

Putting smiles on the faces of internally displaced persons

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Protests, deaths as economic hardship hits varsities hard

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SUNDAY WEATHER

Lagos - 32°C

Abuja - 31°C

PortHarcourt - 23°C

# Oshiomhole battles for political life



By Ishaya Ibrahim (Lagos) and Titus Oise (Benin)

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easy.

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Party (PDP) juggernauts.

Ever since his Deputy, Pius Odubu, showed interest in the governorship, things have not been the same between the two men. Their robust rela-

tionship has turned sour.

Despite occasional verbal political fireworks, Edo is generally peaceful. But the rift in Government House is tearing the state into two factions, and the APC national leadership looks the other way, unperturbed.

President Muhammadu Buhari, APC leader, declines to call the combatants to order, especially Oshiomhole, whose preference for Obaseki is the genesis of the conflict.

When TheNiche asked Buhari's

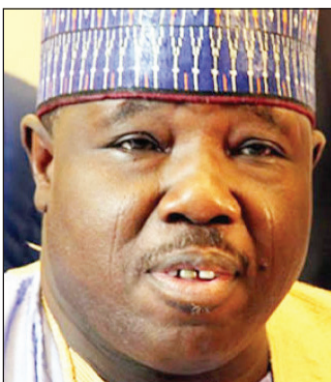
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PDP and challenge of 2019 politics

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'We're telling the Nigerian story through people's voices'

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# News

## Putting smiles on the faces of interna

Those sent packing from their homes by insurgents face multiple problems in internally displaced camps. But one of the problems, hunger, is being tackled by the government in an unusual manner. Assistant Editor (North), CHUKS EHIRIM, reports.



Ali (dressed in white), with some of the children



Another group of children in the camp

**M**ore than half the North East has been devastated by Boko Haram insurgents in the past three years. The zone accounts for over 95 per cent of more than 10,000 Nigerians slain by the jihadists since their campaign turned ferocious in 2009. At a point, Boko Haram was in firm control of 14 of Nigeria's 774 council areas. In each area they occupied, they sacked legitimate governments and installed their own illegitimate regimes, including religious and traditional heads. Most survivors of the onslaughts flee their homes to become refugees in their own country, or what is commonly referred to as Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), scattered across many states, including Edo and the Federal Capital Territory

(FCT). Food in short supply Even in the IDP camps, the victims do not sleep with both eyes closed as the ravaging insurgents occasionally strike and send many to their early deaths. IDPs also face severe hunger because food at their disposal pale into insignificance compared with the large numbers being fed daily. However, a presidential order to the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) to distribute confiscated food items stored in warehouses across the country to IDPs has started yielding fruit. Materials donated A committee set up by NSC Comptroller General, Hamid Ali, to collect and donate the relief materials flagged off its assignment in Yola. It moved to Benin City and donated

- 211 (25kg) bags of rice
  - 340 cartons of vegetable oil
  - Eight jerry cans of 20 litres of vegetable oil
  - 33 jerry cans of 25 litres of vegetable oil
  - 4,820 cartons and 32 tablets of Eva and Savon soap
  - 100 cartons of slippers
  - 16 sacks of school bags
  - 156 bales of cloth
- The materials were donated to the IDP camp at the International Christian Centre, Uhogua village, Benin City – handed over to the Camp Director, Solomon Folurunsho, in the presence of the wife of Edo State Governor, Iara Oshiomhole.
- Safe corridors for trading, farming

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Ali, who had earlier walked around the large premises housing the IDPs who are mainly from the North East, said the plan is to give succour to the victims of Boko Haram. His words: "It gives me great pleasure to be here, joining all our well-meaning stakeholders who are united in one mission. "Our common objective is working together to bring succour to millions of Nigerians who have been displaced, traumatised and separated from their loved ones. "Working with partner government agencies, the Nigeria Customs Service is executing a Presidential mandate to alleviate the plight of our internally displaced brothers and sisters. "The scope of our intervention involves transferring relief items that have been seized and forfeited to the federal government, through appropriate legal processes, to the IDP

camps. "Today's event is the second in the series of donations to be made in the first phase. We have flagged off the exercise in Adamawa State and reached out to four IDP camps, namely: Damare, St. Theresa, Fufore, and Melkahi." Ali disclosed that the committee is conscious of government's efforts to guarantee safe corridors for trading, farming and other economic activities without hindrance. In his view, rebuilding the North East "will therefore require a strong collaboration of all Nigerians, united in the belief that an injury to one or some of us, represents an injury to all." Support from other agencies He expressed gratitude to the chief of army staff, chief of air staff, inspector general of police, commandant general of the Nigeria Security



# ally displaced persons



Foodstuff

Over 85 per cent of the campers are young boys and girls, most of whom have lost their parents and may not know where they hail from. There are many nursing mothers and pregnant women as well as volunteer workers, including German nationals, who are assisting Folorunsho in the humanitarian work.



Other relief materials

and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), corps marshal of the Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC), director general of the National Agency for Food and Administration and Control (NAFDAC) for their "unconditional support" since the exercise start-

ed. "We have also received tremendous support from the Red Cross and the media. We appreciate you all." Oshiomhole said: "I am, on behalf of the Edo State Government, thanking the manage-

ment of the Nigeria Customs Service and the Presidency for their support to the IDPs in Edo State." Folorunsho thanked the Customs, describing the gesture as "a source of joy to the people in the camp. But like Oliver

Twist, we are asking for more of this in future."

The entire Uhogua village went into celebration, with people lining up the dusty road leading to the camp to welcome Ali and his entourage. Momentary happiness returned to the campers, who organised cultural dances to herald the event.

85% of campers children

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There are many nursing mothers and pregnant women as well as volunteer workers, including German nationals, who are assisting Folorunsho in the humanitarian work.

TheNiche learnt that the campers consume as much as 10 bags (50 kg) of rice a day.

# News

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## Protests, deaths as economic hardship hits varsities hard

By Henry Oduah  
Special Correspondent, Lagos

**N**igeria's oldest university, the University of Ibadan (UI), joined the list of federal institutions shut down after students' unrest, even though the protest was peaceful.

UI Vice Chancellor, Professor Idowu Olayinka, directed students to vacate their halls of residence after they demonstrated against poor power and water supply in their hostels.

### OSUSTECH, AAU

Lives were lost in agitations at the University of Port Harcourt (UNIPORT) and Ondo State University of Science and Technology (OSUSTECH), Okitipupa.

Another school owned by Ondo State, Adekunle Ajasin University (AAU), Akungba-Akoko, has also been closed.

There, students protested as one of them was hit by a motorcycle taxi. Indigenes of the town joined the fracas; it escalated, and led to the closure.

OSUSTECH students protested the death of a student as a result of poor infrastructure.

A student, Ife Olasanmi, told TheNiche that "we took our friend who had an emergency situation to the university hospital and unfortunately their facilities were inadequate."

"They referred us to the general hospital. But there was no fuel in the ambulance to take us there. That was how our friend died in the process."

### UNIPORT, OAU

Within a week, two federal tertiary institutions – the University of Lagos (UNILAG) and UNIPORT – were closed down because of students' protests over unstable electricity and water supply.

Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU) also suffered the same fate as students protested over poor welfare and treatment.

A grouse over increased tuition fee was added in the case of UNIPORT.

UNIPORT Deputy Registrar (Information), Williams Wodi, confirmed in a text message to the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) that "Senate has shut down the University of Port Harcourt with immediate effect."

"All students are hereby directed to vacate their hostel accommodation ... while the students' union and all its affiliates' bodies are suspended with immediate effect."

Protests got violent and Wodi's office was allegedly destroyed alongside the faculty of science building.

The students also demanded the resignation of President Muhammadu Buhari whom they described as

insensitive to the hardship of Nigerians over lingering fuel crisis, power outage, and continuous rise in food prices.

TheNiche learnt that the police raided the institution and arrested several students. The Faculty President of the Management Science Students, Peter Ofurum, was reportedly shot dead by the police.

Occupy Nigeria, a non-governmental organisation (NGO), demanded the suspension of UNIPORT Vice Chancellor, Professor Ndowa Laale.

### UNILAG

UNILAG students blocked strategic locations on campus, including the entrance of the Senate Building and Assembly Hall, where the Vice Chancellor, Professor Rahman Bello, was attending a function.

Things got messy and the Senate swiftly suspended academic activities, saying it "considered the situation on campus occasioned by the ongoing agitation of the student body over poor electricity and water supply in the community, and the difficulty faced by a large number of students living off campus to attend classes as a result of the fuel crisis."

"Senate noted that the problem of poor municipal services is a national issue that governments at both state and federal levels are addressing."

"However, in order to fore-



Laale



Bello

stall a further breakdown of law and order on campus, Senate resolved to take the following decisions until the situation normalises.

"All academic activities on campus are hereby suspended with immediate effect. The university is therefore closed with immediate effect."

The school authority dissolved the students' union and asked every student to sign an undertaking and submit parents' indemnity forms before they would be allowed to return to school.

Three days after UNILAG was closed, UNIPORT announced its closure as students vented disapproval of the increase in tuition fee.

An economics student at UNILAG, Paul Sewah, who lives outside campus, confirmed that "normal activities have [now] resumed on cam-

pus. Although lectures have ended because as from Monday (tomorrow, May 9) exam begins."

He added that transport fare from his residence to campus has returned to normal. "I used to pay N500 or more to and fro school because of the fuel scarcity, now I pay N300 which is the normal amount."

### UNN

However, the University of Nigeria, Nsukka (UNN), another federal institution, has been enjoying serenity though power and water supply is average.

Patricia Odia, a student of English and literary studies, confirmed that electricity and water supply on campus remains normal.

"Our major challenge

here in school is the increase in the transport cost of campus shuttles.

"We used to pay N60 to any part of the university, now it's N70. We don't have a choice but to pay as the problem is nationwide," she said.

### Adamu to step in

The upsurge in the suspension of scholarly activities raises concern and requires intervention. Most universities affected are owned by the federal government.

Before the appointment of Adamu Adamu as education minister in November last year, the ministry had convened to address the crisis in public universities; now is the time for another urgent intervention.

See who is reading *TheNiche*...



Alexander Bamgbala, chairman, Christian Association of Nigeria, Lagos State chapter.



## Oshiomhole battles for political life



Edoror



Atovie



Odubu

Continued from page 1

By Ishaya Ibrahim (Lagos) and Titus Oise (Benin)

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Adversaries are aghast that, Oshiomhole, a virulent critic of autocrats, both military and civilian, is determined to impose Godwin Obaseki as the All Progressives Congress (APC) candidate to succeed him. But he is not finding it easy.

The former Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) president is getting sidekicks from his APC stalwarts as well as frontal punches from Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) juggernauts.

Ever since his Deputy, Pius Odubu, showed interest in the governorship, things have not been the same between the two men. Their robust relationship has turned sour.

Despite occasional verbal political fireworks, Edo is generally peaceful. But the rift in Government House is tearing the state into two factions, and the APC national leadership looks the other way, unperturbed.

President Muhammadu Buhari, APC leader, declines to call the combatants to order, especially Oshiomhole, whose preference for Obaseki is the genesis of the conflict.

When TheNiche asked Buhari's Media Assistant, Garba Shehu, why his principal is mute on the fracas, he said the party is in a better position to speak on it.

### Buildup of rift

Oshiomhole wants someone else to succeed him, not his deputy, and wants to do everything to stop Odubu, according to his opponents.

On the other hand, Odubu has political clout, and seems popular enough to stop Oshiomhole's machinery.

