both northern and southern parts of the country.

The MD called for stronger policies to protect biodiversity while integrating traditional knowledge with modern technology to build a resilient and sustainable green economy.



## Breakthrough: Modibbo Adama Teaching Hospital Separate Co-joined Twins Again

From Umar Dankano, Yola

The Modibbo Adama University Teaching hospital Yola has conducted successful surgical operation on separation of co-joined twins at the hospital facility on Monday.

By the records, this is the sixth times such co-joined twins' separation surgical operation were performed successfully

Head of the surgical team and former Chief Medical Director of the hospital, Professor Auwal Abubakar said his team had a three hours surgical operation on the co-joined twins asserting that all the necessary gazettes for the operation were effective which made the medical exercise easier.

Professor Abubakar explained that, the co-joined twins were attached together through their abdominal position of their bodies at birth which informed the parent to report the complications to the hospital and they (parent) came from Taraba state for the medical attention.

Auwal added that the patient was held for some time for observation and research on the case before finally the separation surgery was conducted by the thirty-five team. He also confirmed that the twins have been taken to intensive care unit, ICU for the torched parts to heal gradually.

## CBM Launches 10-Year SightQuest Programme to Eliminate Avoidable Visual Impairment in Nigeria

By Mijinyawa Ahmed

The Bauchi State Government has distributed 100 choppers, 100 crushers and 20 motorcycles to livestock value chain clusters and extension workers across the state

This is contained in a statement signed Mr Mohammed Abdul the project communication officer, Livestock Productivity and Resilience Support Project (L-PRES) made available to newsmen on Monday in Bauchi

It said the intervention forms part of ongoing efforts to modernize livestock production and promote sustainable agricultural development in Bauchi State.

The distribution was carried out under the Livestock Productivity and Resilience Support Project (L-PRES), an initiative aimed at improving livestock production systems and enhancing resilience among



He also applauded the Tertiary Education Trust Fund, TETFUND for the provision of the centre of excellence where state of art medical equipment's is installed for health care delivery services for the public stressing that the services to the co-joined twins were free of charge.

In his remarks, the father of the separated twins, Shuaibu Jibrin appreciated the gesture extended to him for assessing the medical surgery at no cost.

Jibrin narrated that he married his wife in February 2025 who got pregnant at the ninth month of their marriage but the delivering of the co-joined twins came with complications where the twins were delivered through Caesarea Section (C-section) at Jatau health facility in Bali local government area of Taraba state.

Jibrin said that, after his wife gave birth to the co-joined twins, died in the process as they were advised to come to Modibbo Adama Teaching

hospital Yola for the services needed which they adhered to and it has been done successfully.

He stated that, the hospital accorded free services since their arrival in the last five months.

Chief Medical Director of the hospital (MAUTH YOLA), Professor Adamu G. Bakari assured that public that the hospital is accessible to the public with qualified staff and equipment's for health care delivery.

Professor Bakari confirmed that the federal government has installed needed equipment's for excellent service delivery noting that maintenance culture on the apparatus is guaranteed under his watch.

Our Correspondent reported that the separation surgical operation was televised live by the public relations unit of the hospital to the admiration of limited staff, invited journalists and few members of the public.

farmers.

Speaking during the distribution exercise, the State Project Coordinator of L-PRES, Dr. Musa Adamu, described the intervention as a major milestone in the collective effort to reposition the livestock sector in Bauchi State and Nigeria at large.

According to him, the equipment was distributed to three main livestock value chain clusters, 30 sub-clusters and 20 livestock extension workers across the 20 Local Government Areas of the state.

Adamu explained that the machines would significantly improve the processing of animal feed, reduce post-harvest losses of crop residues and enhance the overall quality of livestock nutrition.

He added that the intervention would also strengthen extension service delivery at the grassroots level and support farmers with modern tools needed to

increase productivity.

"The distribution is not merely about handing over machines to communities.

It reflects the state government's commitment to transforming the livestock sector into a modern, productive and economically viable industry," he said.

Adamu noted that the initiative would contribute to improved food security, job creation and better livelihoods, particularly among rural communities engaged in livestock production.

The statement said Gov, Bala Mohammed, urged beneficiaries of the L-PRES facilities to safeguard and utilise the equipment effectively to stimulate viable economic activities in their communities.

He emphasised that proper use and maintenance of the machines would ensure long-term benefits for livestock farmers and strengthen the state's agricultural value chain.

## News

### Pastor, wife arrested for impregnating 13 years old girl in Bayelsa

By Salihu Makera

The Bayelsa State Police Command has arrested a pastor and his wife over their alleged involvement in the abuse of a 13-year-old girl in Yenagoa, the state capital.

According to reports, the wife was apprehended during a Sunday church service for allegedly paying ₦120,000 to procure an illegal abortion for the victim, who is said to be her cousin. The arrest reportedly caused confusion among members of the congregation.

Eyewitnesses said the pastor initially fled through a back door when officers arrived but later surrendered after his wife was taken into custody at the church premises.

Members of the advocacy group, Women Against Gender-Based Violence and Do Foundation, confirmed that an initial interview with the victim indicated the abuse allegedly occurred on five occasions beginning in

November 2025. The incidents were said to have taken place both at the church and at the pastor's residence.

It was further alleged that the girl had visited the church to deliver a local bread known as Madiga to the pastor's wife when the incidents occurred. Reports also claim that the victim's mother was persuaded not to act initially and was given ₦120,000, which was used to terminate the pregnancy after a medical scan.

The matter later escalated when the mother reported the case to the Ekeki Police Division and contacted the National Association of Women Against Gender-Based Violence.

Confirming the development, the Commissioner of Police, Iyama Daniel Edebor, stated that the case has been transferred to the Gender Unit at the police headquarters for thorough investigation and prosecution.

### Blackout: Why Nigerian Govt mini-grid deployment won't fail – Aliyu

The Managing Director of the Rural Electrification Agency (REA), Abba Aliyu, has explained the Nigerian government's deployment of mini-grids as backup to the current blackout and drop in electricity supply Nigerians face.

He stated that the mini-grid deployment bypasses Nigeria's national grid flaws.

Aliyu made this explanation in a recent interview.

According to him, the Nigerian government has begun deploying mini-grids directly within isolated communities to provide completely independent electricity.

Aliyu noted that REA has internalized lessons from the national grid failures to enhance its mini-grid policy implementation to the underserved communities.

He added that the agency ensures that every mini-grid installation includes its own dedicated distribution network and 100% metering.

"We've learned from the mistakes of the main grid, so every mini-grid we deploy includes a distribution network, 100% metering, and a SCADA system that allows performance to be monitored via a phone.

"In peri-urban communities with existing distribution networks but unreliable power, we bring in our generation plant. We work with DISCOs through service-level agreements, where we provide solar power during the day, and the distribution companies are expected to provide power at night.

"If the DISCO fails to provide power, our battery storage system kicks in. We are also currently deploying 50 interconnected mini-grids that will inject 280 megawatts of reliable supply into the grid," he explained.

This comes amid the uproar that greeted the planned disconnection of the presidential villa from the national grid and the shift to 100 percent solar from March 2026.

The power allocated to discos has dropped for the past months, leaving the majority of Nigerians in blackout.



### President Tinubu Labels FCT Minister Wike as the "leader" of the River State

By Usman Shehu Gungura, Bauchi

The controversy surrounding President Bola Tinubu's recent remarks labeling FCT Minister Nyesom Wike as the "leader" of Rivers State despite the state having a sitting governor is a matter of "contextualization" rather than a constitutional crisis, according to a top APC stakeholder.

Speaking on Arise News on Wednesday, March 5, 2026, monitored by our Correspondent, Victor Ochei, a former Speaker of the Delta State House of Assembly, argued that the President was not attempting to rewrite party rules or undermine Governor Siminalayi Fubara, but was instead acknowledging Wike's enduring political stature.

The former speaker addressed the confusion among Nigerians who believe the sitting governor should automatically be recognized as the sole leader of the state's political structure.

He clarified that the President's rating of Wike is based on his current role and his historical influence in the region.

"Now his rating of the minister of FCT Wike is a leader in River State as River State is today. Nyesom Wike is a leader and works in his cabinet and besides being a cabinet minister for him he is a



leader in River State."

He explained that the President's comments were likely a strategic move to manage delicate political alliances, effectively telling members of his own party to respect Wike's position.

"So, he speaks to his own governor who is an APC. Hey relax whatever it is Wike is number one. It's not a statement to say that that has changed the position of how governors are seen."

While Ochei admitted that the party's constitution serves as its "grand norm" and theoretically places the governor at the top of the state hierarchy, he insisted that political leadership often transcends formal documents.

"Constitution of a party should be your grand norm. Politicians can defend it. The constitution is the ground norm. That does not take away

the party chairman. What did he say? The governor is 01."

Ochei said that the President sees Wike as synonymous with the political heartbeat of Rivers State, regardless of party affiliations.

"The president in speaking, he's a leader of our party and he says Wike is the leader of Rivers State whether in APC or PDP. He sees Wike as a state. He doesn't see Wike from the prism of APC. So all this lies in contextualization and I think that's where the major issue is."

The former Speaker emphasized that the President's role often involves "balancing situations" to maintain peace among powerful stakeholders.

He dismissed the idea that these statements are "cast in stone" legal decrees, suggesting instead that they are diplomatic tools.

### Again, Gov Fintiri imposes 24-hour curfew on Lamurde LGA

Governor Ahmadu Fintiri of Adamawa State has imposed a 24-hour curfew on Lamurde Local Government Area with immediate effect following renewed violent attacks in some communities.

The Chief Press Secretary to the Governor, Humwashi Wonosikou, made this known in a statement issued on Monday in Yola.

It has reports that, this is the fourth time in less than six months the governor is imposing a curfew due to the ongoing conflict between the Chobo and Bachaman communities.

Wonosikou said the directive followed renewed violence and breach of peace that reportedly claimed the lives of some residents in the affected communities.

He said the governor described the disturbances as unacceptable and directed



security agencies to enforce the curfew strictly.

According to him, anyone or group found violating the directive will be arrested and dealt with in accordance with the law.

The governor said the curfew would remain in place until further notice.

He also directed security agencies to maintain law and order in the area while enforcing the restriction.

Fintiri urged residents to

comply with the curfew and provide useful information to security agencies to ensure peaceful coexistence.

"Government will not condone acts of violence and will take necessary measures to restore peace and order," he said.

The governor appealed to residents to cooperate with security agencies to restore normalcy, reaffirming government's commitment to protecting lives and property.

## Northeast News

# Shehu Buba Opens Islamic Centre, pledge to fight banditry

From Ahmad Muhammad, Bauchi



The Senator representing Bauchi South Senatorial District, Senator Shehu Buba Umar, has inaugurated the Imam Shu'aibu Yisin Council of Ulama Islamic Centre in Bununu, the headquarters of Tafawa Balewa local government area of Bauchi State, as part of efforts to promote unity among the Muslim community and support community development.

Senator Buba commiserate with the people of Gwana district in Alkaleri Local Government Area who were attacked by bandits and pledged to work with the Federal, State Government and all stakeholders to defeat banditry.

He said this when he spoke during the inauguration ceremony of the Islamic Centre in Bununu over the weekend,

Senator Shehu Buba said the centre was established to bring together Islamic scholars and followers from different groups in order to strengthen unity, understanding and cooperation among Muslims.

He said, the centre will serve as a platform for dialogue and collaboration among Islamic scholars, helping to promote peace, mutual respect and meaningful development within the society.

The Senator said that since assuming office, he has remained committed to effective representation of the people of Bauchi South through programmes and projects aimed at improving the welfare of communities across the seven local government areas of the district.

He explained that the centre contains several units, including departments responsible for inheritance matters, reconciliation and other services designed to support Islamic teachings and promote community harmony.

Senator Buba said the project was initiated following requests from Islamic scholars across different organisations who sought the establishment of a central meeting point to enhance unity and understanding among Muslims.

He expressed satisfaction with the quality of the project from the beginning of its construction to its completion, and prayed that the centre would continue to serve as a catalyst for the growth and development of Islam in the area.

The Senator also highlighted some of his interventions since becoming a member of the Senate, including programmes focused on women and youth empowerment, job creation for young people, social

support initiatives, healthcare services, agricultural support and other development efforts.

For his part, the chairman of the building committee, Hon. Aminu Tukur, commended the senator for sponsoring the project from inception to completion.

Aminu Tukur explained that the centre comprises 12 offices, a conference hall, a guest house with nine rooms, a store and a shopping complex containing six shops, among other facilities. He added that the project cost about N200 million and was fully funded by Senator Shehu Buba.

During the event, Senator Shehu Buba also extended condolences to the people of Alkaleri Local Government Area over the recent bandit attacks in the area, describing the incident as deeply disturbing.

He said that communities such as Mansur, Digare, Gwana and Yalo among others have been seriously affected by the attacks, stressing that insecurity remains a challenge that concerns everyone.

The Senator assured that he would work closely with the Bauchi State Government and security agencies to curb the activities of bandits in the affected communities.

He said plans to constitute a special committee to explore ways of providing support to the affected communities, particularly those currently displaced in Kashere.

In a related development, Senator Shehu Buba Umar donated N20 million towards the construction of the permanent site of the College of Health Sciences and Technology in Bununu.

The senator announced the donation during the foundation-laying ceremony of the institution's permanent site, reiterating his commitment to prioritizing education and healthcare as key drivers of development.

## Women, children missing after Boko Haram attack in Borno

By Alkali Muhammad Musa, Maiduguri



Women and children are feared missing after suspected Boko Haram/ISWAP insurgents attacked Ngoshe, a community in Gwoza Local Government Area of Borno State.

The attack, which occurred on Wednesday, left soldiers and residents dead, while several houses and properties were destroyed. Following the incident, more than one thousand residents, mostly women and children, reportedly fled to Pulka town in search of safety.

Local sources said the insurgents stormed the community shortly after people broke their Ramadan fast. The attackers were said to have overpowered the military troops stationed in the area with heavier weapons during the assault.

In the confusion that followed the attack, many residents ran into nearby bushes and surrounding areas to escape the violence. Reports indicate that over one hundred

people, mainly women and children, have not yet been accounted for, raising fears that they may have been abducted or are still missing.

Ngoshe, a community located close to the Mandara Mountains along the Nigeria-Cameroon border, was recently resettled by authorities after years of displacement caused by insurgency. However, the town has continued to experience repeated attacks by terrorists.

A security source, however, said the air component of the Joint Task Force North East under Operation Hadin Kai responded to the incident and carried out an airstrike on some of the fleeing insurgents. The source said several terrorists were neutralized during the operation.

The latest attack has once again highlighted the continuing threat posed by insurgents in parts of Borno State and the growing humanitarian concerns affecting civilians, especially women and children living in vulnerable communities.

## Adamawa Assembly confirms 3 commissioners



The Adamawa State House of Assembly has confirmed three commissioner nominees transmitted to it by Governor Ahmadu Umaru Fintiri for confirmation as members of the state executive council.

During plenary session, the lawmakers screened and confirmed the nominations of Sali Idris from Maiha LGA, Eng. Muhammed Suleiman from Mubi North LGA, and Chubado Mohammed from Jada LGA.

After appearing before the House of Assembly in a session presided over by Speaker Hon. Bathiya Wesley, the nominees' confirmation was moved by Majority Leader Hon. Kate Raymond Mamuno of Demsa Constituency and seconded by Deputy Speaker Rt. Hon. Buba Mohammed Jidjiwa of Jada Mbulo.

Following the confirmation, the Speaker directed the clerk to convey the Assembly's resolution to Governor Fintiri.

## PDP National Convention: Appeal Court dismisses Turaki-led faction

The Court of Appeal has upheld the decision of the Federal High Court stopping the Peoples Democratic Party, PDP, National Convention.

The appellate court on Monday dismissed the appeal brought before it by the Taminu Turaki-led faction of the party.

The Turaki-led National

Working Committee, NWC, which is laying claim to the leadership of the opposition party, was elected at the Ibadan convention.

The court also awarded the cost of N2 million against the appellants – Turaki and other members of the NWC

It reports that the Court of Appeal in Abuja had fixed Monday to deliver its

judgment on the consolidated appeals emanating from the Ibadan National Convention of the PDP, held on November 15 and 16, 2022.



## Issues

# Fed Govt reviews options as Iran War impact grows

\* Petrol price crosses N1,000/litre, queues return

\* Nigeria not facing fiscal collapse, Edun insists

\* FG activates measures for safety of nationals in Middle East

The Federal Government is currently assessing the possible economic impact of the growing conflict in the Middle East on the national economy as the parties involved in the crisis show no signs of backing down soon.

One of the immediate fallouts of the hostilities is the rise in crude oil price to \$90 per barrel at the international market and the hike in the cost of petrol in Nigeria to over N1,000 in many parts of the country.

Government has also set in motion machinery to evacuate Nigerians, most of them students, in Iran.

The United States, Israel and Iran remained locked in exchange of missiles and drones for the seventh day running yesterday.

Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian vowed in a television broadcast yesterday that his country would never surrender to Israel and the US.

Iran's enemies "must take their wish for the unconditional surrender of the Iranian people to their graves," Pezeshkian said while US President Dolad Trump threatened that Tehran would be "hit very hard."

The Nation gathered yesterday in Abuja that the Federal Government's Economic Management Team (EMT) had launched into a review of the situation to see how best to minimise the negative effects of the crisis on Nigerians and the country.

Government predicated the 2026 budget on \$64.85 for a barrel of crude, Nigeria's main export.

There are fears the price could reach \$150 per barrel if the crisis does not abate in the next three weeks.

Although this could fetch Nigeria more money, experts say it could also precipitate further rise in the pump price of petrol and cost of living generally.

"The EMT is doing an assessment of this to determine the options," a well-placed source said yesterday in Abuja. The source gave no details.

### FG set to evacuate stranded Nigerians from Iran

The Federal Government said yesterday it had set in motion machinery to evacuate stranded Nigerians from Iran.

Spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Head of Crisis Monitoring and Public Communications Division, Kimiebi Ebienfa,



said on radio in Abuja that during an inter-ministerial meeting on Friday, stakeholders agreed on a reliable evacuation plan, especially for Nigerians in Iran, who are currently the most vulnerable.

He put the number of the Nigerians in that country at 1,000.

He said Nigeria was holding talks with Armenia on how best to evacuate affected Nigerians.

He further explained that the Ministry was working through its embassies and consulates to maintain updated records of Nigerians residing in the region, strengthen communication channels with diaspora communities and provide timely security advisories.

Besides, Ebienfa said Nigeria has activated diplomatic channels and consular alert mechanisms to ensure the safety of Nigerians living in the countries affected by the Middle East crisis.

He said the diplomatic response was prompted by the rapid escalation of hostilities in the Gulf and the potential spillover effects across the region.

"Our foreign policy is anchored on dialogue, peaceful resolution of conflicts and respect for international law," Ebienfa said.

He explained that Nigerian embassies in Tehran, Tel Aviv, Qatar, Beirut, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia have been placed on high alert to closely monitor developments and provide support to Nigerian nationals where necessary.

### Fuel prices rise over N1,000

Our correspondents reported from different parts of the country yesterday that the cost of petrol now ranges between N900 and N1050.

Dangote Refinery and Petrochemicals (DPRP) had adjusted the gantry price of the Premium Motor Spirit (PMS) to N995 per litre.

The Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPCL) yesterday in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) vended the product at N1,050 per litre while Total sold it at N960/l.