The man who wants to succeed his boss recalls easily what happened in Ebonyi State where the then Deputy Governor, Dave Umahi, wrestled the then Governor Martins Elechi, to the ground in emerging the PDP governor-

**"Odubu is not asking for any special favour but only a level playing field to allow our party members freely choose who to carry the party's flag .... We will resist geo-godfatherism, imposition or rigging of any sort. We call on Buhari to call [Oshiomhole] to order today before he plunges our state into avoidable bloodshed."**

ship candidate.

Umahi eventually won the election.

However, strident alarm bells rang on Saturday, April 30, 2016 when gunmen attacked Odubu and his campaign team at the secretariat of the APC in Auchi.

When the smoke cleared, eight persons had been injured, including security details in his convoy. Those injured are still receiving treatment at the University of Benin Teaching Hospital (UBTH).

On Sunday, May 1, Odubu's campaign organisation addressed a press conference on the assassination attempt on its principal – which was quickly dismissed by Information and Orientation Commissioner, Kassim Afegbua, who described as laughable the alleged attempt on Odubu's life.

On Tuesday, May 3, there was confusion when state House of Assembly Speaker, Victor Ekor, and his Deputy, Bright Osayande, were impeached by 16 of the 24 legislators.

Elizabeth Atovie (Uhunwomde Constituency), an ally of Oshiomhole, was made the speaker and Justice Okonobor (Igueben Constituency) deputy speaker.

Another lawmaker, Osaigbovo Iyoha, has since crossed the carpet from Edoror's column to join the Atovie camp – making it 17 for Oshiomhole, and seven for Odubu.

### Maradona has run full circle, says PDP

Edo PDP Chairman, Dan Orbih, told TheNiche in an interview that Oshiomhole came into the political scene like (former Argentine Captain) Diego Maradona and dribbled everybody scoring goals by hook and crook.

His words: "When Maradona broke

into the scene in world football, he mesmerised every team, he dribbled one particular team from his own half to score a goal.

"Where he could not score goal, he would use the hand of God. And every person said a genius has been born.

"Before he left active football, he became anonymous because people now knew him well. To even score a goal in a World Cup tournament was a problem.

"Like Maradona, Oshiomhole bursts into the scene, and people did not know much about him. He dribbled every person. Towards the tail end of his tenure, people now know Oshiomhole well. Oshiomhole can no longer dribble.

"One day he shouts that [Odubu] wants to kill him with native doctor or juju. The next day, they will organise armed men to shoot at [Odubu]. The people are now praying everyday to see the end of Oshiomhole.

"If it was before, when they announced that Greek gift of N25,000 minimum wage, the whole state would have been celebrating him, dancing in the street and saying Osho baba. Now they call him Osho wayo."

Orbih said the PDP is devising measures to clean up the mess in the state.

"Oshiomhole has borrowed more than any other previous government. He has misused the resources of the state to a level that cannot be imagined.

"He spends between N500 million and N700 million of the security vote in a month, in a state where there is no Boko Haram."

### Impeachment plot against Odubu

Edo for Good Governance (EGG), a popular group in the state, alleged that the removal of the leadership of

the state House of Assembly is a prelude to the impeachment of Odubu.

A statement issued by EGG Co-ordinator, John Ogbeide, described the impeachment of Edoror and Osayande as part of the plot to eliminate Odubu from the APC governorship ticket.

Said he: "It's an open secret that all efforts to make Odubu give up his resolve to vie for the

ticket have failed.

"For the avoidance of doubt, EGG wishes to put the national leadership of the APC on notice as well as alert our democracy-loving President Muhammadu Buhari to call Oshiomhole to order to allow democracy and one-man one-vote prevail in Edo as the party prepares for the primaries in the next four weeks.

"Odubu is not asking for any special favour but only a level playing field to allow our party members freely choose who to carry the party's flag in the September 10 election.

"We will resist geo-godfatherism, imposition or rigging of any sort.

"We call on Buhari to call [Oshiomhole] to order today before he plunges our state into avoidable bloodshed."

### Atovie denies conspiracy

However, Atovie told TheNiche that her emergence as speaker has nothing to do with the crisis of confidence between Oshiomhole and Odubu.

"Since this problem started, you would have noticed that no member of the House has spoken. There is no impeachment plan against [Odubu]," she stressed.

### Cutting Odubu to size

Despite that denial, opponents point to Oshiomhole's anger over the resil-

ience of Odubu to seek the APC ticket, which they say made him to sack political appointees who were present at Odubu's flag off of his campaign.

The House of Assembly has ordered the arrest of Godwin Oribh, chief press secretary to Edoror, for claiming that his principal remains the speaker.

Besides, Curtis Ugbor, former media assistant to Oshiomhole, has alleged that Oshiomhole is after his life for supporting Odubu.

He told TheNiche in a telephone interview from his hospital bed (name withheld) in Benin that he is being punished for no just cause.

Ugbor, a rights activist cum politician, was one of the political appointees who lost their jobs because of their allegiance to Odubu.

He disclosed that his arrest on allegations of writing inciting comments about Oshiomhole was carried out by about 25 armed security officers who searched his home.

He said the manner of his arrest a few days before his sack was an eye-opener.

He recalled that his problem with Oshiomhole started last year when he accompanied him to Bayelsa State where he supervised the governorship primaries of the APC.



Orbih

## News

## Remember the poor, Ezeude implores Nigerians

By Daniel Kanu  
Assistant Politics Editor

Founder of Emilia Foundation/ Eye Care, Emilia Ezeude, has urged Nigerians not to stop rendering help to the less privileged because of the general economic hardship.

She pleaded with those well off not to abandon the needy because "we must at all time, in the spirit of brotherhood and our cherished value, continue to be our brother's keeper despite the hardship being experienced in the country."

She made the call at the inauguration of the foundation in Ajeromi-lfelodun Council in Lagos, where many residents were given free eye care tests.

Ezeude, who ran for last year's State House of Assem-

bly election on the platform of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), counselled Nigerians and those in leadership to always make a case for the poor.

This, she stressed, would help give them a sense of belonging in the society.

She also advised PDP members not to give up as the party has a good chance of upstaging the All Progressives Congress (APC) in 2019.

"I just want to use this foundation, Emilia Foundation Eye Care, to give back as little as I can to the society. I also want to use this opportunity to urge all others whom God has blessed and with a giving heart to remember to assist the needy.

"They are our brothers and sisters, and given our spirit of being your brother's keeper, we must accommodate them

with the gifts God has bestowed on us. It is for our collective good," she explained.

On her optimism about the PDP, Ezeude said: "We must work collectively for our great party in any way we can to enable us bounce back. Though I am not a prophet, I can predict that we will come back to power at the national level in 2019.

"With where we are today economically and politically, Nigerians are already set to vote out the APC in the next election.

"What we are undergoing now in the party is 'operation back to Aso Rock and take over Lagos in 2019'.

"But this is only possible if we work harder, learn from our mistakes, and play a good opposition to show Nigerians that the APC is not a better alternative to the PDP."



Ezeude

## Abia plans integrated healthcare delivery

By Onwukwe Ezeru  
Special Correspondent, Umuahia

Integrated healthcare delivery will take off soon in Abia State, says Governor Okezie Ikpeazu.

He made the promise at Eluama Isuikwuato Council while commissioning Eluama Primary Health Centre which was reconstructed and equipped by Emmanuel Mbaka, chairman of Emma Mbaka Foundation.

Ikpeazu said primary, secondary, and tertiary health facilities will be upgraded and a super tertiary health facility will also be established in the next two years to undertake heart transplant.

Ikpeazu disclosed plans by the state government to spend about N1 billion on healthcare in the next one month, and said the process of making Eluama Health Centre a cottage hospital has begun.

He promised to construct a two-kilometre access road to the health centre and commended Mbaka for assisting the government in meeting the needs of the people.

Mbaka described healthcare as essential and said the centre will provide services free.

Eluama Isuikwuato Council Transition Committee Chairman, Christopher Osondu, thanked Ikpeazu for his love for Isuikwuato people and urged him to mend the road leading to the health centre.



Ikpeazu

## Odusile emerges FAJ president

By Ayo Bada  
Senior Correspondent

Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ) President, Abdulwaheed Odusile, has been elected as Federation of African Journalists (FAJ) president in a unanimous voting by FAJ steering committee.

FAJ, the African regional association of the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ)

held the election during its fourth congress in Abuja where Odusile emerged unopposed.

Maria Carvalho of Sindicato dos Jornalistas Angolanos was elected vice president and Zeid Debbon (Syndicat National des Journalistes Tunisiens) treasurer.

Union representatives elected from all African sub regions to serve on the steering committee are Stephen Ouma Bwire (Uganda Journalists Union), Foster Dongozi (Zimbabwe Union of Journalists), and Ibrahim Ndiaye (Syndicat des Pro-

fessionnels de l'Information de la Communication - Senegal).

Alexandre Niyungeko (Union Burundaise des Journalistes), Denis Nkwebo (Syndicat Nationale des Journalistes du Cameroon), Moussa Traore (Union Nationale des Journalistes de Cote d'Ivoire).

Eduardo Constantino (Sindicato Nacional de Jornalistas of Mozambique), Abdullai Camara (Press Union of Liberia, PUL), and Franck Kpochere (Union des Professionnels des medias du Benin).

Five female journalists elected into the Pan-African Gender Council are Angela Chishimaba (Zambia Union of Journalists), Marion Vivivan (Syndicat Nationale des Journalistes du Cameroon), Patricia Ajdisseku (Union des Journalistes Independents du Togo), Aisha Youssouf (Association des Journalistes Djiboutiens), and Nigeria's Fatimah Abdulkareem.

FAJ outlined the safety of journalists and the campaign against impunity as top priorities in the next three years.

It will also focus on gender equality in the media and unions, freedom of information, online safety, and decriminalisation of libel.

The two-day event brought together 34 delegates from 22 journalists' unions and associations across Africa who deliberated on issues affecting journalists and the media in Africa, took stock of FAJ's achievements and challenges, and elected a new leadership to run its affairs for the next three years.

## Okorocho, Edebiri, ex-Biafran soldiers seek end to herdsmen killings

By Okey Maduforo (Owerri)  
and Titus Oise (Benin)

Two former Biafran soldiers, one of them now a professor, have joined Imo State Governor, Rochas Okorocho, to appeal to President Muhammadu Buhari to intervene urgently in the recurring killings by Fulani herdsmen.

A People's Democratic Party (PDP) governorship aspirant in Edo State, Solomon Edebiri, also called on Abuja to stop the attacks.

Okorocho told a gathering of traditional rulers in Owerri to take control of security in their communities and ensure peaceful co-existence between indigenes and people from other parts of Nigeria living in their midst.

He appealed for calm over the killings in the South East, expressing optimism that Buhari would address the development.

He condemned the attack in Enugu and other parts of the country, sympathised with bereaved families, and appealed for peace, saying Nigeria cannot afford wanton killings.

"The killings in Enugu State are inhuman and those behind the killings should be made to face the law. As traditional rulers you are to take charge of security in your autonomous communities.

"You are now the chief security officers of your communities and you must ensure harmony between your people and others living with them. At this time in the country absolute peace is required," Okorocho said.

## Prepare against herdsmen, Edebiri warns

In Benin, Edebiri urged the federal government to take action immediately to curb the activities of Fulani herdsmen now on a killing spree.

He also asked the Edo State government to take security steps to forestall any attack by the herdsmen anywhere in the state.

"The Edo State government must not wait until it happens before it starts rushing to put security measures in place. We have had enough warnings from news of attacks in neighbouring states. The government must act now," he stressed.

"The government should make serious arrangements for a joint task force of the police and the military to monitor known communities and city outskirts where the Fulani herdsmen take their cattle for grazing to make sure they don't attack their hosts."