Meanwhile, Etena vended it at N1,069/l and Amasco sold it at N980/l.

The product was easily accessible as there were no queues around any of the retail outlets.

Speaking on the phone with the Independent Petroleum Marketers Association of Nigeria (IPMAN) National President, Alhaji Abubakar Maigandi, he said in terms of importation, the landing cost of petrol was N1,050/litre.

Car owners and commercial bus drivers formed long lines at MRS stations on the Ibadan/Lagos Expressway yesterday for petrol currently sold at ₦937 per litre.

Other stations in the same axis increased pump prices above ₦1,000 but had no queues.

Eterna Plc hiked price to ₦1,040, North West Capital Oil, and Fatgbems also adjusted their prices to ₦1,030 per litre, with Mobil Station's a bit lower at ₦1,025 per litre.

Despite the rush for petrol, few stations, including the Nigerian National Petroleum Company (NNPC) Limited, shut their gates against buyers.

Consumers in Owerri, Jos, Ibadan, Osogbo and Ilorin expressed outrage at the hike.

### Experts: Nigeria faces double-edged sword

Economic experts warn that while higher global crude oil prices may increase Nigeria's export earnings in the short term, the country could face inflation, supply chain disruptions and declining investor confidence if global uncertainty persists.

President, Nigerian Economic Society (NES), Dr. Baba Y. Musa, told The Nation that the most immediate impact of the crisis is likely to come through the global oil market.

"First, oil prices. Nigeria, as a major oil-producing nation, faces a double-edged reality," Musa said.

"A spike in global oil prices, driven by supply disruptions through the Strait of Hormuz, through which roughly 20 per cent of global oil supply passes, could temporarily boost Nigeria's export revenues.

He explained that although Nigeria could earn more foreign exchange from crude oil exports if prices rise, the country could experience higher fuel costs because it imports a large portion of its refined petroleum products.

Musa added that Nigeria is currently in a stronger position to withstand external shocks than it was in the past.

According to him, the country's external reserves and ongoing exchange rate reforms provide some level of protection against sudden global financial pressures.

"Second, foreign exchange resilience. It is noteworthy that Nigeria is

considerably better positioned today than in previous episodes of global geopolitical stress," he said.

"With external reserves standing at over \$48 billion, and with the ongoing improvements in exchange rate management by the Central Bank of Nigeria, the country has a meaningful buffer to absorb external shocks and maintain relative stability in the foreign exchange market.

"This is a positive development that should inspire cautious confidence."

The NES president also warned that the conflict could disrupt global trade and supply chains, which could raise the cost of imported goods in Nigeria.

"Third, trade and supply chain disruptions. Nigeria imports a significant volume of goods including refined petroleum products, machinery, and commodities that could be affected by shipping disruptions and rising freight costs in an already strained global supply chain environment," he said.

He also said geopolitical tensions of this scale often make international investors more cautious about investing in emerging markets.

"Fourth, investor confidence. Geopolitical instability of this magnitude tends to dampen appetite for frontier and emerging market investments, which could negatively affect capital flows into Nigeria at a time when the country urgently needs foreign direct investment."

According to Musa, the overall impact on Nigeria will depend largely on how long the conflict lasts and how widely it spreads.

"In sum, while Nigeria may see short-term revenue gains on the oil side and is better cushioned than before, the net economic impact could still turn negative if the conflict deepens and prolongs global uncertainty.

Another economist, Dr. Yusha'u Aliyu of the Institute of Professional Economists and Policy Management in Abuja, said: "The Israel-US war with Iran, which is mainly regime change agitation, has catastrophic consequences for the principal parties as well as the regional and global economy," Aliyu said.

"Nigeria and Africa at large cannot be exempted from trade uncertainty, global oil supply shocks and high transport costs due to longer shipping routes."

*Continued on Page 9*

From Page 8

He explained that any disruption to oil supply from the Middle East would likely push global prices higher and create inflationary pressure.

"The supply disruption of oil to high demand zones from the Middle East will pressure prices upwards and conversely trigger inflation," he said.

Aliyu said Nigeria may benefit from higher oil prices if they rise above the benchmark used in the national budget.

However, he warned that Nigerians could still face higher fuel prices and reduced purchasing power.

"Even with domestic refining capacity, pump price will be rising relatively to international price adjustment, which will adversely affect consumers' purchasing power in Nigeria," Aliyu added.

Dr. Samson Galadima Simon, Chief Economist at ARKK Economics and Data Limited in Abuja, said Nigeria's relationship with high oil prices has always been complicated.

He said while higher crude prices usually improve government revenue and increase foreign exchange inflows, they can also worsen the cost of living for ordinary citizens.

According to him, rising oil prices can bring benefits such as stronger foreign exchange reserves, improved government revenue and greater fiscal space for public spending.

However, he said the country also faces significant downsides when crude prices increase sharply.

He explained that higher oil prices can lead to imported inflation and push up the prices of goods and services across the economy.

The Minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister of the Economy, Mr. Wale Edun, dismissed suggestions that Nigeria could be facing fiscal collapse.

The minister said yesterday in Abuja that the country was merely undergoing a period of fiscal correction driven by the economic reforms of the Federal Government.

The current economic adjustments, according to him, are the result of structural reforms designed to promote transparency, enforce fiscal discipline, and support long-term economic growth.

Edun said the government deliberately chose policies that focus on long-term sustainability rather than temporary measures that could create the illusion of stability.

"Nigeria is not

## Fed Govt reviews options as Iran War impact grows

\* Petrol price crosses N1,000/litre, queues return

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experiencing fiscal collapse. It is undergoing fiscal correction. The reforms are structural, transparency-driven, discipline-enforcing and growth-enabling," he said in a statement.

He explained that available economic data showed positive trends in several key areas, including revenue growth and the continued implementation of capital projects.

According to him, the government has also stopped the practice of financing budget deficits through direct monetary support from the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN).

The minister also addressed public concerns about the performance of government revenue collection, particularly regarding the Nigeria Revenue Service.

His words: "The Nigeria Revenue Service collects a large share of federal taxes and sets internal collection targets," Edun said.

"However, NRS does not collect all revenue sources. Allocation ratios are applied after revenues reach the Budget Office and the Federation Account Allocation Committee, and meeting an NRS collection target does not automatically mean Federal Government revenue targets are met.

Edun also responded to claims that federal capital projects are not being implemented due to low capital releases to government ministries, departments and agencies.

According to him, such conclusions do not reflect the full picture of how capital spending works in the federal budget.

He explained that federal capital expenditure has two main components. The first component involves capital projects funded directly by the Federal Government from its cash revenues.

This type of spending is handled through ministries, departments and agencies and depends largely on government revenue performance.

Edun explained that when government revenue falls short or when debt servicing obligations increase, releases for these projects may slow down, which can affect performance ratios.

The second component involves capital projects funded through loans from international development partners.

These funds are disbursed directly by multilateral institutions and are tied to specific infrastructure or social programmes.

According to the minister, such projects continue to move forward even when cash releases to government agencies appear limited.

"Capital projects are ongoing. Execution continues. The financing mix differs. The misunderstanding arises from focusing solely on MDA cash releases rather than total capital execution," he added.

Edun also explained that increases in Nigeria's debt service payments in recent years do not necessarily mean the government is borrowing recklessly. He noted that debt servicing rose above budget projections in both 2024 and 2025.

In 2024, debt service was projected at ₦8.56 trillion but the actual amount reached ₦12.63 trillion, creating an overshoot of about ₦4 trillion.

For 2025, the budget projected ₦13.12 trillion for debt servicing, but the actual figure rose to ₦14.57 trillion, resulting in an overshoot of about ₦1.45 trillion.

The minister said these increases were largely caused by economic factors rather than excessive borrowing.

One of the key factors, he said, was the depreciation of the naira. He explained that much of Nigeria's external

debt is denominated in foreign currencies.

When the naira weakens against these currencies, the naira cost of servicing the same debt automatically rises.

He added that higher domestic interest rates also contributed to the increase in debt servicing costs. According to him, interest rates were raised as part of efforts to control inflation and stabilise the currency. "To stabilise inflation and the currency, monetary policy was tightened, interest rates increased, and domestic debt servicing costs rose," he said.

Despite these pressures, Edun said the government prioritised key obligations including debt servicing, payment of salaries and pensions, and the continued implementation of capital projects.

He added that these commitments were met without returning to the practice of monetary financing. "This reflects fiscal discipline under strain; not fiscal collapse," he said.

The minister also addressed concerns about Nigeria's rising public debt, noting that a large portion of the increase is due to accounting adjustments and exchange rate changes rather than new borrowing.

He explained that about ₦30 trillion previously owed the Central Bank under the Ways and Means facility was formally recognised and added to the public debt record.

"Previously off-book liabilities are now transparently recorded. This is not new borrowing; it is formal recognition," he said.

He also pointed to the impact of exchange rate adjustments. According to him, when the naira depreciated, the naira value of Nigeria's external debt increased significantly.

He said about ₦70 trillion of the nominal rise in public

debt can be attributed to exchange rate valuation effects.

"Thus, much of the increase is accounting and currency-driven, not borrowing-driven," he said.

Edun said Nigeria's debt sustainability should be assessed using broader economic indicators such as the debt-to-GDP ratio, the debt service-to-revenue ratio, the fiscal deficit level and trends in government revenue.

He noted that recent policy reforms, including fuel subsidy removal and improvements in non-oil revenue, are gradually strengthening the country's fiscal position.

The minister also pointed to strong growth in government revenue in recent years. According to him, Federal Government aggregate revenue increased from ₦12.48 trillion in 2023 to ₦20.98 trillion in 2024. By November 2025, revenue had already reached about ₦22 trillion.

He said the increase reflects improvements in tax administration, stronger remittance discipline by government agencies, efforts to block revenue leakages and improved performance from non-oil sectors of the economy.

"The direction is upward and structural," Edun said.

The minister acknowledged that the economic pressures experienced in 2024 and 2025 reflect the transition from previous fiscal practices to a more transparent system.

He said the country is moving away from an era characterised by hidden deficits and heavy reliance on monetary financing.

According to him, the current reforms include the removal of fuel subsidy, exchange rate liberalisation, the end of Ways and Means financing, tighter monetary policy and improved debt transparency.

He noted that such economic transitions can be difficult in the short term but tend to stabilise over time.

According to him, the capital budget approved for 2024 was largely implemented in 2025, while a large part of the 2025 capital budget will now be executed in 2026.

Despite the short-term pressures, the minister said the reforms are aimed at building a more stable and sustainable fiscal system for Nigeria's economy.



# News

## 2027: Aso Rock in a fix over Shettima

...Insiders torn among choices, as religion remains a 'stubborn' variable

The presidency is in a fix as to the options to adopt in dealing with the issue of the running mate to President Bola Tinubu in the 2027 elections, sources within the ruling party have said.

Investigations by the Newsmen/Journalist confirmed over the weekend that Aso Rock insiders are torn between the different options being bandied as possible ways out of the challenge.

It was learnt that though there are no open outbursts between President Tinubu and Vice-President Kashim



Shettima, sources said that the Tinubu camp had resolved more than a year ago that the president would not seek election alongside the vice-president.



While the reason for such remains unclear, with sources indicating that the issues may be located between political and other considerations, it was learnt that the vice-president had continued to dig in by not giving space to his traducers.

One source said that the Tinubu camp is worried that if Shettima is retained as the vice-president in 2027, it might become too difficult to replace him with another candidate as the successor in 2031.

It was gathered that even if Tinubu is compelled by circumstances to keep Shettima, he would prefer another northerner as his successor in 2031.

At one stage, it was touted that Tinubu would need to ensure religious balance in the presidential ticket to dilute the kind of protest votes that threw up Mr. Peter Obi of the Labour Party in the 2023 election.

However, some other sources have insisted that the failure to raise a "formidable Northern Christian politician" is a threat to that indication.

That thinking was also helped, to some extent, by the resolve of the United States, which called for religious balance in the upper echelons of Nigeria's power system

Newsmen/Journalist was further told that though President Tinubu is believed to have his eyes on another Muslim from the North-East, he is also weighing the option of replacing Shettima with the Minister of Defence, Christopher Musa, seen as a well-accepted professional across the North.

"The issue is that the Kanuris are united around the vice-president. The problem is that no one has been able to point out his offence in the Villa, so far, and so, his supporters are unable to apportion any blame," a source said, adding that the Shettima question remains a knotty one ahead of the primaries.

Another source said that the kind of silence that pervades the political setting is traceable to the headaches the All Progressives Congress (APC) is having over the

during its recent interactions with the government.

While some party insiders have said that the Muslim-



Muslim ticket is the issue, others have insisted that for the president to win, he still has to go to the North-East to pick a running mate.

It was, if the president should stick to that thinking, the space would only be open for the former Speaker of the House of Representatives, Yakubu Dogara, a Christian from Bauchi State, whose main constraint is the fact that he hails from the minority segment of the state. Insiders were said to have argued that a Christian minority from the North would be unable to mobilise the massive votes needed there.

Shettima issue, adding that the vice-president is fully aware of the plot against him.

As a result of the misgivings within the Party, the camp of the vice-president is not at ease with the office of the national chairman of the party, Prof. Nentawe Yilwatda, who has also been mentioned as a possible replacement for the vice-president.

"There are issues we have left under the table", a source said, adding that despite the fact that the party has been able to harness 30 governors in its camp, the leaders are still maintaining cautious bounce.

## Five Popular Nigerian Celebrities Who Dropped Christianity For Islam



The Nigerian leisure business has witnessed quite a few high-profile celebrities embracing the Islamic faith and adopting Muslim names.

NOP NIGERIA experiences that whereas some transformed to Islam as a consequence of marriage, others did so via private non-secular journeys and a seek for objective.

In this text, Niaja News highlights 5 widespread celebrities who've transformed from Christianity to Islam.

**1. Burna Boy:** In 2025, Nigerian Grammy Award winner, Damini Ogulu, higher often known as Burna Boy, in an interview with American streamer Playboymax, stated he had transformed from Christianity to Islam due to his seek for the reality.

The 'Stand Tall' crooner defined that he was raised a Christian just because it was the religion of his mother and father and the surroundings through which he grew up.

However, he admitted that regardless of his non-secular exploration, he stays unsure about non-secular reality, and his determination to affix Islam has solely led to extra questions than solutions.

**2. Mercy Aigbe:** Nollywood actress, Mercy Aigbe, in 2023, spoke about accepting Islam and taking on the Islamic identify, Hajia Minnah.

The film star admitted changing to Islam due to her marriage to Nollywood film producer, Kazim Adeoti, who can also be a Muslim.

**3. Priscilla Ojo:** Nigerian social media influencer,

Priscilla Ojo, daughter of Nollywood actress, Iyabo Ojo, transformed to Islam from Christianity, following her marriage to Tanzanian singer, Juma Jux. Jux, who's a Muslim.

The duo tied the knot in lavish ceremonies held in each Nigeria and Tanzania. Following her marriage to the Tanzanian singer and conversion to Islam, Priscilla Ojo is now often known as Hadizah Mkambala.

**4. Adebimpe Oyebade:** Nollywood actress, Bimpe Oyebade, also referred to as Mo Bimpe, switched to Islam when she married her Muslim colleague, Lateef Adedimeji, in 2021 and formally introduced her Islamic identify, Rahmatullah.

The thespian in a video shared on her Instagram web page on the time disclosed that her mother and father initially opposed their marriage as a consequence of non-secular variations.

According to Bimpe, her father particularly questioned her marrying a Muslim, however the couple had been allowed to proceed with their marriage after the actor met along with her mother and father

**5. Faithia Balogun:** Nollywood actress, Faithia Balogun was born right into a Roman Catholic household, however her previous marriage to her colleague, Saidi Balogun, made her change her faith.

She adopted the Muslim identify Fathia and holds the Islamic chieftaincy title of 'Atesin Se Adinni'.

(Called from NOP News Nigeria).



## Shuwari-Kirchinga residents flee over fear of Boko Haram attack

From Umar Dankano, Yola



Residents of Shuwari-Kirchinga town are fleeing the town due to tension and fear of uncertainty following last week's Tuesday Boko Haram terrorists attack that claimed 22 lives in Madagali local government area of Adamawa state.

Kirchinga is the political ward and hometown of Governor Ahmadu Umaru Fintiri which has been experiencing the terrorists attack because of its proximity to Sambisa forest in the northern part of the state neighboring Borno state.

In mobile phone interviews, some of the residents explained that, the security situation in their communities remain fragile and dicey because the terrorists can strike at any interval without being challenged which always give them the audacity to unravel their atrocities.

Livinus Moses said that, he has already relocated his family and belongings back to Yola, the state capital for safety and harmony lamenting that fear and uncertainty have gripped us as a people.

Moses stated that all his animals including cows and goats have been rustled by the terrorists during the last week's invasion of the town. He decried that people are leaving enmasse to have peace of mind.

Ejandri Papka of Shuwari expressed dismay with the manner in which the security agencies are handling the issue with kids glove. He observed that military were alerted about the impending attack but only to arrive after the unfortunate incidence had

taken place that black Tuesday.

Papka confessed to have parked his family and property to mubi as a result of the traumatic experience in the last security breach in the location.

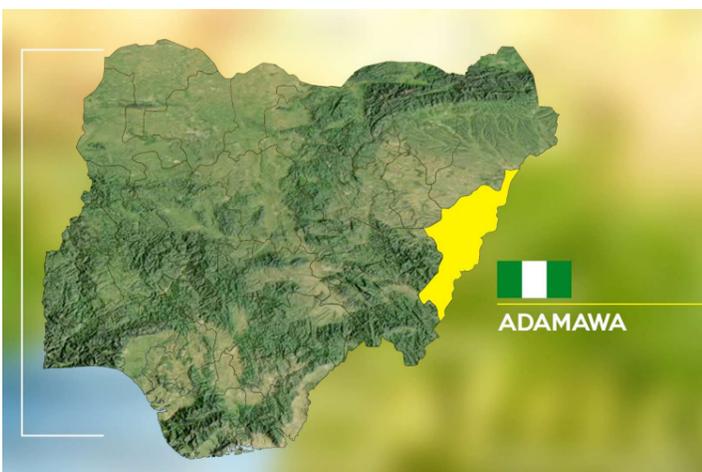
In his interview, Auwal Yakubu regretted that the attack by the bad guys made him too loose over hundred herds of cattle and sheep. He narrated that many of their people have moved to Mubi, Michika, Yola Shuwa and Gombi towns for safety.

Former Chairman of Madagali local council, Maina Ularamu confirmed that villagers are currently leaving in drops and the town is becoming ghost of itself urging constituted authorities to hasten in addressing this ugly scenario before it is too late.

Chairman of Madagali, Musa Shashi didn't answered calls put to his verify phone number and did not reply SMS message sent to him by this reporter.

"Chairman, I want to find out the situation in regards to the insinuation that, your people are leaving Shuwari-Kirchinga town for the fear of imminent and impending attack by Boko Haram terrorists"

Governor Fintiri who visited the town promised the traumatized villagers that his government is collaborating with the federal government to proper a lasting solution to the security challenge as he was sighted at the office of the Minister of defense recently which may not be unconnected with the issue under review.



## Zulum empowers 2,970 Borno youths trained in vocations ... Distributes N2bn starter packs

Borno State Governor, Professor Babagana Umara Zulum, has empowered 2,970 young persons who completed intensive vocational training across the state.