Edebiri insisted that the masses have suffered enough hardship as a result of the insensitivity of leaders, and the time has come for the government at all levels across the country to protect lives and property.

## Achuzia sees another pogrom

To Joe Achuzia, a former Biafran colonel, the mass killings by Fulani herdsmen in the South East has resurrected the ghost of the civil war.

He described the murders as another pogrom against the South East, and urged Ndigbo to defend themselves against a plot to "exterminate" a race.

His words: "The killings by Fulani people

are reprehensible. Before, we knew them as nomads that take cattle from place to place. Now they have started killing people.

"This is reprehensible and I make bold to say that this is the similar way our people were killed in the North. What is happening now is a pogrom.

"Any mass killing of a people by another race is a pogrom and that is exactly what the Fulani herdsmen are doing.

"It is only a mad person that will go to sleep without securing his home. Our people should stand and protect themselves. We have the constitutional right to do so. This is called self defence.

"If this type of thing continues then we are doomed. How can a community watch their homes attacked and their kinsmen killed and keep quiet? They should protect themselves.

"This is no longer those days when we saw them as Fulani men herding cattle about and we saw them as harmless people.

"A fresh and new pogrom has started and it may spread to other parts of Igboland if we fail to defend ourselves at this point.

"While we wait for the government to come into the matter we should be seen to be doing something proactive and not to keep mourning and crying while death is close to our door step."

## Like war captives

Another former Biafran soldier and former Vice Chancellor of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Professor Boniface Egboke, lamented that the killings are an attempt to remind Ndigbo that they are war

captives.

"That was how it all started and our brothers and sisters were killed in the North. Pregnant women had their unborn babies ripped off and children were killed like chicken," he recalled.

"This time around it is happening in the South East and our senators and House of Representatives members are watching. This is yet another way of telling us that we are war captives and we must remain a conquered race.

"People may think that it is one of those things and sooner or later we shall come to terms with the realities of the undercurrent.

"I saw the pogrom and I saw the war. I saw people suffer. I saw hunger. I saw frustration. I saw orphans. I saw psychological distress. Those things are still happening now."

## MASSOB wants self defence

Leader of the Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), Uchenna Madu, announced that "this is no longer the time for so much talking. Talking is cheap and anybody can say whatever he or she wants to say.

"All we need now is action. I mean real action. Does it mean that we do not have men in Igboland? Does it mean that our young men and women are cowards?"

"Enough of this nonsense. This is a game plan by the Nigerian government. They first arrested Nnamdi Kanu and then sent their people to start the killings.

"People should not see us as cowards, we have all that it takes to get back at them and the time is now."



# News Analysis

## The Week Ahead

Saraki's trial continues May 10



Senate President, Bukola Saraki, will re-appear in court on Tuesday, May 10.

He has pleaded not guilty to the amended 16-count charge filed by the Code of Conduct Bureau (CCB).

Mark meets Onjeh in court May 11



Senator David Mark of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) will go head to head with Daniel

Onjeh of the All Progressives Congress (APC) in a pre-trial at the National Election Petition Tribunal in Makurdi on Wednesday, May 11.

Onjeh claimed that the purported margin of win that led to Mark's declaration as winner by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) was far less than the number of cancelled and rejected votes of over 29,000.

Court rules on Ese's secret trial May 12

A Federal High Court in Yenagoa will rule on the application for secret trial for 14-year-old Ese Oruru on Thursday, May 12.

She was reportedly abducted for forceful marriage by Yunusa Dahiru on August 12, 2015.



Abdulsalam's trial begins May 12

Nigeria Airspace Management Agency (NAMA) Managing Director, Ibrahim Abdulsalam, will be in the dock at the Federal High Court in Lagos on Thursday, May 12.

He is being prosecuted alongside six others for alleged theft of N6.8 billion which belongs to NAMA.



Adamolekun launches autobiography May 12

Ladipo Adamolekun's autobiography *I Remember* will be launched on Thursday, May 12 at the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs (NIIA), Kofo Abayomi Street, Victoria Island, Lagos at 11am.

A second event will hold on Tuesday, May 17 at Merit House, Auditorium, Maitama, Abuja at 11am.

Adamolekun, a professor of public administration, is the author and co-author of over 30 books and more than 100 articles and contributions to books on politics and public administration.

## How economy suffered from budget delay

•Experts proffer ways to create jobs



Adegbenro



Oseni



Yusuf

By Ishaya Ibrahim and Henry Oduah (Lagos)

**A**back and forth between the Villa and the National Assembly (NASS) delayed President Muhammadu Buhari's assent to the 2016 budget until Friday, May 6, causing hiccups everywhere, as federal spending is the lifeline of the economy.

Lagos Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) Director General, Muda Yusuf, lamented that the delay entrenched the cycle of poor budget implementation.

"Definitely, continued delay would affect implementation, especially the capital component of the budget. The risk is that recurrent spending will be fully implemented while capital projects suffer the usual implementation shortfall," he said.

### Implications of delay

He stressed that the delay has implications for both the public and private sectors, because "strategic planning for many organisations takes a cue from the budget structure and the policies that come with it.

"To the extent that the budget is not in place, uncertainty and associated business risks in the economy are heightened."

Going forward, however, he advocated better communication between the NASS and the executive.

"They need to be on the same page with regard to the fundamental principles of the budget. The ruling party has a role to play in this matter, especially when it has the majority in the legislature.

"It seems also necessary to clearly define the boundaries of responsibilities between the executive and the legisla-

ture in budgetary appropriations to avoid this recurring problem of delay. A judicial pronouncement is necessary to lay the matter to rest."

### Bad economic planning

Former Director of Corporate Affairs, Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN), Rasheed Adegbenro, said bad planning makes the whole economy to rest on the government "simply because the government is the largest single spender and government is the largest single earner.

"Because the government is the largest single spender, the rest of the economy wants to wait and see how much it is putting into the economy and in what direction.

"And since our economic structure is more of trading and services, the larger economy will rest on the government to see where spending will go in a year."

Adegbenro explained that the delay may not have really affected manufacturing but consumers and buyers since the money in their pocket is what determines how far production goes.

He said manufacturing may be affected because it does not have control over monetary and fiscal policies.

"Monetary policy will give you a picture of what the forex (foreign exchange) calculation for the year will be – the benchmark dollar to naira policy.

"Manufacturers will need that for their own internal planning because most of them import raw materials from overseas. So the ruling rate of the dollar is a major factor in their forex calculation. That is about the monetary policy.

"Fiscal policy is also at the full control of the government. This is what determines what duties you are going to pay and what machinery you are bringing in or what duty you are going to

pay for bringing in a particular material.

"So monetary and fiscal policy measures usually give directions to industries, how their planning should go."

### Job creation

In terms of jobs, Adegbenro said government spending will show whether there will be expansion in the economy or contraction.

"If there will be contraction, most of the contractors working for the government will first lay off unneeded labour. Same with those in trading.

"If the economy contracts that means there will be less money in the pockets of people and that means consumable purchase may also drop. And this may inform manufacturers to drop down their capacity utilisation.

"If the contraction is very heavy, a lot of workers might have to go. But if it is marginal, industries can still sustain particularly trained hands by keeping them for longer period.

"In the areas where you expect policy to show direction concerning job expansion is where there is a shift from recurrent heavy spending to capital projects.

"Capital projects will entail construction of new hospitals, roads and others; and naturally these things bring up new labour.

"But if there is contraction in the budget, like in the last few years we've been having more spending of the budget on recurrent expenditure – just paying salary and maintenance services – it's never good for any economy.

### NASS on overdrive

Tunde Oseni, a lecturer in political science and international relations at Lead City University Ibadan, argued that the NASS went overboard by tinkering with the

budget.

Said he: "The budget process begins from the executive. It is supposed to be vetted by the legislature which is the recognised body representing the Nigerian people.

"It will then be given back to the executive for assent, to say that what I have given to you is what you are giving back to me."

He said Buhari realised that his budget was tampered with, and protested on April 21 that he was not going to sign it.

"The legislature is only constitutionally empowered to vet budget.

"If the legislature has the power to tinker with the budget, it therefore means that the executive has no power to make the budget in the first instance, because the executive could have made a budget and said, 'I want to spend N1 billion this financial year', and the legislature could say, 'no, spend N1.5 billion'.

"That removes the power of the executive to make the budget."

Oseni recalled that because the PDP had dominated the legislature since 1999 there had never been any conflict over budget padding.

"This president seems to be a more thorough person. He believes that if he should assent his signature to the budget as given to him by the legislature, he may be committing some errors.

"He doesn't want to sign something that will not satisfy the yearnings of Nigerians as promised during the campaign."

He said even if the legislature wanted to suggest some areas which it thinks should be funded, it should be in form of addendum, achieved through meetings and deliberations with the executive.

"Not for the executive to propose A, and the legislature is returning A plus. That will rob the executive of the power to make the budget."

# Notes From Finland



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## Police deport 1,200 rejected asylum seekers

About 1,200 asylum seekers who received negative decisions in Finland this year have been deported, says National Police Board Superintendent, Mia Poutanen.

Last year, the police deported about 3,180 asylum seekers whose applications were not granted.

The number of deportations is expected to increase, as the Finnish Immigration Service estimates that two-thirds of the 32,000 asylum seekers that came to Finland last year will receive negative decisions.

National Police Commissioner, Seppo Kolehmainen, said quick deportation of rejected asylum seekers is important for internal security and public order.

"To protect asylum seekers who re-

ceive negative decisions from, for example, becoming victims of organised crime before they leave the country requires swift government action," he said.

Finland is able to deport between 60 per cent and 70 per cent of those who receive negative decisions. The figure across Europe is 40 per cent on average.

An asylum seeker who receives deportation order must leave voluntarily. In this case, his or her whereabouts are known by the authorities.

"There is also the group who, after receiving deportation orders, have moved across internal borders to elsewhere in Europe or remained illegally in Finland and are hiding from the authorities," Poutanen said.



asylum seekers

## U.S. dethrones France as Germany's biggest trading partner



From left: French President, Francois Hollande; U.S. President, Barack Obama; and German Chancellor, Angela Merkel

France has been Germany's most important trading partner for 40 years, but it is not anymore after the United States grabbed the crown.

America overtook France last year for the first time since the mid-1970s.

"According to provisional data, goods worth a total €173.2 billion (\$188 billion) changed hands between Germany and the U.S. in 2015," the federal statistics office (Destatis) said.

"That meant the U.S. was

Germany's most important trading partner in 2015, followed by France with €170.1 billion worth of goods and the Netherlands with €167.6 billion."

The U.S. was the biggest foreign buyer of German goods, with exports amounting to 113.9 billion euros.

Exports to France, the country to which Germany has exported the most every year since 1961, amounted to 103 billion euros.

The United Arab Emirates followed in third place, with exports totalling €89.3 billion.

France was always been seen as Germany's primary trading partner in the past, underlining the close political and economic ties between Europe's number one and number two economies.

But the weakness of the euro against the dollar and the pick up in the U.S. economy has boosted Germany's transatlantic trade.

Germany imported the most goods from China last year, worth €91.5 billion.

The Netherlands was second (€88.1 billion), France third (€67 billion).

## Finnish Parliament approves same-sex marriage legislation

Legislators in Finland have approved changes to the law to allow same-sex couples to convert registered partnerships into marriages by notifying the authorities.

The move is a follow up to previous laws that made marriage legislation gender neu-

tral.

Parliament voted in favour of the legislation by 106 votes to 42.

The move also eliminates registered partnerships for couples seeking to get hitched – they will now only have the option to get married.

Transgender people will no longer be required to be single

– not in a marriage or registered partnership – when their gender switch is recognised.