At the event, which took place in Muna Vocational Enterprises Institute, Maiduguri, Zulum distributed starter packs and business kits valued at ₦2,050,000,000 to the graduates, equipping them to establish their own enterprises and become self-employed immediately.

The beneficiaries were drawn from the nine modern vocational training institutes located across Borno State.

The centres, established by the Zulum administration, offer skills in high-demand fields such as information technology, plumbing, construction, tailoring, welding and various artisan trades.

Governor Zulum, while addressing the gathering, reiterated his administration's commitment to supporting young people, particularly those affected by the over 10 years of insurgency in the state.

In his address, the governor stated, "distinguished ladies and gentlemen, one of the cardinal priorities of this administration has been youth empowerment and the protection of vulnerable members of our society. We remain mindful of the devastating effects of insurgency on our communities, which disrupted livelihoods, increased unemployment and exposed many young people to uncertainty and hardship.

"It became imperative for the government to implement sustainable interventions aimed at restoring dignity, creating opportunities and rebuilding productive capacity among our people."

"It is with great honour and a deep sense of fulfilment that I address this distinguished gathering on the occasion of the graduation and presentation of starter packs to 2,970 trainees drawn from nine vocational enterprise institutes and centres across Borno State."

The governor recalled that 5 vocational enterprises institutes and smaller centres were established since 2019.

He further stated: "the Borno State Government



established five vocational enterprises institutes in Muna, Mafa, Biu, Shani and Magumeri. In addition, we reactivated nine vocational training centres and three second chance skills entrepreneurship schools dedicated to women and girls."

The governor said the institutes prioritise the enrolment of vulnerable individuals, particularly those affected by insurgency and provide structured training in diverse vocational and technical trades to enhance employability and economic independence.

Still in his address, the governor reiterated, "I am pleased to state that this administration has invested over ₦40,000,000,000 in the establishment, rehabilitation, and equipping of vocational enterprises institutes, vocational training centres and technical colleges across Borno State."

According to Governor Zulum, this strategic investment is aimed at reducing the number of out-of-school youths, promoting self-reliance and developing a skilled workforce capable of contributing meaningfully to both the state and national economy through Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET).

Earlier, the Commissioner for Education, Engr Lawan Abba Wakilbe, had explained Zulum's vocational training concept, saying, "Your Excellency, permit me to briefly reflect on the origin and evolution of this laudable initiative.

"This programme is a direct product of the visionary leadership and unwavering commitment of Your Excellency, Professor Babagana Umara Zulum, whose administration recognised the urgent need to empower our youths with practical, employable and entrepreneurial skills.

"This initiative was conceived as part of Your Excellency's broader agenda to promote self-reliance, restore dignity and rebuild livelihoods, particularly among conflict-affected youths, women and vulnerable members of our society."

The event was attended by Professor Idris Bugaje, Executive Secretary of the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE); Senators Mohammed Tahir Monguno, Mohammed Ali Ndume and Kaka Shehu Lawan; the Secretary to Borno State Government, Bukar Tijani; the acting Chief of Staff, Babagana Mallumbe and many other senior government officials.



## News

# Aliyu, the opposition and Ramadan feeding

Opposition noise cannot and will never drown out the sterling performance of Governor Aliyu Abubakar Bawa, DG Media and Publicity.

With the announcement of the timetable for the 2027 general elections by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), the countdown to political activities has officially begun. Across the country, especially in Sokoto State, the line between governance and politicking is becoming unmistakably blurred. On one side stands Governor Ahmed Aliyu, who continues to implement policies designed to ease hardship and to deliver on critical projects. On the other is an opposition increasingly focused on muddying the waters as it attempts to regain relevance. It has become its trademark to cast every government intervention as a scandal, turning routine governance into political contestation with its eyes fixed firmly on 2027.

The Ramadan feeding programme of the Sokoto State Government is now the latest propaganda campaign tool by the opposition Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), which seeks to portray Governor Aliyu's administration negatively.

Despite not providing Ramadan feeding support during its eight years in office, the opposition circulated a photograph from a programme organised by private individuals and falsely presented it as that of the state government. On the strength of that misrepresentation, it went further to accuse the government of distributing only garri, kuli-kuli, and sachet water, despite a ₦1 billion budget for the feeding programme.

The narrative spread quickly and was amplified by its supporters. However, when confronted with verifiable evidence — including official images of the government-structured feeding centres — the allegation collapsed.

Context matters. Nigeria's inflationary climate has significantly increased the cost of staple foods, fuel, and logistics. Prices of rice, grains, cooking oil, and protein have risen sharply, while transportation costs have also surged. In such an environment, sustaining a feeding initiative across 170 centres must reflect prevailing market realities. Inflation is



not theoretical; it is felt daily in the marketplace.

For the 2026 Ramadan programme, the state expanded the number of feeding centres from 155 in 2025 to 170 across Sokoto State. This deliberate increase was aimed at reaching more residents in the face of economic challenges. The administration projected approximately 34,000 meals per day throughout Ramadan. Over roughly 30 days, this will amount to an estimated 1,020,000 meals.

To support the programme, ₦1 billion was allocated. A straightforward calculation — ₦1,000,000,000 divided by 1,020,000 meals — produces an average of about ₦980 per meal. However, this is not a fixed per-plate contract price but an average derived from the total budget and projected output. The allocation covers procurement, transportation across local government areas, storage, cooking, stipends for handlers, sanitation, supervision, coordination, and media engagements. It is therefore misleading to isolate the figure without considering these components.

Importantly, the ₦1 billion does not fund the meals alone. It also supports live Ramadan programmes for spiritual reflection and public enlightenment, as well as financial assistance to mosques to operate community-based feeding centres. The allocation sustains a broader Ramadan welfare framework rather than merely designated feeding points.

For comparison, in 2025, the state operated 155 centres serving about 20,000 residents daily. The 2026 expansion to 170 centres and 34,000 daily meals reflects broader coverage and increased

ambition. The direction of Governor Aliyu's policy is very clear: expand reach and increase impact.

The opposition has nevertheless focused narrowly on the ₦1 billion figure, insinuating impropriety without substantiation. It alleges corruption by repeating the false claim that only garri, kuli-kuli, and sachet water were being served. There has been no audit finding, investigative report, or documented evidence supporting such false claims. Assertions of wrongdoing require proof, not insinuation.

Clearing the government of allegations must rest on evidence-based discourse. The figures were publicly announced. The feeding centres are visible and accessible. Targets are measurable, and expansion is verifiable. These are objective benchmarks.

It is also important to emphasize that Governor Aliyu from the outset did not frame the initiative as a government-only effort. He invited well-meaning individuals to support fellow citizens during Ramadan. Philanthropists and community leaders responded positively by contributing food and water to assist the vulnerable. While commendable, such personal efforts are naturally limited in scale compared to the structured intervention of the government.

The inclusion of mosque-based feeding within the framework further strengthens community ownership. By providing support to mosques to run local distribution, the administration leveraged trusted institutions familiar with their congregations' needs. This decentralised structure enhances

accountability because distribution occurs within established community networks.

To ensure that his people were well-fed, Governor Aliyu personally visited several feeding centres to assess meal quality and operational efficiency. During these inspections, he interacted with officials and beneficiaries to ensure standards were maintained. He expressed satisfaction with what he observed, noting orderly distribution and adequate meals. Those familiar with the governor know that he does not tolerate poor performance. Had he encountered substandard practices, he would have taken firm corrective action.

It is worth recalling that during the administration of former governor Aminu Tambuwal, the state did not operate a state-funded Ramadan feeding programme. That period was marked by the pursuits of his presidential ambition, with significant financial expenditure. The contrast is clear: one administration prioritising statewide feeding centres and mosque-based welfare support; another focused on a presidential campaign without instituting a comparable Ramadan feeding framework.

This comparison is offered for context. Leadership reflects priorities. Expanding welfare support to the poor amid inflation communicates a different set of priorities.

As elections approach, programmes delivering visible social impact will continue to be used by the opposition to attempt to discredit the government. For the opposition, it's easier to dramatise a feeding initiative than to present a comprehensive alternative policy blueprint, which is what a serious opposition should do.

Governance, however, cannot pause because of political noise. Rising food prices disproportionately affect low-income households, and Ramadan

heightens both spiritual devotion and economic pressure. In such circumstances, the intervention of the government is a responsibility.

When examined proportionately — over one million projected meals, 170 centres, mosque-based support, live Ramadan programming, and inflation-driven logistics — the allocation reflects scope and scale. The arithmetic does not support the sensational conclusions the opposition attempted to construct.

Ultimately, the people of Sokoto will judge both the Governor Aliyu administration and the opposition based on lived reality. Did the centres operate? Did mosques receive support? Did meals reach households? Did the programme ease hardship? These are tangible benchmarks.

As political temperatures rise, citizens will weigh records carefully. They will consider expanded coverage, increased daily beneficiaries, and sustained intervention against alternative priorities.

The Ramadan feeding programme forms part of the 9-Point Smart Agenda on which the governor campaigned. Other components include mosque reconstruction and promotion of Islamic affairs. Recently, the Buhari Dan Shehu Jumu'at Mosque in Tambuwal — demolished by Aminu Tambuwal and abandoned — was commissioned. Several Jumu'at mosques across the 23 local government areas have also been remodeled.

By expanding the programme despite economic headwinds, inviting community participation, empowering mosques, and maintaining oversight, Governor Aliyu's administration chose to prioritise welfare.

And in that choice lies the difference between governance rooted in responsibility and politics driven by propaganda.



## SDP state chairmen reject alleged leadership changes

The Forum of Constitutionally Elected State Chairmen of the Social Democratic Party (SDP) has warned against what it described as illegal attempts to alter the party's leadership structure and convene an unconstitutional meeting of its National Executive Committee (NEC).

In a press release issued on Monday, the forum said it decided to address what it called "growing confusion" surrounding the party's leadership and the purported convening of a NEC meeting by individuals it claimed lacked the constitutional authority to do so.

The statement was signed by the Secretary of the Forum of SDP State Chairmen, Hon. Musa Danlamin.

The forum alleged that certain individuals had announced the replacement of duly elected State Executive Committees with appointed state chairmen and were also attempting to convene a NEC meeting without the involvement of the party's recognised leadership.

According to the group, such actions violate the provisions of the party's constitution.

The forum further revealed that the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) had already been notified of the alleged unconstitutional activities. It referenced the commission's position in a previous case involving the Labour Party, where INEC declined to recognise the removal of elected state, local government, and ward executives because it did not comply with the party's constitutional provisions.

It argued that the same principle of due process should apply in the current situation within the SDP.

The state chairmen also criticised what they described as INEC's reliance on a court judgment to justify an alleged change in the party's leadership, describing such interpretation as legally unsustainable.

They explained that the judgment delivered by the Federal High Court in Suit No. FHC/ABJ/CS/1525/2025, and later affirmed by the Court of Appeal in Suit No. CA/ABJ/1234/2025, dealt strictly with the nomination of twelve candidates for a by-election.

According to the forum, the courts did not at any point pronounce on or alter the leadership structure of the SDP.

"The judgment cannot be interpreted, directly or indirectly, as conferring authority on any individual to assume the position of Acting National Chairman, nor does it in any way undermine or invalidate the duly elected National Chairman of the party," the forum said, referring to Shehu Musa Gabam.

The group added that the matter is still subject to pending appeals before the Court of Appeal in Suit Nos. CA/ABJ/CV/126/2026 and CA/ABJ/CV/127/2026, stressing that any attempt to rely on the earlier judgment to alter the leadership of the party was premature and legally defective.

Citing provisions of the SDP Constitution (2022, as amended), the forum stated that Section 13.1 establishes the National Chairman as the chief executive officer and leader of the party.

It also noted that Section 14.3 provides that no meeting of any organ of the party can validly hold in the absence of the chairman of that organ.

The forum explained that in the case of the NEC, no meeting can lawfully take place and no valid decisions can be taken without the presence and authority of the National Chairman, who constitutionally presides over the committee.

According to the statement, the combined provisions of Sections 13.1(iv) and 14.4(ii) also vest the authority to preside over NEC meetings solely in the National Chairman, while Section 14.4(i) states that failure to comply with the rules governing party meetings renders any decisions taken null and void.

It also condemned alleged attempts to replace duly elected state executive committees with appointed state chairmen in order to manipulate the composition of the NEC, describing the move as a direct assault on the democratic foundation of the party.

The forum further informed the public that the Court of Appeal was scheduled to sit on Monday, March 9, 2026, to hear matters relating to the judgment being relied upon by INEC.

It reiterated that the judgment in question did not address, determine, or alter the leadership of the party in any way.

Consequently, the forum warned party members, institutions, and the general public that any meeting, resolution, or decision arising from a purported NEC meeting convened by unauthorised persons would be considered null and void and incapable of conferring any legal authority within the party.

It added that any attempt to subvert the party's constitutional order would be resisted through all lawful and democratic means.

## I will deliver better governance than Tinubu — SDP's Adebayo

The 2023 presidential candidate of the Social Democratic Party (SDP), Adewole Adebayo, has said he is ready to assume leadership of Nigeria immediately if given the opportunity, insisting he would deliver better governance than President Bola Ahmed Tinubu.

Adebayo made the remark while reacting to the announcement by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) of the timetable for the 2027 general elections.

He said that while opposition parties are already preparing for the polls, the more important issue is whether Nigerians themselves are ready to change the current administration.

"The opposition being ready is a given. What is more important is whether the people are ready," he said.

"If you ask me whether I am ready to take over from President Bola Ahmed Tinubu and govern the country better, yes, I am ready, even today."

The SDP chieftain said he was well prepared and surrounded by competent individuals capable of offering clearer direction for the country.

"You can drive me to the Aso Rock Villa now and ask me to take over, and you will see a better result today, not tomorrow. I am better prepared, better intentioned and surrounded by better people with a clearer vision," he said.

Adebayo also criticised the Tinubu administration, describing the current government as a historic disaster.

"Our duty, as we point out that President Tinubu's government is a disaster, which is obvious by every metric, is also to organise the opposition and present clear alternatives to the people," he said.

According to him, the real challenge for opposition parties is not merely criticising the government but presenting credible leadership and policies capable of winning public trust.

"It is not difficult to defeat President Bola Ahmed Tinubu. What we need to do is bring more voters out and help them understand that their immediate solution is to remove the APC from power," he said.

Adebayo also urged

Nigerians to vote out members of the National Assembly, accusing lawmakers of passing electoral laws that favour the ruling party.

"The duty Nigerians have is to make sure that no member of the National Assembly returns because they surrendered the sovereignty of Nigeria to the whims of one person," he said.

Commenting on threats by the Inter-Party Advisory Council (IPAC) to boycott future elections if the Electoral Act is not amended, Adebayo said the demand for reforms was legitimate but stressed that political parties must continue preparing for elections regardless of the controversy.

"The right decision is to have a good electoral act that encourages people to vote and deepens democracy," he said.

"But parties must continue their groundwork so they are not caught unawares."

He added that although the current law contains what he described as "booby traps", opposition parties still have a responsibility to defeat the government through the ballot.

Adebayo also rejected calls for a broad opposition coalition aimed solely at defeating Tinubu in 2027.

He criticised some opposition figures who recently moved to the African Democratic Congress (ADC), arguing that many of them had previously been part of governments responsible for Nigeria's current challenges.

"You cannot say you are against corruption or bad governance and then align with the same people who created the problem," he said.

According to him, replacing Tinubu with politicians who previously held power without reforming the system would not solve Nigeria's problems.

"If you remove Tinubu and bring back those who created the same problems, you have

achieved nothing," he added.

### Confidence in SDP

Despite concerns about the strength of the Social Democratic Party compared with the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC), Adebayo said the party was focused on mobilising ordinary Nigerians rather than relying on political heavyweights.

He recalled that the SDP once played a historic role in Nigeria's democratic struggle, particularly during the 1993 presidential election won by the late Moshood Kashimawo Olawale Abiola.

"Our focus is to reconnect the party with the people. Once the people embrace the party again, the structure will naturally follow," he said.

Adebayo further described Tinubu as Nigeria's worst president, arguing that the current administration has failed in governance.

"There are three reasons why he is the worst president," he said. "First, he is in charge at a time when the impact of bad governance is most severe. Second, his style of governance weakens institutions and personalises power."

He also accused the president of disregarding the rule of law and weakening accountability mechanisms.

### Looking Ahead to 2027

Adebayo said he has already begun preparations for the next presidential election, insisting his ambition is not to remain in perpetual opposition.

"My job in the opposition is to form the next government. I don't want to be a professional opposition politician. I want to be president and commander-in-chief," he said.

He added that his political future ultimately depends on the Nigerian electorate.

"My presidency is in the hands of God and the Nigerian people. When the people are ready, we will come," he said.



## Issues

# We can continue "intense war" with US & Israel for at least six months - IRAN

By Salihu Makera with Media Repots

As the war between USA and Israel and Iran on the other side enter second week, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) said that Iran can continue an "intense war" with the United States and Israel for at least six months at the current pace of operation. The statement also added that they had targeted "more than 200" sites related to the US and Israel bases and facilities in the region.

"The Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran are capable of continuing at least a 6-month intense war at the current pace of operations," said Guards spokesperson Ali Mohammad Naini, according to Fars news agency.

### Trump acknowledged potential casualties

In a new Time, cover story titled "Trump's War," President Donald Trump addressed concerns about Iran retaliating against Americans on U.S. soil amid escalating tensions in the Middle East.

When asked by correspondent Eric Cortellessa whether Americans should worry about attacks at home, Trump, 79, said, "I guess."

He added, "But I think they're worried about that all the time. We think about it all the time. We plan for it. But yeah, you know, we expect some things." Trump acknowledged potential casualties, saying, "Like I said, some people will die. When you go to war, some people will die."

His remarks come days after six U.S. service members were killed in a retaliatory drone strike following a joint U.S.-Israel attack on Iran.

The conflict has resulted in over 1,000 deaths, with the



Iranian Red Crescent Society reporting "1,009 emergency response teams deployed across 153 affected counties."

### US asked Ukraine assistance against Iran's drones

U.S. President Donald Trump has said the United States is willing to accept assistance from any country to counter Iranian drones.

Speaking to Reuters in a telephone interview on Thursday, Trump stated that Washington would welcome support from international partners to strengthen its defense efforts.

Meanwhile, Volodymyr Zelenskyy revealed that Ukraine had received a specific request from the U.S. for help dealing with drone threats linked to Iran in the Middle East.

Ukraine has gained significant experience in countering Iranian-made drones during its war with

continue to rise in the region.

### Iran questions US stance on its political future

Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister Saeed Khatibzadeh sharply criticized US President Donald Trump, questioning Washington's stance on Iran's political future.

In conversation at the Raisina Dialogue 2026 in New Delhi, Khatib Zadeh said it was ironic that the US president talks about shaping Iran's leadership when he cannot even control local political appointments in the United States.

Criticising the American leadership's approach to Tehran, he pointed to what he described as a 'colonial' contradiction in US policy.

'President Trump is asking for a leadership change in Iran, while he can't even appoint the Mayor of New York. Can you imagine this colonial

already triggered sharp increases in fuel and gas prices that are directly affecting European households.

Speaking at a joint press conference with Portuguese Prime Minister Luís Montenegro in the southern Spanish city of Huelva, Andalusia, Sánchez described the US and Israeli military strikes on Iran—which began on February 28, 2026—as "an extraordinary mistake" whose consequences are now being felt far beyond the Middle East.

"We are already paying for it through higher fuel and gas prices, as well as the number of victims and the pain and suffering in the Middle East," Sánchez said. He pointed to the near-total disruption of commercial tanker traffic through the Strait of Hormuz, sustained high oil prices (Brent crude hovering near \$82 per barrel), and Qatar Energy's force majeure declaration on LNG exports following Iranian attacks on key facilities.

The prime minister's remarks come nine days into the most intense phase of US-Israeli operations against Iran, which have included the killing of Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the destruction of large parts of Iran's air defence network and missile production capacity, and the sinking of the Iranian frigate IRIS Dena by a US submarine in the Indian Ocean on March 4. Iran has retaliated with multiple waves of ballistic missiles, cruise missiles and drones targeting

Israeli military sites and US bases in Gulf Cooperation Council countries, causing casualties and infrastructure damage across the region.

### Indonesia suspends all discussions on the Board of Peace

According to a report made by Anadolu English on Saturday, 7 March, 2026, the Foreign Minister of Indonesia, Sugiono announced that Indonesia has suspended all discussions on the Board of Peace initiative launched by US President Donald Trump, explaining that international attention has shifted toward the consequences of the war involving Iran.

It was gathered that the decision of the Government of Indonesia through its Foreign Minister to suspend participation comes as the US-Israeli campaign against the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran under the leadership of the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei that has killed over 1,000 people, including Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and dozens of schoolgirls.

### Iran to stop attacks on Gulf countries

Iran's President, Masoud Pezeshkian, has announced that Iran will stop targeting neighboring countries unless the United States or Israel launches attacks from their territories.

According to Al Jazeera, the decision was reached during a meeting of Iran's interim council on Friday. The announcement also suggests that the country's government is still functioning despite the reported killing of Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei in recent US and Israeli strikes.

Since the United States and Israel began military strikes on Iran last Saturday, Iran has carried out retaliatory attacks on Israeli targets and American interests across the Middle East. These attacks included strikes on military bases, hotels and oil facilities.

Countries affected by the attacks include Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain and Oman. The strikes have disrupted airports, businesses and public activities across the region and have also contributed to a sharp rise in global oil prices.



## Iran War

## Iran war costing the US \$891.4m per day — Report



The ongoing conflict involving Iran is costing the United States about \$891.4 million per day, according to an analysis by the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), a think tank based in Washington, DC.

The estimate is based on an analysis of information released by the Pentagon on targets struck and the military assets deployed in the operation.

CSIS said the daily cost could fall if the United States begins to rely on cheaper weapons and if Iran reduces the number of drones and missiles it launches.

“However, future costs will depend mostly on the intensity of operations and the effectiveness of Iranian retaliation,” the report stated.

According to the analysis, air, naval and ground operations account for the largest share of daily spending. Air operations are estimated to cost about \$30 million per day, while naval operations are put at around \$15 million daily. Ground operations are estimated at \$1.6 million each day.

The report also listed the daily cost of several key military assets used in the conflict.

For air assets, tanker and cargo aircraft operations cost about \$9 million per day, while carrier air wings, non-stealth fighters, and stealth fighters each cost roughly \$5 million daily.

For naval assets, operating an aircraft carrier costs about \$6 million per day, while a destroyer costs around \$5 million daily.

On the ground, the report estimates that an artillery brigade costs about \$1 million

per day, while a National Guard battalion costs less than \$1 million daily.

CSIS also compared the current costs with those of earlier US military actions against Iran.

It noted that the US strikes on Iran's nuclear facilities in June 2025, known as Operation Midnight Hammer, cost less than the first 100 hours of military operations in the current conflict, even though the earlier operation lasted only about two-and-a-half hours.

According to CSIS, the first 100 hours of the current war have cost about \$3.7 billion.

Separate estimates by the Costs of War project at Brown University put the cost of the Operation Midnight Hammer strikes at between \$2.04 billion and \$2.26 billion.

The research group said the main expenses during that operation included the use of 40 MOP 30,000-pound bombs, costing between \$49 million and \$70 million, the deployment of seven B2 stealth bombers, estimated at \$31.75 million to \$37.8 million, and the firing of 24 Tomahawk missiles, estimated at \$36 million to \$45.6 million.

*Reuters* reports that the US and Israel last Saturday launched pre-emptive attacks on several targets in Iran, leading to the death of its Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, and other top officials.

Iran, in its retaliatory strikes, *Reuters* reports that it has fired missiles not just at Israel but also at many neighbouring Gulf countries where US assets are based, leading to tensions in the Middle East region. (CNN)

## From Saddam's Hole to Khamenei's killing: 7 Heads of State the U.S. Has Captured or Killed

By Salihu Makera

The killing of Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, in a joint U.S.-Israeli military strike in February 2026 sent shockwaves across the world. For many, it was unprecedented, a sitting head of state eliminated by American military force.

While the scale of Khamenei's death is extraordinary, the United States has a long history of capturing or killing foreign leaders it regards as threats. From the jungles of the Philippines more than a century ago to the streets of Caracas, here are the heads of state the United States has captured or removed.

## 1. Emilio Aguinaldo, President of the First Philippine Republic (1901).

Emilio Aguinaldo, the first President of the Philippine Republic, was captured by U.S. forces during the Philippine-American War in a covert operation in March 1901. His arrest significantly weakened organised Filipino resistance to American colonial rule. Although the republic lacked broad international recognition, Aguinaldo functioned as its head of state. His capture remains one of the earliest examples of the United States detaining a foreign leader during armed conflict.



## 2. Manuel Noriega, De Facto Leader of Panama (1990)

In December 1989, the United States launched Operation Just Cause, invading Panama to remove Manuel Noriega, the country's effective ruler. Noriega, a former CIA asset, sought refuge in the Vatican diplomatic mission before surrendering. He was flown to the United States, tried on federal drug trafficking charges, and sentenced to prison. The operation blurred the lines between military intervention and law enforcement.

## 3. Saddam Hussein, President of Iraq (2003)

Saddam Hussein



After the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq in March 2003, Saddam Hussein went into hiding following the fall of Baghdad. In December 2003, he was captured near Tikrit hiding in an underground chamber. Footage of his medical examination was broadcast globally. He was later tried by an Iraqi tribunal and executed on 30 December 2006.



## 4. Juan Orlando Hernández, President of Honduras (2022)

Juan Orlando Hernández, President of Honduras from 2014 to 2022, was arrested by Honduran authorities shortly after leaving office, following a U.S. extradition request. He faced federal charges of drug and weapons trafficking in the United States. A federal jury convicted him, and he was sentenced to 45 years in prison. His case is one of the few instances of a former head of state prosecuted in a U.S. court.



## 5. Nicolás Maduro, President of Venezuela (2026)

In January 2026, U.S. forces conducted a military operation in Caracas, resulting in the arrest of sitting President Nicolás Maduro. He was transported to New York to face federal charges, including narco-terrorism and drug trafficking. The operation drew condemnation from several governments as a violation of Venezuelan sovereignty, while others welcomed it. Maduro pleaded

not guilty. His arrest marked a rare instance of a sitting South American head of state physically removed from power by U.S. forces.

## 6. Muammar Gaddafi, Leader of Libya (2011)



Muammar Gaddafi ruled Libya for more than four decades. In 2011, the Arab Spring sparked a civil war, prompting the United States and NATO to intervene under a United Nations mandate to protect civilians. In October 2011, a NATO airstrike hit Gaddafi's convoy as he attempted to flee Sirte. He was captured shortly afterwards by rebel forces and killed. While U.S. forces did not directly execute him, American military action played a decisive role in the events leading to his death.



## 7. Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Supreme Leader of Iran (2026)

In February 2026, a joint U.S.-Israeli military operation killed Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. The strikes targeted military and intelligence facilities in addition to Khamenei himself. No sitting leader of Iran had ever been killed by a foreign power in the modern era. The geopolitical consequences continue to unfold, with analysts debating whether this marks a turning point in Middle Eastern history or the start of a more volatile chapter.

## A Pattern Across Generations

From Emilio Aguinaldo's capture in 1901 to Khamenei's death in 2026, the United States has repeatedly demonstrated a willingness to remove leaders it perceives as threats. Taken together, these actions trace a century-long thread of American influence and intervention in global politics.

(Called from Pulse Africa).

## Politics

### APC has set new benchmark in democratic organisation — Spokesman

The Lagos State chapter of the All Progressives Congress (APC) says its recent electronic membership registration and party congresses have set a benchmark for democratic organisation in Nigeria.

The party's spokesman, Seye Oladejo, said this in a statement issued on Friday in Lagos.

Oladejo said the exercises reflected the party's commitment to discipline, innovation and strong institutional structures.

He said the successful electronic membership registration demonstrated the party's ability to deploy modern systems to strengthen internal democracy.

"From the resounding success of our electronic membership registration exercise to the seamless conduct of our Party Congresses, the APC has proven that structure, innovation, and order are not mere slogans – they are our culture.

"While others trade in confusion and press statements, we build systems. While others quarrel over factions, we strengthen institutions. While others manufacture propaganda, we consolidate progress.

"Across wards and local governments in Lagos State, our congresses were conducted peacefully, transparently, and in strict compliance with constitutional guidelines.

"Participation was massive. The process was orderly. The outcome was clear: a united and forward-looking party ready for the tasks ahead," the spokesman said.

According to him, beyond the successful conduct of the Congresses, the quality of members elected into the State Executive of the party speaks volumes.

He added: "The new leadership embodies a rare and strategic blend of experience and youthfulness, continuity and renewal, as well as deliberate gender balancing,

"It is a team forged from institutional memory and fresh energy – a combination designed not just to sustain progress, but to accelerate it," he added.

Oladejo urged opposition parties to learn the values of discipline, organisation and unity of purpose in political leadership.

According to him, it is time for opposition parties to face reality and embrace politics of discipline, cohesion, organisation, and unity of purpose.

He said: "Politics is not noise-making. It is not social media agitation. It is not perpetual internal crisis. It is structure. It is coordination. It is leadership.

"These enduring values remain the bedrock of the progressive movement's dominance in Lagos State and across Nigeria.

"They explain why the APC continues to grow stronger while others grow louder – and weaker."

The spokesman said these values remained the foundation of the progressive movement's dominance in Lagos and across Nigeria.

He said the development also reflected the confidence residents continue to place in the APC.

"Above all, this moment once again affirms the absolute trust that Lagosians place in the APC as a serious, competent, and result-driven political platform worthy of their mandate.

"The people of Lagos have consistently chosen stability over chaos, progress over bitterness, and performance over empty rhetoric.

"We will not be distracted by noise. We will not be slowed by cynicism. And we will certainly not take lectures on organization from parties that cannot organize themselves.

"The APC in Lagos stands disciplined. It stands cohesive. It stands battle-ready. And when the time comes, the verdict of the people will once again be emphatic." Oladejo said. (NAN)



## IPAC threatens boycott of 2027 polls over Electoral Act amendments

Inter-Party Advisory Council (IPAC) has threatened to boycott the 2027 general elections if the National Assembly fails to address concerns in the Electoral Act 2026.

The threat is contained in a communiqué issued after the council's General Assembly meeting held at the council's secretariat in Abuja.

The News Agency of Nigeria NAN reports that the communiqué was jointly signed by the IPAC National Chairman, Yusuf Dantalle and National Secretary, Maxwell Mgbudem.

Reading the communiqué, Dantalle said that some provisions in the Electoral Act 2026 introduced new issues that were not conducive to political party development in Nigeria's multi-party democracy.

He said that the council observed that certain sections of the law undermined the fundamental objectives of political parties and contradicted the principles guiding democratic participation and political inclusion.

"In the present circumstances, IPAC cannot fold its arms. The time to act is now," he said.

Dantalle said that IPAC had resolved to draw the attention of Nigerians and the international community, including the United Nations, European Union and Economic Community of West African States, to the issues.

According to him, the council has outlined minimum conditions that must be addressed by the National Assembly to guarantee free, fair, credible and inclusive elections in 2027.

He noted that IPAC reserved the right to challenge some contentious provisions of the Electoral Act 2026 in court if the issues remained unresolved.

"Should the National Assembly fail to address these anomalies through urgent



amendments, political parties under IPAC will be compelled to boycott the 2027 elections.

"In such circumstances, the outcome of the elections will be rejected as illegitimate and will not be recognised by political parties," he stated.

The IPAC national chairman said that the recently-passed amended Act was meant to correct anomalies in the Electoral Act 2022, adding, however, that it had introduced fresh concerns.

The communiqué maintained that political parties possess constitutional rights to manage their internal affairs, including determining the mode of selecting candidates for elections.

It criticised Section 84(2) of the Act which excluded indirect primaries, describing the provision as a violation of the rights of political parties.

IPAC warned that failure to restore indirect primaries could weaken party structures and undermine the growth of multi-party democracy in the country.

It also called for the removal of the requirement for political party members to upload their National Identification Number (NIN) during party registration processes.

According to IPAC, the provision is capable of disenfranchising millions of

Nigerians who do not yet possess the identification number and therefore limit their participation in politics.

It further demanded the expungement of Sections 77(4), (5) (6) and (7) which, it argued, infringed on citizens' constitutional right to freedom of association.

IPAC also called for the restoration of mandatory electronic transmission of election results immediately after voting at polling units.

It noted that the absence of electronic transmission created controversies during the 2023 presidential election.

The council recommended stronger penalties for vote buying, describing the practice as one of the major threats to the credibility of elections.

It equally urged lawmakers to restore forged certificates as valid grounds for election petitions, stressing that leadership integrity remained fundamental to democratic governance.

The council recalled its role in defending the democratic process during the collation of results in the 2023 presidential election.

While reiterating its commitment to strengthening democracy, it, however, warned that electoral reforms must reflect transparency, inclusiveness and respect for constitutional principles. (NAN)

## US lawmakers appear powerless before Trump – Shehu Sani

Former lawmaker, who represented Kaduna Central Senatorial District, Shehu Sani, has said that the United States' Senate and Congress appeared to be powerless before President Donald Trump where their consent is needed.

Sani said this in a statement posted via his verified X handle, while reacting to the

ongoing US/Israel hostility with Iran.

It has reported that tensions started February 28, when the United States and its ally, Israel launched air strikes on Iran resulting in the death of Iranian Supreme Leader and other notable top government officials.

Airing his own opinion, the former lawmaker said, "The US Senate and Congress are ignored by the President on

matters where their consent is needed.

"They appeared powerless, and now resorted to the Social Media to express their outrage and anger.

"When will the next team of those lawmakers visit the next third World country and lecture them about Democracy, the Constitution, rule of law and freedom?"

# El-Rufai, Malami: Coalition urges Atiku, Obi, Amaechi, others to condemn alleged injustice

The Coalition Political Action Committee (COPAC) has warned the Federal Government that the rule of law in Nigeria cannot be suspended for political convenience, urging prominent opposition figures to speak out against the continued detention of former Kaduna State Governor, Mallam Nasiru El-Rufai, and former Minister of Justice, Abubakar Malami (SAN).

The coalition specifically called on former Vice President Atiku Abubakar, former Anambra State Governor Peter Obi, former Minister of Transportation Rotimi Amaechi, Senator Rabiu Musa Kwankwaso and Senator Aminu Waziri Tambuwal to publicly condemn what it described as a rising pattern of injustice.

COPAC argued that the 14-day remand order obtained by investigators in the case involving El-Rufai had expired, stressing that the order was granted for a specific and limited purpose — to allow investigators complete their work within a defined constitutional timeframe.

In a statement issued by the convener of the coalition, Aminu Datti-Ahmed, the group maintained that the warrant was not granted as a



licence for indefinite detention, procedural manipulation, or political theatre.

According to the statement, “Under Section 35 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, the liberty of every citizen is protected by law. Investigative detention is strictly temporary and must lead, within a reasonable time, to either formal charges before a competent court or the immediate release of the detainee.

“The Federal Government must therefore do one of two things in the case involving El-Rufai: file formal charges before a court or release the detainee immediately.

“Anything outside these clearly defined legal options would amount to acting illegally and unconstitutionally, and would render the continued detention an abuse of state power and a violation of the constitutional rights guaranteed to every Nigerian citizen.”

The coalition also stated

that the conduct of security operatives in the cases involving El-Rufai and Abubakar Malami runs contrary to Nigeria's obligations under international human rights law, including Article 9 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and Article 6 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, both of which prohibit arbitrary arrest and detention and require that any deprivation of liberty be strictly governed by law and

subject to judicial oversight.

“Make no mistake, the danger of this moment cannot be overstated. Nigeria is witnessing a disturbing pattern in which state institutions deploy investigative powers against political actors in a manner that raises legitimate questions about selectivity, timing and motive.

“This is why silence from other opposition leaders at this moment is both dangerous and irresponsible.”

COPAC therefore called on leading opposition figures, including Atiku Abubakar, Peter Obi, Tambuwal, Amaechi and Kwankwaso, as well as other political leaders who claim to stand for democratic accountability, to immediately speak out against any attempt to harass, intimidate or clamp down on opposition figures.

“This is not about El-Rufai. This is about ensuring that the law remains a level playing field. The rule of law must never become a selective weapon used against those who fall out of favour with those who hold power,” the statement added.

The coalition warned that history shows the dangers of silence when state power is used against political opponents.

“First, they came for Tambuwal, and I did not speak out because I was not Tambuwal.

“Then they came for Malami, and I did not speak out because I was not Malami.

“Then they came for Kwankwaso, and I did not speak out because I was not Kwankwaso.

“Then they came for El-Rufai, and I did not speak out because I was not El-Rufai.

“Then they came for me, and there was no one left to speak out for me.”

COPAC concluded by insisting that if the government has evidence against the detained individuals, it should file charges immediately.

“If the government has evidence, it should file charges. If it does not, it must release the detainees.

“The law is not optional. The Constitution is not a suggestion. And the Nigerian people will not remain silent if the guarantees of liberty written into our Constitution are treated as expendable.

“Nigeria is a constitutional democracy, not a police state.”

## Khamenei: Tinubu yet to condole with Iran amid US pressure

President Bola Tinubu has yet to issue condolences to Iran on behalf of Nigeria following the death of the country's Supreme Leader, Ali Hosseini Khamenei.

Khamenei was killed following coordinated strikes by the United States and Israel in an ongoing war with the Middle Eastern country.

Since his death, several countries have expressed their opinions regarding the Shia cleric who served as Iran's

second supreme leader from 1989.

In a message on Kremlin's website, President Vladimir Putin of Russia described the death as a “cynical murder” that violated “all standards of human morality and international law”.

“Please accept my deep condolences in connection with the assassination of the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Seyed Ali Khamenei, and members of his family,” he said.

In a post on X, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan sympathised with the people of Iran, adding that he was saddened to learn of the passing of the supreme leader.

The Houthi leadership in Yemen described the attack on Khamenei as a heinous crime that represents a “flagrant violation of all international laws and norms and embodies the continuation of the unjust attack on the Islamic nation.”

In Africa, Chad's leader, Mahamat Idriss Deby Itno,

sympathised with Iran and extended “most sincere and heartfelt condolences” to the late supreme leader.

According to the Iranian Embassy in South Africa, it received the letter of condolence from President Cyril Ramaphosa, following the “martyrdom of Imam Khamenei. Iran and South Africa have deep-rooted friendship.”

However, the embassy's message on X was met with a sharp response from the U.S. House Committee on Foreign Affairs against Ramaphosa.

It reads, “No friend of the Ayatollah is a friend of ours. South Africa's president is cozying up to the Iranian regime while grandstanding and enjoying American freedom in Chicago.”