The changes approved are a follow up to the law on same-sex marriage, which made legislation covering marriage gender-neutral.

The changes will come into force in March 2017.

## OECD group faults Finland on combating bribery

A working group at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has reprimanded Finland for failing to implement anti-bribery measures.

It expressed "serious concern" about failings and difficulties in enforcing laws against bribing foreign officials.

Finland has enacted only six of 19 recommendations on combating bribery given by the group in 2010, and has trouble enforcing existing provisions against corruption.

The working group helps police enforcement of the OECD's Anti-Bribery Con-

vention.

"Finland has not introduced genuine whistleblower protections for those who – in good faith and on reasonable grounds – report suspected instances of foreign bribery," the group lamented.

"Moreover, companies are still not liable for false accounting offences, although Finland has recently informed the Working Group that a bill to correct this shortcoming is scheduled to be submitted to Parliament in the first half of 2016."

The group also expressed concern about Finland's poor enforcement record.

"Defendants have been acquitted of foreign bribery charges in all four of the

cases that have been finally concluded in Finland even though foreign public officials have been convicted in their home country for a bribery scheme connected with a Finnish company."

In 2014, Patria executives were acquitted of bribery in Finnish courts, even though Slovenian courts had convicted officials, including the then Prime Minister Janez Jansa, of corruption related to the deal.

The working group asked the Finnish government to submit a report outlining how it will implement OECD's recommendations.

If that report is not submitted, the group could consider "further measures".

## Study finds Finns having less sex



FINSEX research project, which has monitored the sex lives of Finns for more than 50 years, says they had less sex in 2015 in continuation of the decline over previous years.

The project, carried out by the Family Federation of Finland, covers "sexological research through surveys and studies on the adult population's sexual desires, values, behaviours, sexual problems, and sexual pleasures."

Its most recent report, for 2015, which was recently published, showed that the sharpest decrease in sexual intercourse was recorded for those aged between 30 and 40 years who are often in the "peak busy years" juggling family and children with work.

Compared with findings of the previous study in 2007, the decline of the amount of sex that started in the 2000s continues.

Karoliina Vuontoniemi, a sexuality therapist, said: "A decline in sex life is usually affected by daily things such as busy work

schedules, stress, raising children, or big life changes such as illness, unemployment, or a large project such as building a house."

Vuontoniemi, who works for the Sexpo Foundation which promotes sexual wellbeing in Finland, said a decline in the amount of sex should not be made into a big deal.

At different stages of life the amount of sex can fluctuate greatly, she added, and focusing on studies and averages is not productive.

The most sexually active groups include 20-year old women and 50-year old men, both of whom have sex on average one and a half times a week.

In other age categories, the average amount of sexual intercourse is once a week.

Only middle-aged men had slightly more sex in 2015 compared with 2007.

In other age categories for both women and men, the amount of sex decreased over previous years.



# PhotoNews



British High Commissioner to Nigeria, Paul Arkwright, and Minister for Information and Culture, Lai Mohammed.



L-R: Managing Director, *TheNiche*, Ikechukwu Amaechi; Rev. Oluwambe Toriola of Archbishop Vining Memorial Cathedral Church, Ikeja Lagos; and Executive Editor, *TheNiche*, Oguwike Nwachuku, when the cleric paid a working visit to Acclaim Communications Limited, publishers of *TheNiche*.



L-R: Founder, Adorable Social Club, Princess Ada-Okeke Amam; Chairperson, Caretaker Committee, *Adorable* Joyce Meteke; former Secretary, *Adorable* Ijeoma Ukpai; during the hand-over ceremony to the new leadership of the club.



Minister of Power, Works and Housing, Mr. Babatunde Fashola (right), discussing with Chief Executive Officer of Nigerian Economic Summit Group (NESG), Mr. Laoye Jaiyeola (2nd left); 1st Vice Chairman of NESG, Mrs. Sola David Borha (3rd left); 2nd Vice Chairman, Mr. Asue Ighodalo (4th left), during a courtesy visit to the Minister at the Conference Room of the Ministry of Power, Works and Housing Headquarters, Mabushi, Abuja.



L-R: Lagos State Permanent Secretary, Ministry for Local Government & Community Affairs, Mr. Jafar Sanuth; Commissioner for Information & Strategy, Mr. Steve Ayorinde; Commissioner for Local Government & Community Affairs, Mr. Muslim Folami; Special Adviser to the Governor on Community & Communications, Mr. Kehinde Bamigbetan; and Senior Special Assistant to the Governor on Community Affairs, *Alhaji* Tajudeen Quadri during the Y2016 Ministerial Press Briefing to commemorate the First Year in Office of Governor Akinwunmi Ambode, at the Bagauda Kaltho Press Centre, Alausa, Ikeja.



Governor Rochas Okorocha with the former Deputy Governor of the old Imo state, Chief Francis Orji (right) and Commandant General, Imo State Peace and Conflict Resolution Bureau, Engr. Peter Ohagwa, during the official launching of Imo Peace Advocate Corps.



R-L: Deputy Governor of Kogi State, Simeon Achuba; Governor of Borno State, Kashim Shettima; Governor Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi of Enugu; Governor Rochas Okorocha of Imo; Governor Rauf Aregbesola of Osun; Governor Badaru Abubakar of Jigawa; and Deputy Governor of Enugu, Mrs. Cecilia Ezeilo, when a delegation of APC governors came to condole with the people of Enugu over the attack by suspected Fulani herdsmen on Nimbo, at Government House, Enugu.



L-R: Hon. Ifeoma Oguine, Chairman, Peoples Club of Nigeria, Lagos chapter, Prince Chigoziem Chibeze; 2nd Vice Chairman, *Nze* Fredrick Ibe Ichie; and a member when Chibeze emerged chairman.

# Diplomacy

## Nigeria, Cameroon's further push against terror

The recent meeting of President Muhammadu Buhari and President Paul Biya of Cameroon inches to consolidate the collaboration against terror, writes Correspondent, SAM NWOKORO



Buhari and Biya

Last week, Cameroonian President, Paul Biya, was in Nigeria and held discussions with President Muhammadu Buhari on the future of both countries' collaborations against terrorism. The meeting would be the third between both leaders over ways of containing the migration of terrorists, especially Muslim fundamentalists between both countries.

Nigeria and Cameroon are neighbours, sharing borders that many see as porous. Most Cameroonians flock into Nigeria with cattle and other consumables, and since they speak Hausa fluently, it is most times taken that they are Nigerians.

Because of the poor surveillance apparatus of the Nigerian Immigration Service (NIS), it has been difficult to contain the influx of migrants into the country, especially from neighbouring West African countries. Nigeria also shares borders with West African like Chad, Niger and Benin Republic, which all have large population of Muslims. In recent times, fundamentalist uprisings sweeping through most West African countries led to high influx of fundamentalists.

Recently, a Nigerian abroad was arrested in the United Kingdom as a member of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS).

In Nigeria, the disturbances of the Fulani herdsman have spewed controversies regarding their true identity. While some

sections of the country say they are Nigerian Fulani, some say they are Fulani from neighbouring North African countries.

At the meet, sources say Buhari discussed the issue of security within the African sub-region with Biya. Top on the discussion was how to further empower the multinational task force fighting Boko Haram in the North East states under insurgency, and how the Cameroonian president was handling internally-displaced persons (IDPS), which was an off-shoot of the insurgency problem. A release issued earlier from the Presidency on Monday by Buhari's spokesman, Femi Adesina, said: "Cameroonian President Paul Biya is currently meeting behind closed doors with President Muhammadu Buhari at the Aso Rock Presidential Villa in Abuja."

Biya, who is on a two-day state visit to Nigeria, arrived the forecourt of the President's office about 2pm.

The Cameroonian leader was received by Buhari and some top government officials.

Biya was honoured with 21-gun salute before he proceeded to inspect a guard of honour mounted by men of the Guards Brigade.

Presidential spokesman, Femi Adesina, had stated on Monday that Buhari and Biya as well as their officials would confer on issues of common interest to Nigeria and Cameroon, including ongoing bilateral and regional cooperation against terrorism,

violent extremism and cross-border crimes.

He had also hinted that new agreements to strengthen existing ties as well as trade and economic relations between Nigeria and Cameroon will be concluded and signed before the end of Biya's visit.

According to Adesina, a joint communique on the visit and the talks between both presidents and their officials would be issued.

#### Common concern

Another issue Buhari and Biya discussed was the economic cooperation between both countries. In recent time, trade issues have dominated both countries' relations.

Nigerian oil merchants are alleged to use Cameroon as a base for siphoning imported fuel headed for Nigeria to other places, while the local consumers suffer.

Also, the issue of the Bakassi people of Nigeria living in Cameroon against their will following the signing of the Green Tree Agreement of 2010 that ceded that oil-rich island to Cameroon, no doubt, are future contentious issues facing both countries in their bilateral relations. The people of Bakassi have already instituted a case against the cession since 2012 at the United Nations Security Council, claiming that the cession violates UN's protocols on the right of person(s) to determine their nationality. They did not want to

belong to Cameroon and have not hidden this since the signing of the GTA that ceded Bakassi to Cameroon.

Appeal to the case comes up for hearing anytime next year, seven years after the ruling, which is the legal time limit any legal suit could stay without hearing.

No doubt, these and many more issues are of serious concern within the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) sub-region to which both Nigeria and Cameroon belong.

There has never been ease between the Cameroonians and the Nigerians in the Bakassi portion ceded to Cameroon. Many times, there have been allegations of maltreatment of those Nigerians, forceful citizenship of Cameroon and even forced labour and evacuation against the Cameroonian authorities. No doubt, these are issues that both leaders will have to be saddled with in the days to come.

#### Ambush

As though to pre-empt the case against the cession, Cameroon is reported to have commenced oil drilling in the Bakassi peninsula and is said to be about to commence production later this year. Obviously, such development rattles not only Nigeria, which had made several attempts to fight Cameroon over the Peninsula during the military regime, before the country went to world court.

A Nigerian government under President Muhammed Buhari, according to a scholar in international relations, Professor Sunday Obua, will not like to give up Bakassi so easily, knowing the security implication to the territorial integrity of Nigeria.

"That the country is already drilling oil around that area does not matter, after all there is a pending appeal against the opinion of the 13 justices of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) who adjudicated on the matter.

"People are not forced to live where they don't like. No referendum or plebiscite was conducted for Bakassi people asking them which country they want to belong to. That is against the UN protocol on rights of indigenous peoples.

"UN Security Council has the final say over the Bakassi issue, not Cameroon, not world court, not even Nigeria," he said.

Other areas of concern in Nigeria-Cameroon relations would be the security of their borders. Both countries have embarked on joint construction of security post at their border, to check arms smuggling, child trafficking and illegal bunkering. For a long time, these issues have dominated discussions between both countries and still continues to dominate.

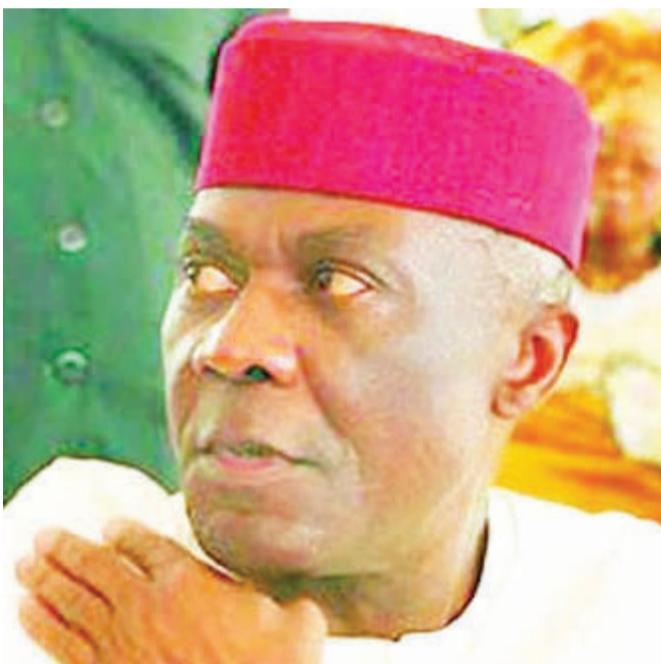


# Perspective

## Moyosore: A journey of discovery, reappraisal and rededication (2)



Abiola



Nzeribe



Dipo

By Chido Onumah

**K**nowing the relationship we had, I didn't anticipate my mum's reaction. The moment she returned and saw me, she yelled at me, asking if I wanted to kill her by going to play football considering my condition. For the first and only time in my life, I talked back to my mum. I replied that I was 17 and old enough to take care of myself. That further enraged her. I would apologise hours later, after refusing dinner, telling her that I only accompanied my cousins to the game. She said she was informed that I went to play football and wondered why I didn't tell her I was just a spectator. I replied that she didn't give me the opportunity to explain myself. We agreed that as soon as I was strong enough to travel, we would return to Lagos.

Lagos holds strong memories for me, though the chaos, noise, heavy traffic and general planlessness combine to fill me with dread each time I have to return there. As a pre-teen, I would sometimes skip school to tend my mother's stall each time she had to attend the regular meetings, in central Lagos, called by Abibatu Mogaji, then President-General, Association of Nigerian Market Women and Men. Interestingly, I was the only boy among the female pre-teens who would also stand in for their mothers. As a youngster, I insisted on working for my welfare allowance. So, during weekends and holidays, I would encourage my mum to buy me things to sell and I would "kiri" (a Yoruba word meaning to carry a tray filled with items on the head and sell in the neighbourhood) different items, mostly fruits – depending on the season. I made enough money to invest on newspapers and books. By the time I left high school in 1983 and had become too big to kiri, my mum made sure I never lacked 'pocket money'. Much of that money went to buying *The Guardian* newspaper which debuted that year and would change the trajectory of Nigerian journalism.

One of the fondest memories about my mum took place in 1995. After graduation, I had moved back to Lagos in search of work as a journalist. I started contributing to *The Punch* during my National Youth Service and would spend some time at *The Guardian* as a trainee reporter after service, then *Sentinel* magazine, before moving to ICNL, the parent company of *The News/Tempo* magazines which had just started a daily newspaper called *AM News*. I was reporting education, though my interest was politics. This was at the height of the brutal military dictatorship of the maniacal General Sani Abacha.

I had done a story on the secret foreign accounts of Abacha's second-in-command, Gen. Oladipo Diya, way before #PanamaPapers would expose the underbelly of global capitalism and the illicit financial activities

of companies and prominent individuals around the world, including past and present public officers in Nigeria, such as Gen. Theophilus Danjuma (rtd.), one of the ringleaders of the second military coup in Nigeria on July 29, 1966, a former Chief of Army Staff and later Minister of Defence, Gen. David Mark (rtd.), ex-Senate President; and Bukola Saraki, former governor of Kwara State and current President of the Nigerian Senate.

Abacha would later fall out with Diya, nicknamed the "Crying General" – after a video emerged showing him on his knees, weeping and pleading for leniency on being accused of conspiring to overthrow the Abacha regime. On this occasion, before the coup allegation that condemned Diya, first to death, and later, to life imprisonment, the story on the cover of *AM News* had alleged that Gen. Diya maintained foreign accounts which had fallen into the hands of fraudsters. Abacha was aghast. As the mindless looting that took place under his murderous regime came to light, it became clear that his shock had to do with the fact that someone else was beating him to his game. The day after the story was published, about five operatives of the State Security Service (SSS) arrived *AM News* as I was preparing my story for the following day and arrested me. I was taken to the SSS headquarters at Shangisha on the outskirts of central Lagos and detained for eight days.

While the story of my arrest was widely reported, my dad and siblings made sure they kept it from my mum. I used to visit her once or twice a week, sometimes before work, and at other times after work, depending on my schedule as a reporter. As the days rolled by and I hadn't visited, she enquired from my siblings if they had heard from me. They were able to convince her that indeed they had heard from me and that I had indicated I would visit. By the end of the week, she had become very apprehensive. She had genuine reasons to be concerned. We had endless discussions about the dangers of my job. In his attempt to legitimise his regime, Abacha had declared war on journalists and human rights activists.

I went straight to the office to inform my bosses the evening I was released. I was given the day off and I went immediately to visit my mum. I imagined the different questions and scenarios that would play out the moment I saw her. Though I had lost a few pounds from not eating the miserable food that was served once or twice a day at the detention centre, I didn't think I was too dishevelled to betray the fact that I was in detention. I barely slept while in detention, partly because there was no bed, and partly because my interrogators kept prodding me, morning, afternoon and night, to retract my story in order to facilitate my release.

The moment I appeared before my mum, she took one look at me, inquired why I did not visit her the week before and intoned that I looked like someone who

had just been released from prison. I smiled and replied in a jocular way that she was right; that I had just been released from detention. I sensed a feeling of betrayal, from my siblings. Then I complimented her clairvoyance before narrating my experience in detention.

I learnt many life lessons from my mum. If ever there is one disappointment I have in life, it is that she did not live to see my family: her daughter-in-law and grandchildren. I remember on many occasions we would talk about love, family and relationship. At the end of such discussion, she would say in that tone only a doting mother would use that she would not interfere in my marriage and that she would not visit my home unless she was expressly invited by my spouse and me. She was sincere about it, but she would add that she knew, considering my disposition, she could not win that battle even if she wanted to act the proverbial "mother-in-law from hell".

I remember my sibling with whom I shared laughter, love, affection, and many childhood pranks; my childhood best friends, Ben Ogazi and Kennedy Etoroma were a constant source of inspiration. Kennedy and I would share a flat much later in Festac Town after graduation. Initially called "Festival Town" or "Festac Village", Festac Town, the magnificent housing estate along the Lagos-Badagry Expressway, was built by the military regime of Olusegun Obasanjo to house participants of the Second World Festival of Black Arts and Culture in 1977. After the festival, the 5,000 dwelling units were handed over to Nigerians who participated in a ballot. Festac Town was, as Andrew Apter noted in *The Pan-African Nation: Oil and the Spectacle of Culture in Nigeria*, "intended to evoke the modern age and the promise of state-sponsored economic development fuelled by oil".

My high school was just opposite what was known as the 2nd Gate of Festac, and my friends and I enjoyed walking to school because of the scenic view. Sometimes, on our way from school, we would sit and chat on benches with trees along the well-paved streets providing adequate protection from the sun. Anyone who wants to understand the tragic paradox called Nigeria, our knack for abuse of systems and processes need look no further than Festac Town. Today, less than four decades after it was opened, that once serene and picturesque estate has degenerated into a slum.

One of the most interesting people I came across during high school was my principal, the late Chief (Mrs.) Bolaji Aduke Awoboh-Pearse. Mrs. Pearse, as we called her, was a mother away from home. She took me and other raw pre-teen boys who arrived Awori Ajeromi Grammar School in September 1978 under her tutelage and refined us in character and learning. Rather than flog us, she would cry – as a sign of disappointment – each time we pulled a prank deserving of punishment like when a few of my friends and I went to

swim in a stream after school.

The late Pa Alfred Poopola Jaiyesimi adopted me as one of his sons and opened a vista of interest in politics, history and the struggle for Independence. Dr. Lambert Onumaegbu was my earliest encounter with the world of intellectualism. My cousin, Chief Ibem Onumaegbulam, the older brother I never had, saw me through university.

I salute my comrades – the cadres of the Movement for a Progressive Nigeria (MPN) – at the University of Calabar (UNICAL) where I mastered the art of insurrection and agitation. Regrettably, it was not until I arrived UNICAL that I first became aware of the role of ethnic consciousness (even among intellectuals) in the stymieing of the Nigerian dream. As part of the rites of passage for fresh students, we were entreated to join, depending on where you claimed to come from, one of the many "Parapo" or ethnic associations on campus that served no meaningful purpose other than to magnify our fault lines as a nation.

We fought many battles against this parochialism. Our other exploits, including the planned take-over of a radio station in Calabar, during the Orkar coup of April 22, 1990, could have cost us our lives. The "canon of the movement", Austin "Canoways" Emaduku, rallied Malabites (male students of UNICAL) to rescue me when I was abducted by reactionary forces one early morning in those turbulent days.

Moyosoreoluwa! I thank God for life and His mercies. On this occasion of the golden jubilee of my birth, I rededicate myself to the destruction of that system, no matter what its purveyors call it, that seeks to enslave the workers of the world; to "the categorical imperative to overthrow all circumstances in which the human being is humiliated, enslaved, abandoned, and despised!"

I pledge to Nigeria; however, not Nigeria in its extremely dysfunctional state. I commit to a new, progressive, and egalitarian Nigeria where citizens will be defined not by their name, language, faith, or ethnicity; where citizens will find fulfilment no matter which part of the country they come from; above all, a Nigeria where every Nigerian can live in peace, go to school, work, raise a family and run for office wherever they choose. I believe that Nigeria is possible!

(Concluded)

• Onumah, an author, is Coordinator of the African Centre for Media & Information Literacy (AFRICMIL).

# Civil Society Platform

## WPFDD: How free is Nigerian press?



Idayat Hassan



Steven Ellis



sagay

United Nations General Assembly declared May 3 as World Press Freedom Day (WPFDD). As Nigeria joined other nations to mark the day, stakeholders gave their verdict on Nigeria vis-à-vis press freedom. Senior Correspondent, ON-YEWUCHI OJINNAKA, compiles their views.

In the beginning The World Press Freedom Day (WPFDD) was proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in 1993 following recommendations of United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) general conference. Since then, May 3 is celebrated as press freedom day. It is celebrated yearly worldwide to evaluate press freedom, to defend the media from attacks on their independence and to pay tribute to journalists who lost their lives while carrying out their professional duties.

### 2016 WPFDD focus

The theme of 2016 WPFDD is 'Access to Information and Fundamental Freedom: This is your Right'. As enunciated by UNESCO/UN, this year's WPFDD focuses on three different aspects of press freedom – freedom of information as a fundamental freedom and as a human right; protecting press freedom from censorship and surveillance overreach; and ensuring safety for journalism online and offline.

Tip from IPI

The International Press Institute (IPI) in Vienna joined the world in celebrating WPFDD. In his address to mark the occasion, IPI Director of Advocacy and Communications, Steven Ellis, posited that press freedom "is necessary to creating just and fair societies". He acknowledged and commended the bravery of journalists who put their lives on the line to tell important stories. He also noted that the primary challenge journalists face is protecting their safety. He solicited steps to ensure that crimes against journalists do not enjoy impunity.

### In Nigeria...

Nigeria joined its counterparts around the globe to commemorate the 2016 WPFDD with an event in Abuja where all stakeholders were urged to join forces to promote press freedom. At the event, the United Nations called on public institutions to adopt proactive disclosure of information as a step to increasing public participation.

According to UN, "the World Press Freedom Day aims to raise awareness on the importance of an independent press.

"This year coincides with the

250th anniversary of the world's first freedom of information law and 25th anniversary of the adoption of the Windhoek declaration of press freedom principles in Africa.

"Press freedom and access to information are essential to democracy and to sustainable development."