While South Africa's President's condolences were sent privately to the Iranian government, no public record indicates whether Nigeria has followed the same approach regarding the passing of

Khamenei. It is also unclear if Nigeria supports or condemns the killing, amid claims by the Israeli Ambassador to Nigeria, Michael Freeman, that Iran sponsors terrorism in Nigeria.

With the U.S. fighting terrorism in Nigeria, the country's silence on Khamenei's death may be seen as playing it safe. The same Tinubu-led government was quick to offer public condolences to the government and people of the Islamic Republic of Iran over the passing of President Ebrahim Raisi, as well as Iranian foreign minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian and other officials in a helicopter crash.

Not following the same footsteps in light of Iran's supreme leader's passing at the hands of the U.S. could suggest that Nigeria is attempting to curry favour with the U.S., which has accused it of Christian genocide.



## Politics

# APC, PDP, LP, ADC: On the march again

The stage is set for the four political parties to lock horns. But their preparations reflect their strengths and weaknesses, their gains and losses, and their projections for the future.

### APC

The All Progressive Congress (APC) is tactical, more focused, less crisis-ridden and more cohesive. These days, the ruling party is busier. It is not responding to the opposition vituperation, but focussing on its mobilisation for next year's polls.

The preparations are in three layers. The first is local government congress. New party leaders at the ward and local governments have been elected to drive mobilisation at the grassroots.

The exercise was not



totally smooth. There were skirmishes in Ondo State, where Governor Lucky Aiyedatiwa and Interior Minister Bunmi Ojo are fighting over the party structures.

The governor is still studying the constitution to see whether he can recontest. The supporters of the minister are preparing ground for his governorship ambition in post-Aiyedatiwa era.

During the local government congress, the party chairman, Ade

Adetimehin, who is backing Ojo, was attacked. He was dragged on the floor. Later, two people were killed during the rancorous exercise.

Sources said the national leadership of the party is wading into the Aiyedatiwa/Ojo crisis.

Also, in Benue, the local government congress has polarised the party. The supporters of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Senator George Akume, and Governor Hychiant Alia are locked in

protracted feud over the control of the state chapter.

The disagreement led to paralleled congresses. Neither of the two factional ward and local government executives have been recognised by the national leadership.

Ironically, the cleric-governor and the SGF are members of the National Reconciliation Committee. Last week, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu appealed to them to sheathe their swords.

APC is warming up for governorship elections in

Ekiti and Osun states this year. In Ekiti, the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) has no candidate. In Osun, the PDP candidate is also weak. While Ekiti APC members of the same page, much success has been recorded in the reconciliation of party leaders after the primary.

APC governors and the national leadership have set up a structure to explain the scorecard of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu to Nigerians. The 'Renewed Hope Ambassadors' may evolve into a formidable, powerful and influential campaign structure ahead of next year's polls.

In Ogun State, there is friction between Governor Dapo Abiodun and Senator Gbenga Daniel over 2027 nomination politics. No serious attempt at restoring cordial relations.

## 2027: Atiku intensifies southeast consultations, meets ADC, Igbo leaders

Former Vice President Atiku Abubakar has intensified his consultations in the South-East, meeting with leaders of the African Democratic Congress (ADC) and other prominent Igbo figures in what sources described as a strategic engagement ahead of the party's presidential primary for the 2027 election.

Details of the meeting were disclosed in an unsigned statement posted on Wednesday by the party on its X handle, @ADCVanguard, which described the engagement as significant to the party's ongoing consultations and emerging alliances as it prepares for the next general election.

According to the statement, the meeting was held behind closed doors at the Abuja residence of Chikwe Udensi and brought together

key party figures and regional stakeholders from the South-East.

Among those present were Senator Augustine Akobundu; Chekwes Okorie; former Minister of State for Education Emeka Nwajiuba; Osita Oruche; Prof. Onyi Nwagbara; Uchenna Okogbuo; former ADC National Chairman Ralph Nwosu; Hon. Uzoma Abonta; Hon. Uko Nkole; Etigwe Uwah; Steve Nwadiuko; Morris Eboh; Senator Frank Ibezim; and Dave Eboh, among others.

Party sources, however, said discussions centred on strengthening the party's structure in the South-East and exploring possible political alignments ahead of the presidential primary.

The engagement is also seen as part of broader consultations by stakeholders



within the ADC as preparations for the 2027 electoral cycle gather momentum.

Although details of the deliberations were not made

public, participants were said to have examined the political landscape and the role of the South-East within the party's emerging strategy.

The meeting comes amid

increasing consultations among political actors across party lines as potential aspirants and stakeholders begin early positioning ahead of the next presidential contest.

## Yari floats new group to mobilise support for Tinubu's re-election

Ahead of the 2027 general elections, former Governor of Zamfara State and current Senator representing Zamfara West Senatorial District, Abdulaziz Yari, has unveiled a new political movement aimed at consolidating nationwide support for the administration and re-election of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu.

The group, named The Renewed Hope Network (TRHN), was announced in a statement in Abuja by the movement's national facilitators, Alhaji Mohammed Abubakar and his

deputy, Emmanuel Osita.

According to the facilitators, TRHN was conceived by Yari following extensive consultations with political stakeholders, grassroots leaders, youth organisations, women's groups, and former elected officials nationwide who share a vision of strengthening the Renewed Hope Agenda championed by the Tinubu administration.

The statement described the network as a broad-based national coalition comprising grassroots politicians, respected political figures, community mobilisers,

women leaders, youth organisations, and former councillors from all 774 Local Government Areas of Nigeria.

They added, "Our collective resolve is anchored on the conviction that Nigeria is on a path of economic recovery, institutional reforms, and renewed national optimism under President Bola Ahmed Tinubu. As patriotic Nigerians, we believe it is necessary to consolidate these gains through a strong grassroots movement mobilising support nationwide."

TRHN's primary objective, the statement noted,

is to galvanise massive grassroots support for Tinubu's re-election in 2027, while promoting citizen engagement, political inclusion, and national unity.

The facilitators also disclosed that preparations for the official national launch of the movement are at an advanced stage, with thousands of supporters, political stakeholders, youth leaders, and women's groups expected from across the 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory.

The statement affirmed TRHN's commitment to deepening Nigeria's

democratic culture, enhancing grassroots participation in governance, and supporting leadership focused on economic growth, national security, and social progress.

The group called on Nigerians of goodwill—particularly youths, women, community leaders, and political stakeholders—to join the movement in consolidating the Renewed Hope vision for a prosperous and stable Nigeria.

"Details of the official launch and nationwide mobilisation activities will be communicated to the public in due course," the statement concluded.

# Why Iran Cannot Become Libya, Iraq, Syria or Venezuela

By Yusuf Musa

In the long theatre of global power politics, certain assumptions quietly shape the decisions of great powers. Some of those assumptions come from experience; others emerge from patterns that seem to repeat themselves across history. For the United States, the closing years of the twentieth century and the early decades of the twenty-first created what appeared to be a workable geopolitical formula: isolate a hostile state diplomatically, weaken it economically through sanctions, delegitimize its leadership internationally, and eventually allow internal fractures—or military pressure—to force regime transformation. This pattern appeared to unfold, in different ways and with varying consequences, in Iraq, Libya, Syria, and Venezuela. Each of these cases reinforced the belief that sustained pressure could bend resistant states toward collapse or submission.

Yet Iran has remained the stubborn exception to this geopolitical pattern. For more than four decades, the Islamic Republic has endured sanctions regimes, cyber operations, covert sabotage, diplomatic isolation, and the constant shadow of military confrontation. Despite all this, the Iranian state has not disintegrated, nor has it drifted toward the kind of internal collapse that befell several other countries subjected to sustained Western pressure. The endurance of Iran has therefore forced a deeper question within strategic circles: why has the same formula failed in Tehran?

To answer this question requires stepping beyond the immediate narratives of contemporary geopolitics and examining deeper historical and structural realities. Iran is not simply another Middle Eastern state confronting Western pressure. It is a civilization-state whose political memory stretches back thousands of years. Unlike several modern states in the region whose borders were shaped by colonial negotiations and post-war settlements, Iran carries a long and continuous identity rooted in Persian history. Empires rose and fell across its territory long before the modern international system emerged, yet the cultural and political consciousness of Iran remained remarkably persistent.

This historical continuity creates a unique form of national resilience. In countries where the state itself is a relatively recent creation, the weakening of central authority often unleashes competing identities—tribal, sectarian, or ethnic—that quickly fragment the political landscape. Iraq's experience after the fall of Saddam Hussein demonstrated how rapidly such fragmentation can occur. Libya followed a similar trajectory once the central authority of Muammar Gaddafi collapsed, and Syria's civil war revealed how fragile the modern state can become when internal fractures widen under external pressure.

Iran operates differently. The Iranian identity is older and deeper than the current political system governing it. While many Iranians may criticize their government or demand reforms within the political structure, the sense of belonging to an Iranian nation remains powerful and enduring. This distinction is critical. When external pressure intensifies, societies with strong

historical identity often close ranks around the state, even when internal disagreements persist. In Iran's case, outside confrontation has repeatedly strengthened national cohesion rather than weakening it.

Geography further reinforces this resilience. The Iranian plateau forms one of the most defensible natural landscapes in the Middle East. Surrounded by rugged mountain ranges, vast deserts, and complex terrain, the country presents formidable challenges to any large-scale military campaign. Unlike Iraq's relatively open plains or Libya's coastal urban concentration, Iran's geography disperses both population and infrastructure across a wide and varied landscape. Strategic installations are often deeply fortified or embedded within mountainous regions, reducing their vulnerability to conventional air strikes.

Military planners understand that geography can shape the outcome of wars long before the first shot is fired. Aerial bombardment may destroy facilities and disrupt logistical networks, but the ability to impose political change ultimately requires control of territory. Achieving such control in a country as vast and geographically complex as Iran would demand an enormous commitment of military resources and manpower. For a United States still grappling with the strategic and political consequences of prolonged wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, such a scenario carries significant risks.

Yet Iran's resilience is not based solely on geography or history. Over the past four decades, the country has developed a distinctive military doctrine designed not to defeat larger powers in conventional battle but to impose unbearable costs on any adversary that seeks confrontation. This doctrine is built around asymmetric warfare. Iran has invested heavily in missile technology, drone capabilities, cyber warfare, and naval strategies capable of disrupting maritime traffic in the Persian Gulf. These capabilities allow Iran to project deterrence far beyond its conventional military strength.

Equally significant is Iran's network of regional alliances and affiliated movements. Through relationships with actors in Lebanon, Iraq, Syria, and Yemen, Tehran has constructed a strategic environment in which any direct confrontation with Iran risks triggering multiple parallel conflicts across the broader Middle East. In such a scenario, a conflict initially confined to one nation could quickly expand into a regional crisis involving energy routes, shipping lanes, and strategic infrastructure.

The geographic position of Iran amplifies this potential impact. The country sits beside the Strait of Hormuz, one of the most critical maritime chokepoints in the global energy system. A significant portion of the world's oil shipments passes through this narrow corridor each day. Even the perception of instability in this area can trigger dramatic fluctuations in global energy markets. Unlike conflicts in Libya or Syria, where regional consequences remained relatively contained, any escalation involving Iran would carry immediate economic implications for the global economy.

Another factor often underestimated in external analysis is the internal architecture of the Iranian political

system. The Islamic Republic is not simply a centralized government dependent on a single military institution. It is supported by a complex network of institutions including the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, ideological organizations, religious authorities, and local mobilization structures. These institutions form a multilayered system designed to preserve regime stability even under significant external pressure.

In Iraq in 2003, the collapse of Saddam Hussein's regime quickly led to the dissolution of the Iraqi army and state institutions, creating a vacuum that insurgent groups rapidly filled. Iran's system, by contrast, was designed precisely to prevent such a sudden breakdown. Authority is distributed across several parallel structures, many of which maintain deep roots within society. As a result, destroying infrastructure or military installations would not necessarily translate into the collapse of political authority.

Economic sanctions, often viewed as a key instrument of Western pressure, have also produced outcomes different from those initially anticipated. Iran has lived under various forms of sanctions since the early years of the Islamic Republic. Over time, the country adapted by developing alternative trade routes, strengthening domestic production, and cultivating economic partnerships beyond Western markets. While sanctions undoubtedly imposed significant hardships, they also accelerated Iran's ability to function within an economic environment shaped by restrictions.

Sanctions, paradoxically, can also reinforce the political narratives of states under pressure. Governments often portray economic hardship as the result of foreign hostility, transforming sanctions into a tool for national mobilization rather than internal dissent. This dynamic has played a visible role in Iran's political discourse, where resistance to external pressure forms a central theme of national identity.

The broader international system has also evolved in ways that complicate unilateral intervention. During the early 2000s, the global order was dominated by a relatively unchallenged American strategic presence. The invasion of Iraq occurred within this unipolar context. Today, however, the international environment has become increasingly multipolar. Major powers such as Russia and China have expanded their influence and interests across the Middle East, including economic and strategic partnerships with Iran.

These relationships do not necessarily guarantee direct military support, but they create diplomatic and economic buffers that complicate efforts to isolate Tehran completely. China's long-term energy interests in the region and Russia's strategic engagement in Middle Eastern security dynamics both introduce additional layers of complexity into any attempt at comprehensive containment or intervention.

Perhaps the most profound shift, however, lies within the strategic psychology of the United States itself. The Iraq War left a lasting imprint on American foreign policy. While the initial invasion achieved rapid military success, the prolonged insurgency and nation-building efforts that followed revealed the immense difficulty of reshaping political systems through external force. The financial costs ran

into trillions of dollars, while the political consequences reverberated across multiple administrations.

This experience produced a deep caution within American strategic thinking. Military superiority remains overwhelming, yet the willingness to engage in large-scale regime change operations has diminished considerably. Iran, with its larger population, more complex terrain, and deeply entrenched institutions, represents a far more formidable challenge than Iraq ever did.

What ultimately emerges from this analysis is not a claim that Iran is invulnerable. No state is immune to internal tensions, economic pressure, or geopolitical shocks. Rather, the Iranian case illustrates the limits of applying a single strategic template across diverse political environments. Policies that produced certain outcomes in Libya, Iraq, Syria, or Venezuela cannot automatically generate similar results in a country shaped by entirely different historical, geographic, and institutional realities.

For the United States, this realization represents an important moment of strategic recalibration. Power remains an essential instrument of international politics, but its effectiveness depends heavily on understanding the deeper structures of the societies it seeks to influence. Misreading those structures can lead to policies that expend enormous resources while achieving limited strategic outcomes.

Iran therefore stands as a reminder that modern geopolitics cannot be reduced to simple formulas of pressure and collapse. Some states, particularly those with long civilizational histories and resilient institutions, possess the capacity to absorb external shocks and reconfigure themselves in ways that outsiders often underestimate.

In the unfolding landscape of the twenty-first century, where power is increasingly distributed across multiple centers and where historical identity continues to shape national resilience, the Iranian experience underscores a fundamental lesson. The ability to weaken a state does not necessarily translate into the ability to transform it. Strategic pressure may alter behavior, but it does not automatically dismantle the deeper foundations upon which nations are built.

Understanding that distinction may well determine the future trajectory of relations between Iran and the wider international community.

## Closing Note from the Centre for Contemporary Studies.

The Centre for Contemporary Studies (CCS), Abuja, continues to observe evolving global power dynamics with particular interest in how emerging multipolar realities are reshaping traditional assumptions of international intervention, sovereignty, and strategic deterrence. The Iranian case offers an important lens through which policymakers, scholars, and global observers may reassess the limits of coercive diplomacy and the enduring resilience of historically rooted states within the modern international system.

Yusuf Musa | CEO, CCS and Prof. Jabir Musa Sulaiman  
Centre For Contemporary Studies  
Abuja-Nigeria

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## News

### UNICEF hails Bauchi journalists' partnership, condoles NUJ over loss of 2 Members

Stories By Mijinyawa Ahmed

The Bauchi Field Office of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has commended the cordial and professional relationship between the organisation and journalists in Bauchi State, describing the partnership as healthy and beneficial to the well-being of women and children.

The Chief of Field Office (CFO), Dr. Nuzhat Rafique, made the commendation on Monday when she led a delegation on a condolence visit to the Secretariat of the Bauchi State Council of the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ) following the death of two journalists in a recent road accident.

Rafique said the collaboration between UNICEF and journalists in the state had significantly contributed to raising awareness on issues affecting children and women, adding that the media remained a critical partner in promoting positive social change.

"Since I came into this country and started working in the Bauchi Field Office, this is the first experience where we are working so closely with journalists," she said.

"And I must say this is one of the best teams of journalists I have seen. I really thank you for the great team and the great mission you have in Bauchi and in Nigeria, which is very much needed."

According to her, journalists play a crucial role in shaping society and influencing positive change.

"You are the backbone of society. You are the makers and the breakers. You can shape culture, traditions and the direction of society.

You can help break harmful practices and promote positive values, especially those that benefit women and children," Rafique said.

She added that the strong working relationship between UNICEF and the media had strengthened advocacy efforts on child protection, education, health and other development issues.

"You are not only our friends; you are part of us. You are part of the UNICEF team because you work with us for the wellbeing of women and children," she said.

Rafique expressed deep sorrow over the loss of the two journalists and conveyed UNICEF's condolences to the union, their families and the entire media community in Bauchi State.

"I am really very grieved by the incident that happened. Please accept UNICEF's heartfelt condolences for the precious lives lost in that incident," she said.

She prayed for the repose of their souls and for strength for the bereaved families.

"I pray that Allah grants them the highest ranks in Jannah and that their souls rest in peace. May their families be comforted and granted the courage to bear the loss.

The loss is huge, not only for the families of the journalists but also for the entire journalism community and even for UNICEF."

Rafique urged members of the

union to remain united and continue to support one another in the face of the tragedy.

"I also pray that you remain in solidarity as a family and continue to stand strong as a team of journalists in Bauchi.

The loss is irreparable, but we can only continue to pray for them," she said.

She thanked the leadership of the NUJ for giving UNICEF the opportunity to express its condolences on behalf of the organisation.

Responding, the Chairman of the Bauchi State Council of the NUJ, Comrade Umar

Saidu, expressed appreciation to the UNICEF delegation for the visit and described it as a demonstration of strong partnership and solidarity with the media community.

He said members of the union were grateful for the concern shown by UNICEF and other stakeholders following the accident.

"We were there together and we witnessed everything that happened leading to the crash. We thank God that we lost only two members because if the bus had caught fire, the situation could have been far worse," he said.

"Alhamdulillah, this is the will of Allah and we accept it."

Saidu also appreciated the Bauchi State Government and the North-East Development Commission (NEDC) for their support, particularly in providing medical assistance to the injured journalists.

"We sincerely appreciate the support we received, especially on the medical aspect, from the state governor and the NEDC. They have supported us throughout the period," he said.

"Alhamdulillah, as I speak now, none of our members is in the hospital. All those who were admitted have been discharged and are now receiving treatment at home."

The NUJ chairman further commended the longstanding partnership between UNICEF and journalists in Bauchi State, noting that media practitioners had benefited from several capacity-building programmes organised by the organisation.

He also acknowledged the contributions of UNICEF's Communication Officer, Opeyemi Olagunju, whom he described as instrumental in strengthening the collaboration between the organisation and journalists in the state.

"Honestly, we have enjoyed working with UNICEF, particularly through the support and experience brought by the communication team.

The way they engage and select journalists for programmes has been very commendable," Saidu said.