In Lagos, the Nigerian Union of Journalists (NUJ), in collaboration with United States Embassy, held a conference to discuss the importance of press freedom in Nigeria. Among issues discussed at the conference were access to information, combating censorship, press freedom and strategy of journalists.

Also speaking at the event in Lagos, the West African Programme Officer of Ford Foundation, Paul Nwulu, used the occasion to solicit payment of salaries to journalists by media owners.

Decrying the non-payment of salaries, he noted that journalism is one of the toughest professions in Nigeria today, enjoining media owners in the country to ensure that journalists working for them are paid regularly and when due.

"In most media houses, journalists are owed six months to one

year salaries. The press has the responsibility to hold government accountable to the people, and that is why the press has to be free; but the press does not really have the freedom today," Nwulu explained.

He charged media owners not to abandon journalists working for them when they are persecuted or attacked over a report that was published or broadcast.

While speaking on 'Contemporary issues of Press Freedom in the Digital Age', Nwulu identified digitalisation as one of the factors affecting the media, due to its wide audience.

"Digitalisation has brought both blessing and curse. It is a curse because it is taking money away, and whether we like it or not, money is a problem to the freedom of press.

"Today everybody is a journalist. When there is a news break, people will quickly go to the social media, like Linda Ikeji who is not a journalist, and we need to stop that," he stressed.

### Assessment of press by activists

TheNiche sought the views of activists on freedom of the press

since the enthronement of democracy in Nigeria.

Kunle Idowu of Nigerian Network of NGOs said that the press is free in Nigeria apart from self-censorship.

He said: "The press is free. There are no draconian laws and the government has not much interfered with press freedom."

He submitted that the press has to do more advocacy and fight for its right because freedom is not given on a platter of gold.

"Nigerian journalists are very complacent due to maybe poverty or other hard issues. They cannot fight for their rights any more unlike what was obtainable during the colonial days," said he.

He was of the view that journalists are not behaving as they should as the fourth estate of the realm. "You go for freedom, you fight for freedom; freedom is not given on a platter of gold," Idowu added.

Executive Director of Civil Society Network Against Corruption (CIS-NAC), Lanre Suraj, submitted that freedom of the press comprises political and economic freedom. "In terms of economic freedom,

# Civil Society Platform



Akin Akingbulu

practitioners are subjected to bondage. They are owed salaries for months. Lack of job security and economic security affect the practice of journalism."

Suraj observed that there are also political influences. He pointed out that our politics is not based on ideology. He posited that politician who play politics of the stomach use the press for their selfish end.

Adetokunbo Mumuni, of Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP) stressed that the Nigerian press is the freest in Africa, except for some lazy practitioners. He however said that freedom of the press used to be very poor, but not anymore, as no media house is under lock and key for criticising government.

"Under the present regime, the press has not been gagged, although under the administration of former President Goodluck Jonathan, the State Security Services (SSS) raided some media houses," he noted.

A professor of law, Senior

Advocate of Nigeria (SAN) and activist, Professor Itse Sagay, was emphatic in saying that the Nigerian press is one of the best in the world in terms of freedom and practice. "Nigeria has one of the best press in the world by any democratic standard, be it in Europe, Asia or America. Nigerian press is one of the freest."

#### FoI compliance

One of the ingredients of free press is having an unhindered access to information which was provided by the Freedom of Information (FoI) Act 2011.

On whether there is compliance with the Act, the Executive Director of Institute for Media and Society, Akin Akingbulu, observed that compliance was not satisfactory on the part of government. He pointed out that very many government agencies were not complying, as they refuse to give information to the citizens who need them. Some state governments have gone to court to challenge the implementation of the Act.



Nwulu

For journalists, so many journalists are not very much aware of the Act. "I expect journalists to have a copy of the Act. The level of usage within the media is not high as expected."

He commended the passage of the Act, adding that civil society organisations and media employers should help journalists get copies of FOI Act.

Akingbulu noted that even local governments refuse to give out information, rather they go to court and await the court's pronouncement which takes longer time, and the need for the information may lapse.

Kunle Idowu opined that if government refuses to comply, it is left for the press to go to court and fight for it.

"Government would not want to disclose what it regards as secret, but the press should go extra mile to fight for it. Go to court," he stressed.

Suraj posited that compliance with the FOI Act "has been very abysmal, below standard", noting that agencies were not responding and the ministries not living up to expectation. "The compliance or responses is very low, less than 10 per cent. There is need to review the contents of the Act, to remove the bottleneck that makes journalists not to get the desired responses."

He decried the attitude of journalists on the usage of the FOI Act.

"There is no proactive and investigative journalism. But given the circumstances of the working environment, journalists are not encouraged to perform their duties as it ought to be.

"There is the need for mass action, demand and advocacy if journalists are to live up to their task of re-

porting accurately. Journalists need a lot in improving journalism," he said.

The Executive Director of Abuja-based Centre for Democracy and Development, Mrs. Idayat Hassan, said the truth of the matter is that journalists find it difficult to access information from states and local governments.

"They should challenge it in court, so as to get the right information for the benefit of the citizens," she expressed.

Mumuni remarked: "You cannot be talking of compliance when Nigerians are not asking for information. Very few journalists may have attempted it, except some NGOs." He posited that Nigerian press has not been using the FOI Act to demand information. "I submit that they are very insignificant. Are Nigerians courageous enough to demand compliance of FOI Act?" he asked.

Professor Sagay noted that compliance had been fairly reasonable, adding that where it is being resisted, people go to court to obtain justice or court pronouncement for the release of information requested or required by any person.

Meanwhile, in solidarity with journalists on WPF, the Nigerian government has stated that it would not stifle press freedom in the country.

## Finland tops World Press Freedom index – PM Sipil

By Nnanna Okere  
Special Correspondent,  
Helsinki

**F**inland's Prime Minister, Juha Sipil, has pointed out that for the past five years, Finland has been ranked first in the World Press Freedom Index released by 'Reporters without Borders'.

According to the index, freedom of the press in Finland is based on strong legal foundations that are supported by a genuine culture of the rights of the individual.

Speaking on the WPF, he stressed that the responsibilities and freedom should go together to uphold transparency in every sector.

Sipila noted that transparency and freedom of expression are the best means to fight corruption.

"Finland is one of the least corrupt countries in the world and this correlates, I believe, with the high level of freedom of the press in our society," said the PM at the inaugural ceremony of the WPF in Helsinki.

He disclosed that good governance means openness and transpar-

ency, and that citizens must demand it.

"Citizens, politicians and public authorities alike have an interest in an independent and professional media. We need good journalism that is based on facts and accuracy.

"We are all aware that both traditional media and social media are being used today to spread disinformation as well.

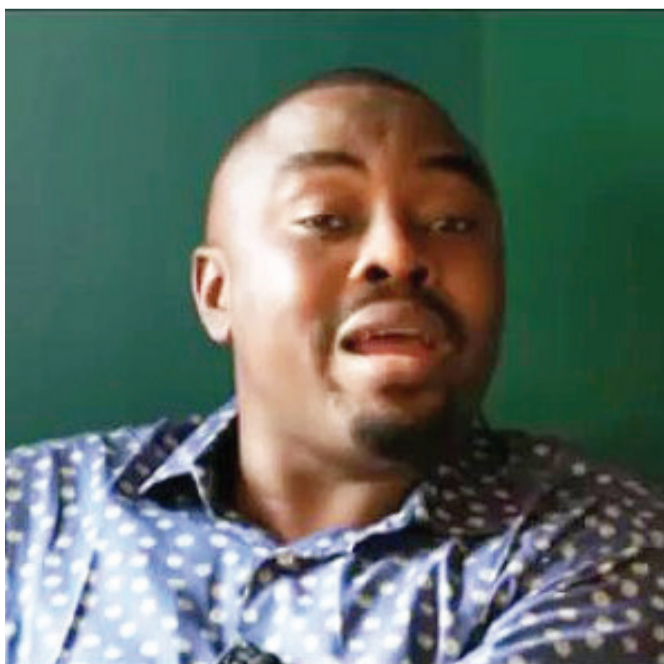
The best way to fight against this is to ensure that the conditions under which media professionals operate allow for diverse and independent high-quality communications," said Sipil, adding that enhancing media literacy skills is also important.

This freedom of information act was also the most liberal one of its time, and it abolished political censorship and made it permissible to engage in political debate, including criticism of ruling groups. It also guaranteed public access to official documents.

The stressed on ensuring the freedom of expression to ensure democratic spirit of the society and fight against corruption.



L-R: Prime Minister Juha Sipil, Former President Tarja Halonen and UNESCO Director-General Irina Bokova during World Press Freedom Day in Helsinki



International

# Five Saudi imperial projects the West has slept through (2)



Salah Abdelsalam, mastermind of the Paris attacks



Abu Shekau, Boko Haram leader



Saudi king, Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud



Abu Bakr al Baghdadadi, ISIS leader



Bin Laden

By Stanley A. Weiss and Terence Ward

• Continues from the edition of April 24, 2016.

Two common elements

The two elements that all five imperial projects share are Saudi financing (private and governmental), and the Wahhabi creed – extremist, fundamentalist, and exclusionist.

This creed is surprisingly new to Islam. Only 200 years old, it carries the name of its firebrand founder, Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab. The Christian equivalent would be a union of two groups: the Jehovah Witness and the Ku Klux Klan.

The Wahhabi creed views all other Muslims as deviant heretics, deserving no mercy. Moderate Sunnis, Sufis, Shia, Ismailis, Druze, Yazidis, Alawites, even the whirling dervishes are all enemies, fallen Muslims.

Of course, non-Muslims fall under the same umbrella of loathing and apostasy. No common humanity exists. There is no dialogue possible. Their Shariah is the only covenant. Non-believers are expendable.

Wahhabism on global mission of conversion

Make no mistake; the Saudi Wahhabis are on a global mission of conversion.

Their dream is to change forever a faith that once was tolerant, when Christians, Jews, and Muslims lived side by side in the cosmopolitan Levant's multi-cultural mélange of dia-

lects and faiths from Alexandria to Beirut, from Damascus to Istanbul.

Yet, in the non-Arabic world of Southeast Asia – in Indonesia with over 190 million Muslim faithful – the mood is different.

Islam arrived there with Persian and Gujarati merchants who sailed into tropical ports with their mystical Sufi faith. This is why Islam spread so quickly. Had the merchants offered the rigid Wahhabi message instead, there would have been no buyers.

Now, it is only in Indonesia that a repudiation of the Islamic State has surfaced from Indonesia's NU party that numbers 50 million Muslims.

Their recent film of ISIS beheadings features the voice-over of former Indonesian president, Abdurrahman Wahid, singing a Javanese mystical poem: "Many who memorize the Quran and Hadith love to condemn others as infidels while ignoring their own infidelity to God, their hearts and minds still mired in filth."

This campaign for a liberal, pluralistic Islam comes from a country with a rich Hindu and Buddhist past, where Sunnis and Shias live together in harmony. This Islam stresses non-violence, inclusiveness and acceptance of other religions.

Antidote to jihadism

All commentators and pundits who ask for a "Reformation in Islam", need look no further. This Islam exists in Indonesia. And it is the antidote to jihadism.

Few know that for 1,000 years Mecca was the centre of the Sufi uni-

verse, where music, dance and ecstatic prayer celebrated the divine and faithful gathered at shrines of saints.

When the Wahhabi-backed House of Saud took full control of Hijaz, Mecca and Medina in 1924, the state of Saudi Arabia was established with Wahhabism as its official religion.

In less than 100 years, the Saud family and their Wahhabi benefactors erased that rich, mystic past as well as historical sites like the Prophet's house in Mecca and that of his daughter Fatimeh. The homes of the Prophet's wives' are now parking lots.

For all those pilgrims on Hajj, Mecca has been cleansed of its multi-cultural history.

Virtually every aspect and corner of modern Islam has now been penetrated by Wahhabi influence, thanks to \$200 billion spent over the last 30 years in a strategic campaign to promote Wahhabism around the world.

Saudi money silences media criticism

Thousands of madrasas – funded by Saudis – have indoctrinated countless young minds with their "pure Wahhabi Islam" in Belgium, France, Holland, Germany, Bosnia, Kosovo, and the United Kingdom as well as the Arab World.

At the moment, the economies of the Middle East and North Africa are not creating job opportunities for tens of millions of young students of both sexes who are the ones most easily vulnerable to be converted and recruited.

In turn, Saudi money has strategi-

cally silenced virtually all criticism in the international media.

Saudi ownership of the largest Arab media outlets (newspapers, magazines, and TV channels) has been crucial in keeping their imperial projects from being discussed openly in the Arab World.

Saudi money silences Western politicians

And Saudi and Qatari money has bought the deafening silence of Western politicians.

Robust sales of military weaponry and prime real estate in major capitals from Rome to Paris and London, has quieted any visible critics. Quite simply, they are not published.

With each passing day, the royal house of Saud plays a dangerous double game – posing as allies of the West, while allowing funding to pour into the terrorist networks. This way they keep criticism from zealous Wahhabi clerics at bay.

Sicilians pay for "protection" in Palermo the same way.

Ironically, over 10 years ago, on July 13, 2005, United States Treasury Undersecretary, Stuart Levey, pointed out that rich Saudi individuals were a "significant source" of global Islamist terror funding. Today, nothing has changed.

Chilling conclusions

The conclusions are chilling. Until the Saudi religious roots in today's crisis are unearthed and examined in the cold light of day, history will only

repeat itself from Raqqa to Paris, from Riyadh to Brussels, from Karachi to San Bernardino.

As George Soros reminds us, we also live in an "Age of Fallibility". Our assumptions of reality must be re-assessed each day. Turning a blind eye to Saudi Arabia's imperial ambitions since 9/11 has led us to this moment of reflection.

Meanwhile, Western leaders should take note of the courageous Indonesians who so profoundly denounce ISIS and Wahhabism. There is indeed a grand difference between Muslims.

Unless the Saudis show tolerance and allow churches, temples and synagogues to be built in Arabia (which is highly unlikely), the E and the US should take a firm position and legally impose a ban on all Saudi funding – public and private – destined for mosques and Muslim schools.

American leaders need to openly speak about Wahhabism (just as they did with Baathism) and end the deafening silence purchased by petro-dollars.

From Capital Hill to Foggy Bottom, an oft-whispered claim insists that the royal family is the lesser of two evils. This smacks of irony. The House of Saud has always been Wahhabi.

Now, the West must wake to the coming storm.

And, we all must pray that no conspiracy is afoot within Pakistan's Intelligence Agency – with its own embedded Wahhabi sympathisers – to offer ISIS their ultimate dream: a nuclear weapon that could become the mother of all suicide bombs.

• Culled from www.huffingtonpost.com



# Politics

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**Big Issue:** PDP and challenge of 2019 politics

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## Herdsmen attack, reminder of pogrom years – Egboka

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Veteran Biafran soldier and former Vice Chancellor of Nnamdi Azikiwe University (NAU), Awka, Prof. Boniface Egboka, speaks on the recent invasion of Enugu community by Fulani herdsmen, additional states for South East and dangers of creating grazing routes for herders in the southern parts of the country, among other issues in this interview with Special Correspondent, OKEY MADUFORO.

# interview

## Herdsman attack, reminder of pogrom years – Egboka

**T**here is this allegation that since the attack on Nimbo community in Enugu State, South East National Assembly members have not taken a bold stance on the issue. How do you feel with the development?

Honestly, with the unfolding events and incidents that have continued to affect the interest of the South East geopolitical zone, one wonders the role of our representatives in the House of Representatives and the Senate. Our people are not talking. They are not making much comments and contributions.

There has, for instance, been strong demand for creation of more states in the South East zone. But it all seems as if nothing is being done about that. We elected them to go out there and speak on our behalf, but I am yet to get the most favourable results so far.

We had talked and canvassed about Lagos/Calabar rail line that would further link us with even some parts of the North with other states in the South East. All we hear or witness is the type of politics being played with that all-important project.

Our people do not understand the importance of that project to the South East and the South South. With that rail line, the pressure on our federal highways would reduce drastically. We are all aware of the state of our roads and the attendant state of dilapidation, occasioned by the pressure of heavy duty vehicles and other vehicles. Our National Assembly members should work with their colleagues to actualise that project. I even learnt that this project was put in our budget and later stories came around that it was withdrawn from the budget. The controversy it has generated has not even helped matters in this present circumstance.

Some people, I believe, are somewhere working against our interest, and this does not speak well of our democracy at all. It also does not speak well of our national unity as a country. Our National Assembly members should always brace up for the tasks ahead.

A similar matter here is the second Niger Bridge which has been a sing-song. At some point, we heard that contract had been awarded for that project, and a lot of politics followed it. Now we hear

that our budget was tampered with and the second Niger Bridge was affected. These are issues that must be addressed in our country's interest.

But I am not doing a total write-off on our National Assembly members. I know that the likes of Uche Ekwunife, Joy Emordi, Enyinnaya Abaribe and the late Uche Chukwumerije had at one point or another made meaningful contributions at the National Assembly. But more needs to be done. I also know that they need the support of their colleagues from other zones to succeed.

That indeed reminds us about the need for the creation of more states in the South East, currently with five states. We only have 15 senators. Also, the number of House of Representatives members from the zone is too small compared to the number from other zones.

With more states in the South East, it will increase the number of representatives from the zone in the National Assembly. The exercise will also increase number of local government areas and

number of House of Assembly seats in the area.

It is my suggestion that Ohanaeze Ndigbo and other pan-Igbo organisations should be more focused towards actualising these dreams and ambitions. I must say at this point that the South East is the sick baby of the federation. Will the Lagos/Calabar rail line suffer the same fate with second Niger Bridge? What about the power station at Ala-Oji?

If you make your research, you will discover that many large-scale, medium-scale and small-scale industries have closed shop due to epileptic power supply, and you know that the number of unemployed people has been on the increase.

We had the Oji Power Station in Enugu State before the Civil War and it served the old Eastern Region. It can be revived, so that we have other sources of power and reduce the pressure on the national power services.

My humble submission is that our people should be more proactive and





# interview



They should have cattle in ranches. Government should build ranches and not to come down to the South to facilitate desert encroachment. If you go to Egypt and other parts of Europe, they have ranches. They should supply grasses and not to push deforestation down the South.

women.

Kaduna State governor, Nasir el-Rufai, is wrong by saying that grazing is part of Fulani culture. So, what that means is that they can go to any part of Nigeria with cattle and graze. This is unacceptable to us in the South East.

We are farmers. Before the advent of crude oil, our people relied greatly on agriculture as our source of economic sustenance and up till now agriculture is still part of our life. You cannot come all the way from the North to destroy our farms on the grounds that Fulani culture is grazing. Who is ready to part with his or her farmland or ancestral land in the name of grazing? There is the need for us as Nigerians to be mindful of some statements that are inimical to our corporate existence.

We are yet to address the Boko Haram issue in Nigeria and the Fulani herdsmen have come into the stage. This goes to question the state of security in Nigeria and the safety of our people in this part of the country.

How do you think grazing in the South would affect the region?

What it means is that when we are talking about afforestation, the federal government is talking about deforestation.

not being fallow. When you study the North, you will also discover that they and the West are more proactive than our people. I was in the Constituent Assembly before and we had people like Babagana Kingibe, Segun Osoba and we know the role they played for their people.

Fulani herdsmen's attack is not the first of such occurrences. Curiously, the Igbo are mostly the targets in such situations. How do you feel about the whole thing?

It has been a constant issue in Nigeria. When you hear of religious riot, the worst hit are the Igbo because we are everywhere. If there is a problem in Lagos, everybody goes to Idumota Market, Alaba International Market and Ladipo Market where our people do business and we have continued to lose a lot. Today we hear of the attacks on our people by the Fulani herdsmen.

These are people who are more of cattle men. Now they carry guns and attack our villages, kill people and rape our

When you look at Lake Chad Basin, you will discover that it was not the same 15 to 20 years ago. It was a large lake, but now it has lost 90 per cent of its water and will soon dry out.

They should have cattle in ranches. Government should build ranches and not to come down to the South to facilitate desert encroachment. If you go to Egypt and other parts of Europe, they have ranches. They should supply grasses and not to push deforestation down the South.

That was how it all started and our brothers and sisters were killed in the North. Pregnant women had their wombs ripped and children slaughtered. This time around, it is happening in the South East and our senators and House of Representatives members are watching. This is yet another way of telling us that we are war captives and we must remain a conquered race.

People may think that it is one of those things; but sooner or later, we shall come to terms with the realities of the undercurrent.

I saw the pogrom and I saw the war. I saw people suffer. I saw hunger. I saw frustration. I saw orphans. I saw psychological distress. There was pogrom and those things are still happening now.

Do you see possibility of another Civil War, going by the turn of events?

We have fought the war and we learnt

our lessons from the war. We are not talking about another war, but there is that urgent need to address issues that led to the Civil War. We had the constitutional conference. Such issues and other related matters were raised and resolutions made. That should also be a good working document for our country.

At this stage of our polity, we should be asking ourselves very pertinent questions about our cooperate existence. That would be better for our country and not going into another civil war.

Any part of the country that is calling for a civil war should go ahead and fight, but not with us, the Igbo. We have had our own share of the civil war and we actually made our point. All we need now is to talk to ourselves and find a better way of bettering our condition and not going to war.

After the war, they said 'no victor no vanquished' and we accepted all that. But today we know the victor and we also know the vanquished. So going to war is out of consideration because we, the Igbo, saw it all during that war.

# Big Issue

## PDP and challenge of 2019 politics

Opposition Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) needs to do more work, if its desire to wrest power from the All Progressives Congress (APC) is to be actualised, Editor, Politics/Features, EMEKA ALEX DURU, writes.



Ali Modu Sherif



Secondus



Ekweremadu

If developments within the opposition Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), last week, were anything to go by, the party needs to work harder in its bid to wrest power from the All Progressives Congress (APC) in 2019.

Ordinarily, the ward and local government congresses of the party, which had commenced two weeks ago, should have provided hope for its agenda. But on the contrary, confusion seems to be the order of the day in various state chapters of the party.

But the dust raised by the congresses pales to nothing compared with disputations over the zoning formula released by the party for its national offices. Among the positions in contention are the offices of the national chairman and the deputy national chairman.

Repackaging a fallen giant

PDP had, after a fatal outing in the March 2015 general election, sold impressions of having learnt from its mistake. Thus, in a bid to forge a common front in re-building the party ahead of 2019 general election, its leadership had embarked on resolution of outstanding disputes among its members. In going about the exercise, the leaders claimed genuine intention to

correct all ill-feelings caused by selection of candidates based on sentiments as well as re-balance the power sharing formula that would be based on merit.

The moves, it had been stated, would ensure acceptable formula in picking the party's flag-bearers in future elections. In that regard, the National Working Committee (NWC) of the party had examined its low performance in the 2015 election and agreed on some core issues that would move it forward.

North East picks chairmanship seat

Part of the exercise was in asking the North East Zone to complete its term (tenure) as the National Chairman of the party till March 2016 when the National Convention was originally scheduled to hold.

TheNiche investigation identified the offer as falling into the moves to unite the aggrieved members of the party ahead of the Presidential election in 2019 which it has vowed to reclaim.