He reaffirmed the commitment of journalists in the state to continue supporting UNICEF in its advocacy and development programmes.

"Whenever you need support from journalists, we are always ready to give that support. We value this partnership and hope it will continue to grow stronger," he added.

## Umrah pilgrimage, significance, challenges, opportunities for Muslims worldwide

The lesser pilgrimage known as Umrah continues to draw millions of Muslim faithful to the holy city of Mecca each year, reflecting its deep spiritual significance in Islam and its growing global appeal.

Unlike Hajj, which is compulsory for Muslims who are physically and financially able and must be performed during specific days in the Islamic calendar, Umrah can be undertaken at any time of the year. This flexibility has made the pilgrimage increasingly popular among Muslims seeking spiritual renewal and closeness to Allah.

However, participation in Umrah often surges during the holy month of Ramadan, particularly in its last ten days when Muslims believe the rewards of worship are multiplied.

During this period, large numbers of faithful troop to Mecca to perform Umrah while observing fasting and engaging in intensive prayers.

The final ten nights of Ramadan are widely regarded as the most sacred period of the month because they are believed to contain Laylat al-Qadr, a night described in the Qur'an as better than a thousand months.

For many pilgrims, performing Umrah during this period offers a rare opportunity to combine pilgrimage with the heightened spirituality associated with the last days of Ramadan.

### Spiritual Importance

The rituals of Umrah reflect deep spiritual symbolism. Pilgrims enter the sacred state of Ihram, perform Tawaf by circling the Kaaba seven times, walk between the hills of Safa and Marwa in the ritual known as Sa'i, and conclude by shaving or trimming their hair.

These rites commemorate the trials and faith of Prophet Ibrahim, his wife Hajar, and their son Ismail, while also symbolising humility, devotion, and equality before God.

Pilgrims perform Umrah worship at the Masjid al-Haram, the largest mosque in the world and the holiest site in Islam. Many also travel to Medina to pray at the Al-Masjid an-Nabawi, where Prophet Muhammad is buried.

For Muslims across Africa, Asia and other parts of the world, the journey to these holy sites is often a deeply emotional and transformative experience.

### Growing Pilgrim Numbers

In recent years, the number of Umrah pilgrims has grown significantly due to improved travel arrangements and expanded infrastructure in Saudi Arabia.

The Saudi government has invested heavily in upgrading facilities around the Grand Mosque, expanding accommodation, and improving transportation networks to handle the growing influx of visitors.

These efforts form part of the country's broader strategy to develop religious tourism and accommodate

millions more pilgrims in the coming years.

### Challenges Facing Pilgrims

Despite its spiritual appeal, performing Umrah can present several challenges.

One major issue is overcrowding, particularly during peak periods such as Ramadan and school holidays. Managing the movement of millions of pilgrims within the limited space around the Kaaba requires careful coordination and advanced crowd-control systems.

Weather conditions also pose difficulties. Mecca experiences extremely high temperatures, especially during summer months, which can be physically demanding for elderly pilgrims and those with underlying health conditions.

Financial constraints remain another barrier. Travel costs, accommodation, and pilgrimage packages can be expensive for many Muslims, especially those from developing countries.

Additionally, the increasing reliance on digital booking systems and travel agencies has led to occasional cases of fraudulent operators who exploit unsuspecting pilgrims.

### Opportunities for Economic and Social Growth

Despite these challenges, Umrah presents significant opportunities for economic development and cultural exchange.

Saudi Arabia's long-term development plan aims to increase the number of Umrah pilgrims annually while improving services and infrastructure.

The growth of pilgrimage tourism has created employment opportunities in transportation, hospitality, healthcare, and travel services.

For countries such as Nigeria, the expanding Umrah industry also provides opportunities for travel agencies, airlines, and tour operators to develop specialised pilgrimage packages for Muslim travellers.

### Conclusion

Umrah remains one of the most cherished spiritual journeys in Islam. Beyond its religious significance, it also represents unity among Muslims from different cultures, languages and backgrounds.

As millions of believers continue to converge on the holy city of Mecca especially during the spiritually significant last ten days of Ramadan the lesser pilgrimage stands as a powerful symbol of faith, devotion, and global Islamic solidarity.



# How Bauchi journalists escaped death: accounts of a victim

By Rauf Oyewole

It has been a week of being bedridden under intensive care. Chronic spinal cord issues, a broken pelvis, deep cuts, fractured bones, and scars now mark the faces of newsmen who are currently receiving medical attention in the hospital.

On 6th February 2026, it was the third day of reporting on the projects of the North East Development Commission (NEDC), following a state visit by Alh. Uba Maigari Ahmodu, Honourable Minister of State for Regional Development; Gen. Paul Tarfa (rtd); the Board Chairman of NEDC, Mohammed Goni Alkali; the MD/CEO of the Commission; and a few members of the National Assembly. The team had visited several projects initiated by the Commission, with journalists and other state officials in attendance.

That Friday, the Commission decided to visit one of its completed schools in Yelwan Duguri. From there, it planned to hand over other projects along the Bauchi-Gombe road, after which the officials would continue to Gombe while Bauchi journalists and others would return home. We all took off from Ramat House, Presidential Wing of the Bauchi Government House.

The school was formally handed over to the state government. Hon. Auwal Jatau, the Deputy Governor, received it on behalf of the state. We covered the event as usual and returned to a newly dedicated Toyota 15-passenger bus. We asked the driver, a staff member of the Bauchi State Ministry of Higher Education and Regional Integration, to wait for our colleagues — the cameramen. Meanwhile, the convoy built up, and our bus lost its third position near the front.

The New Bus, the New Road, and the Genesis of the Accident

The driver, an employee of the Ministry, realised he was now at the tail of the convoy and decided to accelerate the newly purchased Toyota Hiace bus on the newly constructed Yelwan Duguri-Yashi road. He drove off dangerously, signalling the danger ahead when he broke the side mirror of one of the vehicles, hit the road improperly, and attempted to overtake about 30 vehicles in the convoy conveying the

Deputy Governor, the Minister, and the MD.

The speed became alarming. Almost everyone warned him to remain behind the convoy and prioritise safety.

“Driver, easy!” my friend, Saheed Olaide of NAN, shouted.

A few seconds after the warning, I raised my gaze and saw a Sharon car heading directly toward our overspending bus. Our driver became confused. Returning to his lane was impossible, as the convoy fully occupied it. He swerved to his left while keeping the oncoming vehicle in the middle — and that was the beginning of the turbulence.

I heard the loud shouts of my colleagues: “La ilaha illallah!” and “Jesus!” as the bus carrying 14 occupants veered off the road. That was the last thing I saw.

What followed was the terrifying sensation of somersaulting and hitting hard surfaces. I felt suspended in a cloudy realm of ghosts. The thought crossed my mind: Am I alive or dead? I felt bodies hitting mine as we were ejected from the carcass of the somersaulting vehicle.

After the dust settled, I opened my eyes and found myself inside the wrecked bus. To my left, I saw an opening through the window. “Run, fire might break out,” I thought. I tried to stand, but my seatbelt restrained me. I punched it loose and jumped out.

Outside, I saw almost all my colleagues lying on the farmland — land that had been harvested last October — covered in dust and blood. Helpless. Almost lifeless.

I turned and saw Saheed Olaide with fractured legs and blood covering his face.

“Help me,” he said.

I turned again and saw Bulak Hafsa, Manager with NTA; Hajara Aliyu of Channels TV; Sulaiman Isah of AIT; Rabiul Ishaq of BRC; Kabir Ilelah (Matawale); and Harisu, a cameraman with NTA, all lying on the ground.

David Adenuga of The Nation was helpless.

Armstrong Bakam of Arise asked, “Are you okay?”

I replied, “Yes,” even though no doctor had certified me.

Within moments, helpers gathered at the accident scene. My friend, Hassan Ibrahim of Daily Trust, and my senior colleague, Paul Orude of The Sun Newspaper, rushed down from their bus to look for me. They held me down to calm me after the crash.

It was then I realised I had not died.

Shortly afterwards, we were rushed to the Cottage Hospital, Yelwa Duguri. David Adenuga, Bulak Hafsa, and I were placed in the trunk of a van.

“What happened to us? What are we doing here?” Bulak asked.

“Don’t worry, just calm down,” NUJ Chairman, Comrade Umar Sa’idu, who was clinging to the van, assured us.

I looked up at him, but the dust covering my body made it difficult to blink properly. Still, I managed to see blood flowing from the centre of David’s head.

For Oga Kabir, a staff member of Bauchi State Television Authority, after 35 years of service to the state and barely 25 days to his retirement, he sustained severe injuries and, as I write, lies in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU).

Another painful case is my colleague from Channels TV, Kani Ben. Just days before our outing, he had travelled to Yobe, Adamawa, and Taraba states for live coverage. He had planned to cover the Bauchi@50 anniversary as the station’s cameraman on Saturday — but instead landed in the ICU the day before.

In Part Two, I will report on the treatment, the assistance rendered, and the process of discharging us from the hospital. I will also tell you what the big men said and did about this.

Before that, my profound gratitude goes to Governor Bala Mohammed and his wife, the Deputy Governor Hon. Auwal Jatau, the Honourable Minister, the MD of NEDC, and my darling wife.

## CBM Launches 10-Year SightQuest Programme to Eliminate Avoidable Visual Impairment in Nigeria



Christoffel Blind Mission (CBM) International has launched the SightQuest Nigeria Programme, a major 10-year initiative aimed at accelerating progress toward eliminating avoidable visual impairment in the country through stronger and more disability-inclusive eye health systems.

This contained in a statement signed by the programme coordinator, Angela Uyah, at CBM International, make available to newsmen in Bauchi

The programme, scheduled to run from January 2026 to December 2035, represents one of the organisation’s most ambitious national health investments in Nigeria. It is designed to expand access to quality eye care services, strengthen healthcare infrastructure, and build long-term resilience within the country’s eye health sector.

SightQuest Nigeria seeks to significantly transform eye health service delivery across the country, with interventions expected to reach 14 states by 2035. A key target of the initiative is to achieve a 30-percentage-point increase in effective Cataract Surgical Coverage (eCSC) in 10 states, with at least five states expected to reach the milestone by 2030.

The programme will also implement comprehensive strategies to improve effective Refractive Error Coverage (eREC), ensuring more Nigerians with vision problems gain access to appropriate diagnosis and corrective spectacles.

The initiative focuses on four major result areas: improving access to high-quality cataract surgical services; expanding access to quality spectacle provision; strengthening eye health infrastructure and medical equipment; and increasing the number and capacity of trained eye health professionals to deliver accessible and inclusive care.

Implementation of the programme will begin in five pilot states—Bauchi State, Imo State, Jigawa State, Plateau State, and Oyo State—where intensive investments will be made to accelerate progress toward the programme’s 2030 targets.

According to CBM International, the programme is anchored on its Inclusive Health Initiative, which promotes the development of strong, disability-inclusive health systems. Sight Quest adopts a district health system strengthening approach, with emphasis on improving secondary-level eye care services that address the most common causes of visual impairment.

The strategy also includes strengthening primary eye health services and referral systems to ensure early detection of eye conditions, timely treatment, and people-centred care. Special attention will be given to ensuring equitable access to services for persons with disabilities and other marginalized populations.

To support innovation in eye care delivery, the programme will promote the use of emerging technologies to enhance diagnosis, treatment, and data-driven decision-making.

As part of its broader investments, CBM International is also establishing Nigeria’s first high-fidelity virtual simulation training facilities for cataract surgery in Ibadan and Kano, aimed at providing advanced and safe training opportunities for eye surgeons.

CBM reaffirmed that the SightQuest Programme underscores its long-standing commitment to building sustainable and inclusive health systems in Nigeria, combining technology, training, infrastructure development, and community-centred approaches to close critical gaps in eye health service delivery.



## News

# 2027 General Election: The Digital Litmus Test

As the 2027 general election nears, opposition parties in Nigeria are struggling to meet the digital membership deadline. While the reform may strengthen democracy, opposition leaders accuse the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) of manipulating the process. Deputy Political Editor, Raymond Mordi, examines the challenges, advantages, ironies, and potential benefits.

In Nigerian political dramas, the run-up to the 2027 general election was always expected to be a spectacle. Yet, a few anticipated that the focus would shift from rallies and manifestos to databases, National Identification Numbers (NIN), and a quiet panic. Opposition parties are now scrambling to digitise their membership registers before a 34-day deadline expires.

The Electoral Act 2026, signed by President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, requires parties to submit digital membership registers to the INEC by April 2, 2026. Registers must include photos and NIN for each member. Non-compliance means automatic disqualification from fielding candidates.

For opposition parties still regrouping after the 2023 elections, this provision is a major hurdle as the deadline looms. This context sets the stage for understanding their concerns as the new requirements become a focal point of political debate.

## The 'booby-trapped' timetable

The African Democratic Congress (ADC) has expressed strong concerns. National Publicity Secretary Bolaji Abdullahi described the new electoral schedule as a "rigged system" with "booby traps" intended to facilitate President Tinubu's re-election without genuine competition.

"The so-called timetable is not an administrative document. It is a political tool meant to predetermine the 2027 outcome," Abdullahi stated.

He explained: "The law requires us to have a digital membership register in all 36 states within about 32 days. We must submit this to INEC and notify them of our congresses. This is nearly impossible for us."

A key concern is that the APC began electronic membership registration in February 2025, a year before the Electoral Act 2026 made it mandatory. By the time the law was enacted, the ruling party had already completed its digital register and organised congresses at all levels, giving it a significant compliance advantage.

"We know the ruling APC began membership registration in February 2025 and hired a consultant to assist with developing a digital register for the 2027 election," Abdullahi noted. "What took them over a year, they expect us to complete in one month."

Due to these tight deadlines, the ADC has suggested it may be unable to field candidates. Other parties in the coalition of 18 opposition groups, including the New Nigeria People's Party (NNPP), share these concerns and warned that the new legal framework could restrict rather than expand democratic participation. With these apprehensions in mind, differing viewpoints on the requirements are emerging within the opposition.

## A question of seriousness

Chief Chekwes Okorie, founding national chairman of the All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA), which launched its e-registration on March 1, 2026, counters this perspective by stating, "They are just looking for excuses," Okorie told our reporter during an interview over the telephone. "It's a requirement of the law, and there is nothing to blame. INEC is not to blame; when the bill was signed into law, it had to adjust its timetable to align with the Electoral Act 2026."

For Okorie, the digital register requirement is not a trap. He sees it as a long-overdue reform that could bring sanity to Nigeria's notoriously fluid party system. "Online registration of political party members would bring much-needed sanity by clearly defining who is and is not a member," he argued. "Most times, people jump overnight from one party to another, especially during primaries when they are denied their party's ticket. This creates court disputes about whether the person was actually a member, as required by the party's constitution."

He cites the UK Conservative Party: "It is over 400 years old, has fewer than a million members, but earns millions of votes." This suggests a party's success depends more on organisation, messaging, and credibility than member count.

Okorie expressed surprise that parties have not digitised records, given widespread internet access. "It relates to the party system we operate," he explained. "Some belong to a party today and switch the next day, simply writing a one-sentence letter to their ward chairman to leave. The system is so fluid that people change parties freely because our parties lack ideological direction."

APGA announced in June 2024 that it was the first party in Nigeria to fully automate its membership registration system, meeting the new legal requirements. This ongoing process covers all 8,809 electoral wards and requires participants to provide a valid NIN and voter's card, as mandated by the law.

## The capacity questions

Election and policy development specialist Paul James offer a more nuanced perspective than either side in the debate. He distinguishes himself from both the opposition's concerns and the APC's confidence, emphasising that the main issue is not technology but the timeline and parties' capacity to comply.

"Opposition parties, particularly the ADC, are concerned not with technology but with the timeline and capacity to comply, particularly for smaller parties," James said. "The brief period since the bill became law has made this difficult. Most parties report they have not received the gazette copy of the law. This is understandable."

He highlights the NIN challenge: "The law requires parties to submit registered members online 34 days before primaries. Failure bars them from fielding candidates." Integrating NINs improves authentication but forces parties to restart registrations rather than digitising existing lists.

James observes that parties should already have the capacity to engage in

online processes. He points out that parties like Kowa have maintained digital registers for years. "I recommend that others use this time to improve their digital systems."

## The PDP's balancing act

The People's Democratic Party (PDP), Nigeria's main opposition, balances compliance and skepticism. In Lagos, the PDP has accelerated its digital membership drive, integrating NIN and biometric data while remaining wary of technical exclusion. The party coordinates these efforts with its national headquarters.

Dr Christopher Odianarewo, a PDP Lagos chieftain, said the party's efforts are part of a longer-term digital integration strategy, not a last-minute exercise. The party remains concerned that the short compliance window could sideline opposition parties on technical grounds and potentially benefit the ruling APC.

The PDP is consulting its legal team. It has indicated it "would seek judicial interpretation if the guidelines are seen as instruments of exclusion or if the commission's digital infrastructure fails to receive and manage party registers securely. "This approach allows the party to comply while preparing for possible legal action."

## The government's dismissal

The presidency rejected opposition complaints. Bayo Onanuga, Special Adviser on Information and Strategy, called opposition claims "reckless, spurious allegations" and accused them of making "irresponsible statements."

"Working in cahoots with some civil society groups, the opposition has waged a relentless war of disinformation against the National Assembly and the administration, making false allegations in a bid to impose their will on Nigerians and the legislature," Onanuga charged.

He called the 2026 Electoral Act a significant improvement, arguing it "closes loopholes the opposition sought to exploit." He said opposition complaints arise because the law disrupts their practices.

"Rather than this constant lamentation and unwarranted outrage, the ADC and the NNPP leaders should spend more time on introspection and fix their own mess," Onanuga concluded.

## The Ramadan timing issue

Former Vice President Atiku Abubakar, the PDP's 2023 presidential candidate, led the campaign for INEC to revise its initial election timetable because it overlapped with Ramadan.

INEC initially set the presidential election for February 20, 2027, and the governorship races for March 6. Muslim groups protested that these conflicted with Ramadan.

Atiku took to social media to urge reconsideration. He argued, "Elections are not mere administrative rituals; they are national exercises that demand maximum participation, physical endurance, and collective focus."

He warned that holding elections during Ramadan "shows poor judgment and a troubling lack of sensitivity to the nation's socio-religious realities."

As a result, the National Assembly was compelled to hold an emergency session, reducing the mandatory notice period for elections from 360 days to 300

days to give INEC "legal flexibility" to adjust the dates. The commission revised its timetable, thereby compressing the electoral calendar and reducing the time available for opposition parties to comply with the new digital register requirement.

Opposition parties, now objecting to the shortened timelines, are facing the consequences of their earlier actions. Atiku's intervention for religious accommodation unintentionally reduced the time available for compliance.

Austin Aigbe, a civil society activist specialising in development and electoral matters, commented: "This is another piece of evidence of our backwardness," echoing Chief Okorie's earlier sentiment. "This is a country where politics and governance should have nothing to do with religion, which should be left to the individual. Civil servants who are Muslims go to work during the month of Ramadan, so there is no reason why they cannot vote and go back home and rest."

Nigeria's political class often prioritises religious considerations. Still, it has shown less urgency in addressing structural issues that contribute to low voter turnout, such as a lack of trust in the electoral system, logistical failures, and the perception that votes do not count. Religion is frequently used to rally support while deeper democratic challenges remain unresolved.

## Looking ahead to 2027

As the April 2 deadline approaches, Nigeria's political parties are engaged in a frantic race against time. The ADC has announced it will open nationwide free online membership registration, even as it continues to reject the legal framework. The PDP is digitising across all 245 wards in Lagos State. The APGA claims it can surpass two million members through its electronic drive.

It remains uncertain whether these efforts will be sufficient or if INEC's systems will be ready to process the large volume of data. The commission has warned that non-compliance will result in disqualification, and there is little indication of flexibility.

For the opposition, moving forward requires action rather than complaint. The APC's advantage stems from strategic planning that was available to any party prepared for legislative changes. The key question is whether Nigeria's opposition can organise effectively under pressure or will become divided by internal disputes.

Paul James offers a final thought: "In all, we have interesting times ahead, and I hope there will be compliance across the board." It's a hope shared by many Nigerians, regardless of party affiliation, who want an election that is competitive, credible, and contested on a level playing field.

The digital membership register, which has caused significant concern, could, if implemented fairly, bring much-needed transparency to Nigeria's party system. Realising this potential depends on INEC's impartiality, the opposition's organisational capacity, and all parties' willingness to prioritise democracy's long-term health over short-term political gains.

In Nigerian politics, the current contest is not on the campaign trail or at the polling booth, but in digital systems.

## Peterside calls out security agencies over El-Rufai's detention



Aredo Peterside, founder of Stanbic IBTC Bank Plc and Anap Foundation, has condemned the continued detention of former Kaduna State Governor Malam Nasir El-Rufai without charging him to court.

The banker accused the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission, the Department of State Services, and the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission of acting in concert to violate the Nigerian Constitution.

Peterside made his position known in a post on X, describing the development as one he and others had watched "in disbelief."

"Some of us have watched in disbelief as Government Agencies that we respected, such as the ICPC, DSS, and EFCC, appear to have conspired to incarcerate El-Rufai without charging him to Court, thereby violating the spirit and letter of the Nigerian Constitution," he wrote.

Peterside acknowledged his past disagreements with the former governor over the 2019 detention of Islamic Movement of Nigeria leader

Sheikh Ibrahim El-Zakzaky, but insisted that history did not diminish his obligation to speak out against injustice.

"Even though I disagreed with El-Rufai as Kaduna State Governor over El-Zakzaky's 2019 detention, I will still speak out against those ill-treating him today. Two wrongs do not make a right," he stated.

Drawing a line of consistency in his advocacy, Peterside noted that he had similarly spoken out when prominent figures including MKO Abiola, former President Olusegun Obasanjo, Dele Farotimi, and activist Omoyele Sowore were detained, signalling that his intervention was principled rather than partisan.

"If I am ever incarcerated, I will be at peace with my Lord, even if nobody calls out the authorities on my behalf," he added, closing with a prayer for Nigeria's deliverance from what he described as wicked leadership.

Meanwhile, El-Rufai has pushed back against the ICPC, maintaining that the investigation targeting him is politically motivated.

## 'I get excited when we make law that angers opposition' – Akpabio

President of the Nigerian Senate, Senator Godswill Akpabio says when the opposition expresses anger over any law made in the Senate, he gets excited.

Akpabio spoke in Uyo, the Akwa Ibom State capital, while addressing the audience in reception of the First Lady of Nigeria, Senator Oluremi Tinubu.

According to him, anger from the opposition signals to him that the right law has been made.

He declared that opposition figures

threatening to boycott the 2027 presidential election are just not ready for the contest.

He said, "Each time we make a law and the opposition frowns, I get excited that I've made the right law".

"Yesterday I saw one man shouting on TV because of the Amended Electoral Act, saying we're likely to boycott elections.

"My response was tell the truth, you're boycotting the elections because you're not ready. If you are ready you won't boycott."

## 11,000 NSCDC personnel to protect farmers against attacks

Following a wave of deadly attacks on farmers across the country in 2025, the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps has disclosed plans to deploy no fewer than 11,000 Agro-Rangers operatives nationwide to bolster farmers' protection ahead of the 2026 farming season.

Speaking with Journalist, NSCDC's spokesman, Babawale Afolabi, stated that the corps played a pivotal role in safeguarding farmers and agro-allied investments, noting that it also maintains an existing partnership with the Federal Ministry of Agriculture to secure agricultural assets and mediate disputes.

Afolabi disclosed that the Commandant-General of the Corps, Abubakar Audi, had reaffirmed the agency's readiness to deploy specially trained personnel to farming areas.

He said, "The security of farmers is our topmost priority; this culminates in the training and retraining of Special Agro-Rangers operatives numbering over 11,000 across the federation. We enjoin the public to continue to give us relevant information that would assist our work, and most of all, the ravaged areas need more proactiveness in terms of intelligence gathering to forestall attacks and mishaps.

"The Corps is not relenting on putting all hands-on deck to



enhance food security in the nation. The Commandant-General, during the last retraining programme for the Agro-Rangers operatives in Plateau State, affirmed the NSCDC's readiness to deploy the specially trained officers and men to needed areas for the adequate safety of farmers and, by extension, to combat food insecurity," he added.

His remarks come against the backdrop of several violent incidents that marred the 2025 farming and harvest seasons across parts of the country.

On January 12 and 13, 2025, at least 40 farmers were reportedly killed by fighters linked to ISWAP and Boko Haram in Dumba near Lake Chad while working on their farms.

On October 1, 2025, bandits kidnapped three farmers at Bethel Farm in Ejiba, Kogi State.

In November of the same year, attacks intensified in multiple states. On November 2, a farmer was killed in

Kubon village, Mangu Local Government Area, Plateau State.

Between November 3 and 4, no fewer than 10 farmers, including a pastor, were killed while working on their fields in Ohimini, Benue State.

On November 20, four rice farmers were abducted while harvesting in Bokungi, Kwara State.

Three days later, 13 female farmers aged 15 to 20 were kidnapped by Boko Haram insurgents in Borno State. On November 26, at least 10 farmers were abducted in Shiroro, Niger State, while harvesting rice.

In early December, 20 onion farmers were abducted in Konduga, Borno State, days after eight others were taken from the same area.

The recurring attacks have raised concerns about food production and rural safety, with stakeholders warning that continued insecurity could worsen food shortages and inflation.

## Army denies report of 40 soldiers killed in Borno attacks

The Nigerian Army has dismissed reports claiming that more than 40 soldiers were killed during recent terrorist attacks in Borno State.

The denial was contained in a statement issued on Saturday by the Media Information Officer of the Joint Task Force North-East, Operation HADIN KAI, Sani Uba.

Uba said the report, which relied on what he described as unverified sources, misrepresented the events surrounding the attacks and

the response by troops.

According to him, the attacks occurred when remnants of Boko Haram fighters who had earlier been dislodged from the Sambisa Forest regrouped and launched coordinated night assaults on communities and military positions around Konduga, Ngoshe, Mainok and Jakana.

He said troops responded to the attacks and repelled the insurgents, adding that several terrorists were killed during the confrontations.

Uba, however, confirmed

that a commanding officer and some soldiers were killed while confronting the attackers.

He also said the troops were not overrun as claimed in the report but engaged the terrorists in multiple locations to defend the affected communities.

The statement added that the Chief of Army Staff, Waidi Shaibu, had visited the theatre of operations in Maiduguri to assess the situation and review ongoing counter-terrorism efforts.

During the visit, Shaibu reportedly directed the reinforcement of troops and deployment of additional equipment to sustain operations against the insurgents.

The army said coordinated ground and air operations were ongoing to pursue fleeing terrorists and rescue civilians who may have been abducted during the attacks.



## Health

### Perfect Smile! 6 benefits of veneers



**D**ental veneers are thin, custom-made shells of porcelain or composite resin bonded to the front of teeth to correct stains, chips, gaps, or misalignment.

#### Contents

Veneers are designed to cover the surface of your teeth. They can boost your confidence, improve your smile by hiding your discoloured teeth, cracks and gaps.

One of the benefits of veneers that cannot be ignored is that it improves people's appearance. Dentists explain the benefits of veneers:

#### Easy maintenance

You don't need to go overboard with your veneers; no hassle, because it is easy to maintain. All you need is regular flossing, dental exams and of course, brushing.

However, you need to always consult a professional dentist so that you would be able to maintain your veneers properly.

#### Stain resistance

Another benefit of veneers is that they have the ability to resist stains because veneers are composed of non-porous materials such as porcelain that cannot retain colours from food or drinks.

Due to this, you can consume whatever pleases you without worries. As long as you practice proper dental hygiene, your veneers will be intact.

#### Improves oral health

### My worry with kidney failure

**T**here are a number of physical signs of kidney disease, but sometimes people attribute them to other conditions.

Also, those with kidney disease tend not to experience symptoms until the very late stages, when the kidneys are failing or when there are large amounts of protein in the urine.

This is one of the reasons why only 10% of people with chronic kidney disease know that they have it. Person can survive easily on one kidney and sometimes doesn't even know that one kidney has stopped working.

It's very important to get health checkups in every 6 months...as you reach in your 40s, especially for kidneys, fatty liver, blood test. Well, there are signs but you can't be sure that they are early signs...some people are diagnosed early when they start showing signs and some don't.

Never ignore any sign your body shows or when you feel something is

Apart from enhancing your teeth, veneers can help with your oral health; preventing additional wear and tear on your teeth and decreasing your chances of developing dental problems.

They can help prevent any possibility of food particles in between your teeth and also seal the spaces there.

#### Less enamel removal

One of the notable benefits of veneers is that it requires less removal of your natural enamel (the outer covering of your teeth) than any other dental procedures. They are literally less invasive because you can still keep your natural teeth structure.

#### Minimal invasive procedure

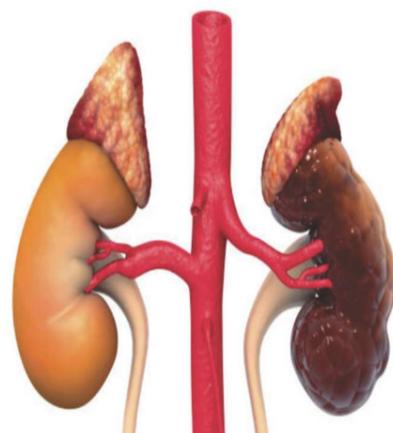
Compared to other dental procedures, veneer placement is less invasive. What is expected of you is to regularly see your dentist for the treatment after you've done the first consultation and planning.

At first, your teeth are prepared for imprints and afterwards the veneers are bonded to them.

#### Permanent teeth whitening

You don't need to constantly go for teeth whitening procedures, veneers are more durable.

They are the long-lasting whitening solution for people who are no longer interested in going for frequent teeth whitening.



### Health benefits of whole milk

**W**hole milk is called "whole" because its fat has not been removed. It is highly rich in several nutrients such as vitamin B12, calcium and protein.

The amino acids in it build muscle, create hormones, neurotransmitters and help the immune system to function.

A cow's diet determines the nutritional content of whole milk. This kind of milk contains more antioxidants (beta-carotene and vitamin E) that fight against cellular damage and regulate inflammation.

Below are the health benefits of whole milk:

#### Support bone health

Whole milk has all the essential nutrients (phosphorus, protein and protein) you need for healthy bones. It is also rich in vitamin D which aids calcium absorption. You're not prone to bone loss fractures, brittle bones disease and osteoporosis by taking full cream milk regularly.

#### May aid weight management

Full cream milk intake can help you maintain a healthy weight; burning any chance of you getting

obesity. This is because whole milk can slow digestion, replace sugar sweetened beverages and increase fullness. Also, fatty acids may reduce calorie intake and intense calorie burning.

#### Reduce disease risk

Another health benefit of whole milk is that it has the capacity to reduce any risk of having common diseases like obesity, colorectal cancer, stroke, high blood pressure, metabolic syndrome, osteoporosis and heart disease. The calcium in it can fight against harmful substances (bile acids) in the gut that can damage its lining and trigger cancer growth.

#### Contains fatty acids

There are over 400 fatty acids in whole milk that are highly beneficial. This is because full cream milk has a higher fat content than lower fat milk. The ones derived from fatty acids can stimulate cellular repair, decrease blood lipid levels and reduce inflammation. Whole milk from cows that feed on grass contain higher levels of omega-3 fatty acids — it has powerful anti-inflammatory properties; conjugated linoleic acid (CLA) —reduces the risk of atherosclerosis.



### How to reverse my diabetes

**K**indly let me know how to reverse my Type 2 Diabetes. I am in my mid-fifties and overweight.

The chances are that you are overweight or even obese, that's what usually triggers it. Losing weight and keeping it off is the key to reversing diabetes, or more accurately, putting it into remission.

If you put the weight back on diabetes will return. Diabetes is not a death sentence but it is a life sentence. So, you have two objectives. One is short-term, keep your blood sugars down. The long-term one is to lose weight and keep it stable at a healthy level.

Sugar spikes are caused by eating or drinking food with sugar in it or that can be quickly turned into sugar.

Refined sugar, flour or starchy foods need to be cut down. Dilute starch in your meals by including more fibre, protein and fats. So, use brown rice, whole meal flour not white, more leafy vegetables, fruit but not fruit-juice, lean meat, fish, eggs. Oil and fat contribute to the short-term goal but not the long-term one.

Unless your diabetes is severe, you shouldn't need to take insulin. High blood sugars for extended periods can attack and organ, including the pancreas. That can mean that you no longer make enough insulin and that can push your sugar levels even higher. So, the diabetic mantra is: eat less, eat better, exercise more. The exercise part is not optional.



## Kuwait Introduces Monthly Allowance for Unmarried Women Over 30



The government of Kuwait has launched a new monthly allowance of Kuwait Dinar 560 (approximately Rs29,400) for unmarried women over the age of 30, aiming to provide direct financial and social support. The initiative is initially being rolled out on a trial basis, with eligibility requiring verification, including confirmation of the applicant's father's death.

Nearly 40,000 Kuwaiti women over 30 are currently unmarried, highlighting evolving social patterns in the country. The scheme is part of

broader welfare measures designed to provide economic security and support women without family-based financial backing.

In addition to this allowance, the Kuwaiti government continues its state-backed marriage grant for men marrying Kuwaiti women, which combines a KD2,000 gift with a KD4,000 interest-free loan.

The initiative underscores Kuwait's commitment to promoting social welfare, economic independence, and targeted support for women in diverse life circumstances.

## Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Defends recent military actions, held US responsible for Damages

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi has issued a firm defense of Iran's recent military actions, clarifying that the strikes were directed exclusively at American interests rather than Iran's Islamic neighbors.

The statement comes in response to growing criticism regarding military escalations during the holy month of Ramadan, with many questionings why regional neighbors most of whom share a common faith have found themselves caught in the crossfire.

Araghchi pushed back against the narrative that Iran is targeting neighboring Muslim nations.

He informed that the presence of U.S. military infrastructure on regional soil is the primary cause for the proximity of the strikes.

"Please don't mistake, we have not attacked our neighbors. We have not attacked the Muslim countries.

We have attacked American targets and American bases, American installations which are unfortunately located in the soils of our neighbors."

The Foreign Minister emphasized that the objective of the Iranian military is specifically the "American presence" in the region, though he acknowledged the unfortunate reality of unintended consequences.

Addressing the reports of destruction and casualties in neighboring territories, Araghchi categorized these incidents as an inevitable byproduct of conflict, while shifting the moral and legal burden toward Washington.

"Well, we have targeted where Americans are, maybe there have been some collateral damages as it is in every war. This is a war of choice by the united states, and they should be held responsible for all those damages."



## US-ISRAEL-IRAN WAR: We try to stay calm, but bombing anxiety is real – Nigerians in M-East

As missiles and drones streak across the skies of the Gulf following the ongoing America-Israel/Iran War, thousands of Nigerians living in the United Arab Emirates and neighbouring countries are navigating a tense reality.

Fear and uncertainty best describe their situation.

For many expatriates, including professionals, entrepreneurs and students scattered across cities such as Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Doha and Kuwait City, the past several days has brought a mix of fear, resilience and reliance on the highly coordinated emergency systems of their host countries.

Although most of the projectiles have been intercepted by air defence systems, some Nigerians in the Middle East said the psychological impact of the attacks has been profound, forcing people to constantly monitor emergency alerts and be prepared to seek shelter at short notice.

They took to their various social media handles to express their worries.

Among those experiencing the tense atmosphere is Dubai-based Nigerian professional Emeka Opara, who described the situation as one that has kept many residents on edge.

According to him, the experience has felt like "almost 96 hours of hell," as missiles and drones streak across the skies and emergency alerts repeatedly flash across mobile phones.

"Missiles and drones have been literally raining on the UAE," Opara said, noting that while many are intercepted, the fear they generate cannot easily be neutralised.

"Imagine if these missiles and drones weren't intercepted. Imagine if they were raining down somewhere in Nigeria or Africa, God forbid," he said.

Opara explained that while authorities in the UAE have demonstrated remarkable preparedness, residents remain understandably anxious.

"You cannot intercept fear. People are scared," Opara said.

He added that the anxiety is worsened by the flood of information circulating on social media, including unverified reports and AI-generated content that sometimes exaggerate the scale of the attacks.

According to him, "the barrage of true and fake news raining down on people is

almost as intense as the missiles and drones themselves."

Despite the tension, Opara said the response of the UAE government has helped reassure residents and prevent panic.

"Still, you must give it to the government," he said. "They've done exceptionally well in protecting their citizens, residents and visitors."

He noted that authorities have maintained constant communication with the public, issuing emergency alerts and guidance through official channels.

"The communication and engagement have been nothing short of world class," Opara said.

He also pointed to visible gestures by leaders aimed at calming public nerves.

"To reassure the public, some leaders, including the Ruler of Dubai, have made appearances in malls and restaurants," he said.

According to him, the government has also taken steps to support visitors whose travel plans may have been disrupted by the security situation.

"They even directed hotels to extend the stay of visitors until they are able to exit and send the invoices to the Ministry of Tourism," Opara said.

For residents, however, daily life now involves a new routine of caution.

Opara said many buildings have effectively converted basement parking areas into emergency shelters.

"Thank God for the basements," he said. "Most of them normally serve as car parks, but they have now become safe houses where people dash down to when emergency alerts of potential missile or drone attacks come into our phones," Opara added.

He acknowledged that some locations have been affected by missile debris or interception fallout, reinforcing the seriousness of the situation.

"A few places we know have been hit by missiles or drones or debris from interceptions. So, the fear and tension are real," he declared.

Meanwhile, in Abu Dhabi, Nigerian resident, Chinelo Okoye said the attacks have created a pervasive atmosphere of unease, particularly for families with young children.

"It's difficult to explain the fear to my kids every time an

alert goes off. We try to stay calm, but the anxiety is real. The government's messages and precautions help, but you still feel vulnerable sometimes," she wrote.

In Doha, Qatar, Nigerian graduate student, Tunde Balogun, described how he and his friends have adapted to the situation.

"We've started keeping backpacks with essentials ready at all times, and we plan our days around the emergency alerts. It's a strange mix of fear and faith, we trust the authorities, but we also pray every day for safety and a quick resolution," Balogun said.

Still, many Nigerians across the Gulf noted faith and community solidarity have helped them cope.

Sunday Vanguard learnt that prayer groups on WhatsApp and church networks in the diaspora have become spaces where people share information, encouragement, and reassurance.

For older Nigerians who remember the Nigerian Civil War, the unfolding events evoke sobering memories of the consequences of conflict.

"War is not a good thing at all," Opara said, recalling the devastating humanitarian crisis that followed the Nigerian conflict of the late 1960s.

Quoting wartime British leader Winston Churchill, he added: "To jaw-jaw is still better than to war-war."

As tensions continue across the Gulf, many Nigerians remain vigilant, hopeful, and prayerful that diplomacy will prevail.

"For now, we follow instructions, remain vigilant, and trust that the situation will stabilize," Opara said.

Sunday Igwebuikwe, who works in construction site in Oman, said his place of work has asked all workers to stay at home until peace returns.

"I don't go to work anymore. We are scared because the missiles from Iran, Israel and America end up killing innocent people. Our supervisors asked us to stay at home until peace returns. There is tension everywhere. We are even confused because when you are at home, you might be hit by missiles. Outside is not safe either. It is scary because Iran is attacking many Gulf countries," he lamented.

For other Nigerians in the Gulf, daily life has become a delicate balance between caution, resilience, and faith.

## Politics

## I'll challenge 2026 Electoral Act in court, says Peter Obi

The 2023 presidential candidate of the Labour Party, Peter Obi, has formally registered as a member of the African Democratic Congress.

Obi, who completed his registration in his hometown of Agulu in Aniocha Local Government Area of Anambra State on Saturday, said he would challenge the newly passed Electoral Act 2026 in court over what he described as attempts to manipulate the outcome of the 2027 general elections.

He alleged that provisions of the new electoral law were designed to facilitate electoral manipulation and undermine the credibility of future elections.

The former governor of Anambra State accused the Independent National Electoral Commission of overstepping its constitutional role by attempting to interfere in how political parties conduct their internal processes.

According to him, the electoral body should focus on conducting credible elections rather than dictating how parties select their candidates.

"I am going to challenge the decision in court; INEC has no reason to assume processes in how political parties elect their candidates. Its responsibility is to conduct elections.

"You don't tell a team how to prepare its players before a match. As a referee, INEC's role is to officiate, not to determine which players a team should field," he said.

Obi said the provisions of the new law appeared designed to favour the ruling party in the next general election.

"All the laws being hurriedly created are simply aimed at enabling the ruling party to snatch the 2027 presidential election and run away with it," he alleged.

He urged party members and supporters to intensify grassroots mobilisation ahead of the 2027 polls.

"We have about 2.8 million registered voters in Anambra, and I urge everyone to go to the grassroots and mobilise people to register and be ready to vote," he said.

The former presidential candidate also emphasised the need for political unity among opposition groups.

According to him, the South-East region is working

collectively with other parts of the country to build a strong opposition ahead of the next elections.

"In this journey of 2027, we in the South-East are working as a family and discussing with other regions.

"The goal is to unite the opposition and create a new Nigeria. The South-East is part of Nigeria and no region is more Nigerian than the South-East," he added.

Obi also criticised the current socio-economic conditions, describing the country as one of the poorest globally despite its vast resources.

He stated, "We cannot continue in an era where Nigeria has become one of the worst five countries in the world and the poverty capital of the world.

"We are committed to building a Nigeria where the child of a nobody can become somebody without knowing anybody.

The National Organising Secretary of the ADC, Chinedu Idigo, explained that the party's membership registration exercise would be conducted both physically and online.

He urged prospective members to complete online registration before visiting designated centres to collect their membership cards.

Idigo added that the party would adopt the direct primary system in selecting its candidates for future elections.

He also disclosed that 50,000 membership cards had been sent to the state, with additional cards expected to arrive soon.

Also speaking at the event, the ADC candidate in the November 8, 2025 Anambra governorship election, John Nwosu, described Obi's registration as a significant milestone for the party.

"This is a day of joy. The journey of Obi to the presidency begins today," Nwosu said.

He urged party members to close ranks and avoid internal divisions ahead of future elections.

Reflecting on the 2023 general elections, Nwosu said challenges such as vote buying, voter apathy and inadequate polling agents had undermined the party's performance, adding that efforts were being made to address those issues.

## Opposition will continue in confusion till 2027 election is over – Akpabio

President of the Senate, Godswill Akpabio, has said opposition parties in Nigeria will continue in confusion till the 2027 general elections is over.

Akpabio made the remark while addressing guests in Uyo during a reception held in honour of the First Lady, Oluremi Tinubu.

He argued that the opposition's decision to begin political activities ahead of the timeline set by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) for August 26, 2026 indicates internal disarray within their ranks.

According to him: "Each time we make a law and the opposition frowns, I get excited that I've made the right law."

He added that while the ruling party continues consultations and political mobilisation across the country, opposition groups are still attempting to organise themselves.

"While we are moving around Nigeria, consulting and campaigning, many of them are still trying to form



their political party.

"They haven't even finished registration and they would continue in confusion till 2027 election is over. Instead of putting their houses in order, they're breaking up."

Akpabio also criticised divisions within opposition parties, pointing to internal leadership disputes.

"You see a man who formed Labour Party, they had millions of votes, today they

can't have a hundred thousand votes, because Labour Party is distressed.

"They have different leaderships. Some in the North, some in the South, some West, some in the East.

"See then PDP that used to be one now struggling to have five different offices in Abuja, with about four Secretaries. Who would sign their forms?" he said.

## Bwala: Phrank Shaibu slams Tinubu's aide over grammatical blunders on Al Jazeera

Senior Special Assistant to Atiku Abubakar on Public Communication, Phrank Shaibu, has slammed Daniel Bwala, his former colleague, for allegedly not being able to even express himself with simple English during his appearance on international TV, Al Jazeera recently.

Shaibu pointed out some grammatical blunders made by the presidential spokesman during the interview that has since set social media on fire.

He wondered how the presidential spokesman could go as low as 'counting water,' which is an uncountable noun when he said at some point in the interview, 'a water'.



Nigerians now believe that Bwala will never forget his interview with Al Jazeera's Mehdi Hasan, who is described as a "deadly fact-checker".

The former aide to Atiku has since faced a public backlash after the journalist quoted his words and cited the dates he made the comments about the President he now works for.

His vehement denial and defensiveness even after watching himself in several clips angered most viewers.

However, Shaibu is more interested in the grammatical errors made by his former colleague. He wrote on X, "Since Bwala now appears eager to posture as a public

intellectual, it may also be necessary to address something far more elementary.

"It is always risky when a man who cannot count water begins to count his arguments as facts.

"How does a 'lawyer,' one so eager to sermonise about competence, manage to betray such basic illiteracy in the English language?

"Water, for his information, is an uncountable noun. One does not say "this is a water." One says "this is water" or "a glass of water."

"But perhaps precision — whether in language or in truth — has never really been his strongest suit.

"What remains astonishing is not merely the elasticity of his political loyalties, but the gusto with which he now attempts to launder them as principle.

"History, unfortunately for him, keeps receipts. And so, do we."

Bwala since reacted to his own interview in a statement where he insisted that his criticisms of Tinubu in the was all politics.

He also claimed that Mehdi did not fully brief him on the questions he would answer.

# Prize increases for African club competition winners

Winners of the two Confederation of African Football club competitions will receive substantially more prize money from this season, it was announced on Monday.

A CAF statement said the 2025/26 CAF Champions League winners will receive six million dollars (5.18 mn euros), up from four million dollars last season.

The club lifting the second-tier CAF Confederation Cup — the African equivalent of the UEFA Europa League — will pocket four million dollars, a 50 per cent increase from last season.

Prize money for runners-up is unchanged. Beaten finalists in the Champions League receive two million dollars and one million in the Confederation Cup.

Increasing the prize money will be welcomed by clubs, who have complained in the past that competing in African



competitions often results in a financial loss.

Air travel is particularly expensive and time-consuming. Direct flights between many countries do not exist and it can be cheaper to fly from Africa to Europe than to fly within Africa.

To reduce travel expenses, some clubs, particularly those in southern Africa, travel via the Middle East or Europe for CAF fixtures in the north of the continent.

The prize money has risen several times since South

African businessman Patrice Motsepe became president of CAF in 2021. He is currently serving a second four-year term.

Quarter-final first legs in both the Champions League and Confederation Cup are scheduled for this weekend.

The eight-fixture programme kicks off on Friday in Pretoria, where Mamelodi Sundowns of South Africa host Stade Malien of Mali in the Champions League.

# Nigeria's Commonwealth Games boxing squad emerges

Nigeria has named its 10-boxer squad for the 2026 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow after the conclusion of the open trials at the Brai Ayonote Boxing Complex, National Stadium, Surulere, Lagos, on Friday.

The four-day event, organised by the Nigeria Boxing Federation, drew 128 boxers—121 men and 27 women—competing across ten weight categories. Each champion earned a coveted ticket to represent the nation at the Games.

UK-based boxer and 2023 African Games gold medallist, Patricia Mbata, was among the standout performers, claiming gold in the women's 70kg category to secure her place on the team, a result that will delight former world heavyweight champion Anthony Joshua, who had sent her a video message earlier in the week, urging her to win.

The other female representatives are Udoette Happiness (51kg), Ajishola Kadijat (57kg), Sodipe Damilola (65kg), and Edoke Celestine (+70kg), while the five male qualifiers are Ogunremi Michael (55kg), Wahab Abdurrahman (65kg), Folly Hassan (70kg), Daniel Joshua (80kg) and Anigbodo Kenneth (90kg).

NBF Technical Director



Babatunde Laguda commended the resilience of the athletes and officials, noting the intensity of the trials, "Most times the fights ended late into the night, but we ensured fairness in every bout. Winning does not always mean you are the best, so we will still invite some of the outstanding boxers to camp as sparring partners. Their contributions will be vital to the team's success."

Secretary-General of the Nigeria Boxing Federation, Vivian Azimene, had said ahead of the finals that selected boxers would be invited to camp, while outstanding performers from the trials would also serve as sparring partners in

preparation for the Games.

Nigeria will be hoping to improve on its 2022 Birmingham outing, where nine fighters led by captain Abdul-Afeez Osoba returned with four medals—one silver from Elizabeth Oshoba and three bronzes courtesy of Cynthia Ogunsemilore, Jacinta Umunnakwe, and Ifeanyi Onyekwere.

The 2026 Commonwealth Games are scheduled for July 24 to August 1 at the SEC Centre in Glasgow, with boxing featuring across 14 events—seven men's and seven women's categories—alongside athletics, swimming, gymnastics, cycling, netball, bowls, and basketball.

## THE TRUMPSPORTS

With

Usman Abbas Shehu



### Bauchi Sports Council Appoints Sirajo Jaja as Chairman of Para Athletic Association



The Management of Bauchi State Sports Council has appointed Bauchi State Accountant General, Mohammed Sirajo Jaja as Chairman of Bauchi State Para Athletic Association.

This was contained in a letter of appointment dated 4th March 2026 sent to Mohammed Sirajo Jaja signed by the Director Bauchi State Sports Council, Alhaji Ado Tanko.

According to the letter, the appointment was based on merit and timely considering his commitment and vast experience in human endeavors and longtime contributions in sports development particularly Para

Athletic in the State.

While congratulating Sirajo jaja for his well-deserved appointment on behalf of the Management of the state sports Council, Ado Tanko, hoped that he will justify the confidence repose in him by the council to make Bauchi State proud in this event both at national and international meets.

Speaking to our Correspondent in his office, Sirajo Jaja expressed gratitude to the Management of Bauchi State Sports Council for finding him worthy of this appointment as chairman of Bauchi State Para Athletic Association.

### Manchester United defender, Harry Maguire, has been slammed with a 15-month sentence over cases of assault and bribery

In a sitting at a court in Greece, Maguire was found guilty of a repeated bodily harm, attempted bribery, violence against public employees and insult, after which he was sentenced accordingly.

The trial, which was postponed four times between 2023 and 2025 was resumed on Wednesday where the Englishman was said to have committed offence against public employees on the island in Mykonos sometime in August 2020.

The 32-year-old, who initially denied wrongdoing and plans to appeal to the

Supreme Court rejected a number of opportunities to settle the case out of court, as he is determined to clear his name legally.

His decision led to a reduced 21-month sentence residence to 15, in line with the Greek law which states that when a defendant appeals against a conviction from a lower criminal court, the verdict is automatically annulled and the case is retried from the beginning.

The retrial was delayed several times due to procedural issues, including lawyer strikes and scheduling problems.

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will pursue you until the end. Insha Allah, your collapse is near. This act of destruction marks your final blow," Zakzaky said, adding that the attempt to weaken the Islamic Republic would only strengthen Islam's global rise.

Zakzaky also urged Muslims worldwide to recognize what he described as the threat to their faith and dignity.

"This is a struggle between truth and falsehood. Soon, Allah will elevate this community and bring forth the awaited saviour. We pray for his swift appearance, through whom ultimate deliverance will come," he said.

**Qadiriyya followers hold Salat al Ghaib for Khamenei in Kano**

Dozens of Qadiriyya Sufi order followers observed Salat al Ghaib on Monday for the late Iranian Supreme Leader, Khamenei, at the Darul Qadiriyya in Kabara quarters in Kano.

Darul Qadiriyya is the residence of the late Sheikh Nasiru Kabara, the leader of the Qadiriyya sect in Africa, who died in 1993.

The funeral prayer observed in absentia (Ghaib) was led by Sheikh Muazzamu Nasiru Kabara, the eldest son of the late spiritual leader of the Qadiriyya sect.

Dozens of faithful

**Middle East War: Protest in North Eastern States, Others**



attended the prayer, which was held immediately after the Asr prayer in the Darul Qadiriyya premises, where faithful prayed for the deceased leader, asking Allah to grant his soul eternal blessings.

Sheikh Musal Qasiyuni Nasiru Kabara, who has been holding sessions on Kitab Al-Shifa daily in the Darul Qadiriyya since the beginning of the Ramadan period, was among those who participated in the funeral rites for the late Iranian supreme leader.

Sheikh Musal Qasiyuni also shared the video of the prayer on his verified Facebook page.

**Why Middle East crisis**

**reverberates in Nigeria – Diplomat**

A former Nigerian Ambassador to Sudan and Côte d'Ivoire, Suleiman Dahiru, has said that the ongoing conflict in the Middle East, particularly the killing of Iran's spiritual leader, is reverberating across Nigeria through protests and economic pressures because the world has become a global village.

Speaking to Reporters, Dahiru said, "Now, you see, as they always say, the world has become a global village. Whatever is happening in one part of the world, the rest of the world is seeing what is going on.

"So, the demonstrations that you are seeing in some cities in Nigeria are simply because of disapproval of what America and Israel are doing in Iran."

He explained that the protests by Shi'ite Muslims in Nigerian cities are not isolated events but part of a broader reaction to what he described as "American and Israeli machinations" in the Middle East.

"Israel is not a friend of the Arabs, is not a friend of Muslims. Unfortunately, because the monarchies want to preserve their rule, they listen to whatever America is telling them, and that is why they are normalising relationships with Israel," he said.

According to him, Iran's refusal to bow to external dictates made it a target.

"Iran, because of its long history of not allowing any country to dominate it, refused to obey American dictation. And Israel has also found Iran too difficult to manipulate. So, the Americans and the Israelis ganged up against Iran," Dahiru noted.

He noted that the crisis will have economic consequences for Nigeria. "If you follow the study, the price of oil has gone up by 13%, and it will keep on going up until they find a solution to the problem.

"The economy in the world is going to suffer for

it, apart from the prices of oil that are already going up. So, the whole situation is not good for the world. Including Nigeria," he stressed.

Dahiru criticised the role of the United States and Israel in undermining global institutions, saying, "The United Nations that was formed in 1945 to stop wars around the world, to seek peace among countries of the world, you have Netanyahu and Donald Trump who have become lawless. They have made nonsense of the United Nations. They have made nonsense of diplomacy and they have made nonsense of the law itself," he stated.

On whether the protests are purely religious, he argued that the issue transcends sectarian lines. "Anybody who has any humanity in him, you don't have to be a Shi'ite. You don't have to be Sunni. You don't have to be a Muslim.

"If you have any humanity in you, you should condemn what America and Israel are doing. They are governed by lawless people. Donald Trump is lawless. Netanyahu is lawless," he said.

"Flights are no longer taking place. The Middle East countries have closed down their airspace. The economy in the world is going to suffer for it..."

"America has never left any country in a better shape than it found it. If you are talking of Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, all the countries we have mentioned, America left them worse off," he added.

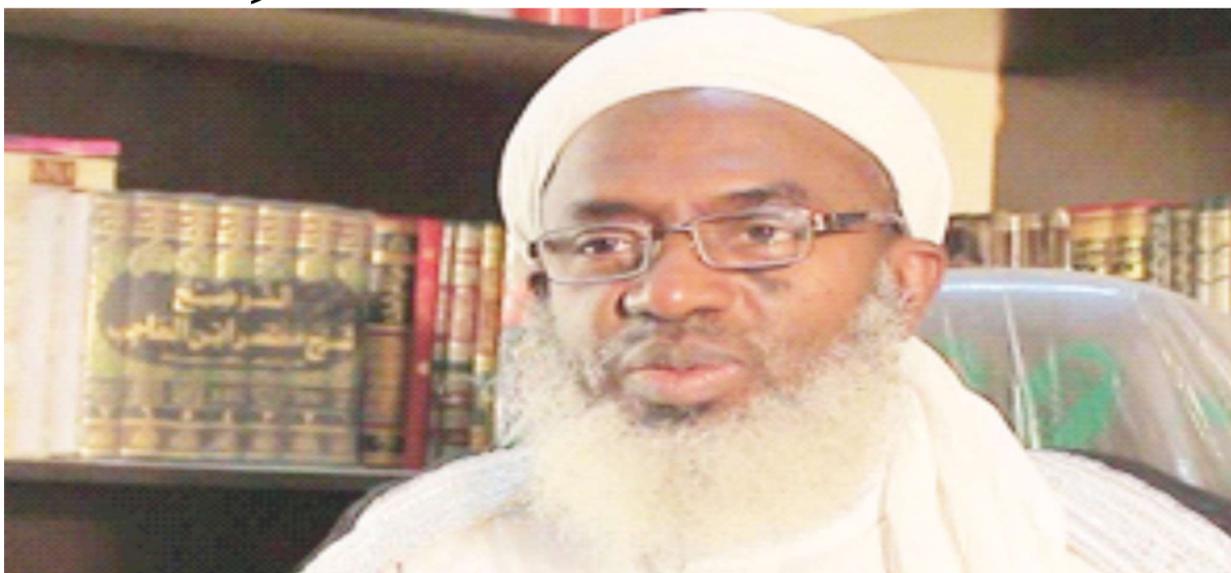
**FG knows every terrorist by name, location – Gumi**

Kaduna-based Islamic scholar Abubakar Gumi has alleged that the Nigerian government is aware of the identities and locations of terrorists operating across the country.

The cleric made the claim during a recent interview with DRTV, which began trending on Tuesday.

Gumi was reacting to accusations that he personally knows and regularly interacts with terrorists and bandits responsible for insecurity in parts of Nigeria, and that he often speaks on their behalf.

Responding to the claims,



the Islamic scholar said his contacts with the armed groups are not conducted alone, insisting that security agencies are

involved in the process. "The government knows every terrorist by name and by location. I don't go alone to negotiate — I go

with the police and other security agencies," he

said. Gumi further stated that some of the

engagements have involved visits to traditional rulers as well as trips into forests believed to be hideouts for bandits.

"I would go to the Emirs. In fact, when we went to one forest, I even went with women into the bush," he added.

The cleric has previously taken part in controversial dialogue initiatives with armed groups in northern Nigeria, maintaining that negotiation could help reduce violence and persuade fighters to lay down their arms.