Former Bauchi State governor, Adamu Mu'azu, had assumed the position of PDP National Chairman, shortly before the 2015 general elections. But following the inability of his team to return the party to victory, there were demands from members of the party on him to go. In respecting the prevailing

opinion, the former governor threw in the towel.

With his exit, Uche Secondus, National Deputy Chairman, took over the mantle of leadership in acting capacity. But following a court process initiated by former President Goodluck Jonathan's aide, Ahmed Gulak, Secondus was thrown out.

To guard against vacuum in the leadership of the party, former and serving governors on its platform picked Ali Modu Sherif, erstwhile Borno governor, as the new chairman.

Aside encouraging the North East to complete its tenure for national chairmanship, other moves were made to ensure stability in the party.

In one of such efforts, a committee led by the Deputy Senate President, Ike Ekweremadu, had zoned the party's Presidential ticket to the North. The deduction by many was that by that concession, technically, the National Chairman of the party would come from the southern part of the country.

Even as the committee was silent on zoning the chairmanship, it was gleaned from standard practice that the party would not do the contrary. The estimation was that, by that, the zoning of other positions would follow in a manner that would give way for rebuilding the party.

Hope dashed?

Contrary to the hopes raised by the efforts at re-packaging the party, zoning arrangement released by its leadership last week appeared to be another hurdle it must overcome ahead its May 21 Convention, taking place in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

The zoning structure is as follows: National Chairman (North East), Deputy National Chairman (South South), National Secretary (South West), Deputy National Secretary (North Central), National Legal Adviser (North West), Deputy National Legal Adviser (South South), National Treasurer (South South), Deputy National Treasurer (North West), National Financial Secretary (North Central), Deputy National Financial Secretary (South East), National Woman Leader (North West), Deputy National Woman Leader (South South), National Auditor (South West), Deputy National Auditor (North East), National Publicity Secretary (South West), Deputy National Publicity Secretary (North Central), National Organising Secretary (South East), Deputy National Organising Secretary (North Central), National Youth Leader (South East), Deputy National Youth Leader (North West).

The arrangement followed the approval, by National Executive Committee (NEC) of the party, of

the zoning of offices as recommended by the Governor Emmanuel Udom-led committee which retained the office of the PDP National Chairman in the North East.

Observers note that following the intrigues that came into play in arriving at the controversial structure, all clogs that may stop Sheriff from contesting for the office of the chairman of the party on May 21 may have been removed by the NEC.

More battles ahead

This may not however be as easy as those that worked out the arrangement may have envisaged. In some of the zones, for instance, there have been agitations either on offices allotted them or those angling to occupy such.

In apparent anticipation of the fall-out of the exercise, PDP is said to have fixed May 14 deadline for all the geo-political zones and state chapters of the party to resolve their differences over national offices zoned to them.

The date, which makes it one week to national convention of the party, it was learnt, was to enable them put their acts together and speak with one voice at the convention.

On the surface, the party seemed foresighted, given the cocktail of crises in some of its state chapters.



Jonathan



George



TheNiche, however, gathered that the riot act from the party was to rein in members from South West and South South who have been kicking over the posts of national chairman and deputy national chairman.

Party chieftains from South West have insisted that with the presidency of the party already zoned to the North, the position of chairman should ordinarily come to the zone. This is especially as the South South had just held office of Deputy National Chairman and the South East positioned for Vice Presidency.

Former Deputy National Chairman of the party and one-time military governor of Ondo State, Olabode George, alluded to the dissatisfaction of members from the South West on the zoning formula.

While speaking on the issue last week, George recalled: "After the elections, the National Working Committee set up this special committee headed by Senator Ekweremadu to look into why we lost the elections. One of the recommendations was that, at least for 2019, the presidential slot should go back to the North.

"What is happening now is that the report has been given that the president should come from the North. It has been approved. Automatically, the chairmanship of the party must come to the South."

For the South South, the tension centres on the person to occupy the slot allotted to the zone. Part of the understanding by members was that in constituting a new NWC for the party, old national office holders would not be returned to office. Our reporter however learnt that there were surreptitious moves to return Secondus to the position of Deputy National Chairman.

Elsewhere, NWC, had, last Wednesday, cancelled the ward congresses in Adamawa, Lagos and Osun states. It also announced the dissolution of the committees it set up to conduct the congresses in those states. The directive was

contained in a statement issued by the Party's National Organising Secretary, Abubakar Mustapha.

The re-scheduled exercise was expected to continue in these states from Friday, May 6.

#### Return to the tracks

Concerned members of the party, who have been following the uncertain trend in the unfolding developments, liken the situation to the return of impunity in the conduct of its affairs. They are already interpreting the developments as repeat of the petty politics that characterised the party's 2012 Abuja convention that witnessed the controversial selection of Bamanga Tukur as its national chairman.

That opaque exercise is what informed analysts locate as the root of the crisis that led to the party's poor showing in 2015 elections.

At the March 24, 2012 National Convention of the party, major positions were parcelled out to favoured candidates of Jonathan in a consensus arrangement that analysts considered highly undemocratic.

Curiously, while preparations for the convention peaked, the party hierarchy had sold impressions of a party that had exited from its past that was characterised by intrigues in the conduct of its affair.

Even, Jonathan had assured that the party would conduct the exercise in line with standard practice. Though there were doubts in some quarters on matching his words with action, there was visible air of enthusiasm among ordinary party members that the years of imposition in its fold were gone.

In fact, for these hapless members, there were hopes that internal democracy, which was almost stifled, would be re-invented. With this euphoria, estranged chieftains of the party, who were chiselled out of its mainstream by the dictatorial tendencies of the time, began

to nurse a dream of the party returning to the ideals of its forebears.

Hopes of a reformed party were however dashed when, few hours to the convention, words filtered out that Tukur, Aso Rock candidate, had been selected for the job. His position was merely affirmed at the convention ground.

Barely two weeks to the Port Harcourt convention, the fears of a repeat of the Abuja episode are gaining root among members. The apprehension is that further mishandling of the party's fortunes may witness more desertion from key members.

Since PDP lost power to APC last year, hitherto key figures in its fold had dumped it for the APC, while others have decided to leave politics entirely. These include former President, Olusegun Obasanjo; former Board of Trustees (BoT) chairman, Tony Anenih; former Anambra State governor, Jim Nwobodo; Adamu Mu'azu, Tukur, former National Secretary, Olagunsoye Oyinlola; among others.

#### Brighter future ahead

Remaining members of PDP are, however, optimistic on the party returning to Aso Rock in 2019. Part of the things giving them hope and confidence is the regime of missteps that characterise APC handling of the country's problems since coming to power on May 29, last year.

They also hope to reap from the emphatic victory PDP recorded in governorship elections in Bayelsa and Rivers states. But how far these can be replicated at the national level remains the big question.

**For the South South, the tension centres on the person to occupy the slot allotted to the zone. Part of the understanding by members was that in constituting a new NWC for the party, old national office holders would not be returned to office. Our reporter however learnt that there were surreptitious moves to return Secondus to the position of Deputy National Chairman.**

# Interview

## Why Obi should be in Senate, by Nwobu-Alor

Second Republic lawmaker and leader of All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA) National Stakeholders' Forum, Sylvester Nwobu-Alor, speaks with Special Correspondent, OKEY MADUFORO, on developments in the party, Anambra Central senatorial election and why former Governor Peter Obi should be in the Red Chamber.



**A**nambra Central Senatorial election and absence of representation  
The job of a legislator is to represent his constituency. But when there is vacancy in doing so, the constituency loses, especially on presence of government in that area. It is not good for the people of that constituency. With Anambra Central currently not having a senator, whatever interest that may have favoured us in the district will be completely omitted.

I do not see why the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) is wasting time in doing its job of filling the slot.

The vacuum at the National Assembly for Anambra Central is totally the handiwork of INEC. I have already told my lawyers to study the law and go to court and obtain an injunction mandating INEC to conduct the Anambra Central Senatorial District election. The commission should conduct the election within the provisions of the constitution. It should also conduct a credible election.

Before the recent High Court order mandating INEC to include the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in the list of political parties for the exercise, INEC had announced that only those candidates that took part in the annulled election would take part. So what they meant was that political parties such as PDP and All Progressives Congress (APC) that are shopping for new candidates will not participate. That is unacceptable.

INEC should know that it has no right to decide for any political party who would be its candidate. Similar issues came up in other states. What INEC said in the case of Anambra is a complete contradiction to what the courts said

in other states.

It is wrong to imagine that the PDP and the APC will be excluded in any national election for whatever reason. That law against them should be expunged completely. The fundamental human right has given me as a citizen the right to contest in any election and you cannot tell me not to contest in an election when I am qualified to do so.

As I said before, I have briefed my legal team to go to court and compel INEC to conduct the election. I am doing that because I am from Anambra Central. I am being denied the right to be represented at the National Assembly.

Once I obtain the court order, INEC is bound to comply or the commission would be charged for contempt of that order.

**Maxi Okwu's defection**

We the APGA stakeholders raised a lot of issues that must be looked into and presented before the party's reconciliation committee.

We made it clear that our party needs to be redeemed from its present situation. But what are we observing now? The party is fast descending the hills in a terrific momentum. That is exactly what is happening now.

Before now, Maxi Okwu had a validly conducted convention and all those demands were completely ignored.

But for him to go and say that he has come to the party with his supporters, including myself, is very funny.

I am the authentic leader of APGA National Stakeholders' Forum. My people held a meeting and suspended Okwu. As it stands now, he is on his own, and does not have the support of our people.

There was a communique signed by 12 members on behalf of the Forum. In it, we said

we had unanimously disassociated the APGA Stakeholders' Forum from the said reconciliation for obvious reasons; that Okwu did not consult the relevant stakeholders since his actions are self-serving.

It was also said that any reconciliatory effort without my blessing as the national leader will not yield any positive result.

The Forum also expressed its support for and confidence in me and the governorship aspirant, Chike Obidigbo, for our sincere commitments towards the unity of APGA as a national party and the overall interest of Nigeria.

**Obi's interest in the Senate**

If that happens, which I am sure will happen, it will be the greatest gift of age. Peter Obi, when he was a governor, performed very well in Anambra.

When he came into the saddle as governor, he promised to construct 100 kilometres of roads every year in Anambra, but he ended up constructing 400 kilometres in two years.

He was leader of South East Governors' Forum (SEGF) for a long time. That was a position that was supposed to be rotated among the governors, but they told him to continue.

Again, almost all these governors are in the Senate. His friends all over the country are in the Senate across all political parties. If he goes to the Senate with his method of leadership and wealth of experience, it will be to the best interest of not only Anambra Central, but the entire South East in general.

**Obi using and dumping APGA**

Peter Obi is not a machine, but a human being who can change his position in line with the prevailing circumstances. It is only machines that can remain constant in what they do. Yes he

said he would not leave APGA for another political party. But he later joined the PDP. He said he would not contest any elective position, today he is going for the Senate seat. These had to do with the situation he found himself at that point. It is only a machine that can remain constant at all times and not human being.

He was pressured to go to the Senate by many people, including myself. I told him to go to the Senate and do what is workable and that he is created by God for a purpose. Many of his friends in the Senate said "come with your fantastic ideas". One morning, he called me and said "I will serve my people in the Senate".

So those who are saying that he is not a man of his own words or that he does not keep to whatever he said are only being funny. He changed his mind because he saw people suffering and he wanted to help. Those of them that are against him will even gain from his membership of the Senate.

**Between Obi and Victor Umeh**

Obi is not interested in Victor Umeh contesting for Senate or not. He is also not bothered with what Umeh is doing. It is Umeh that has been going about saying that Obi is this or that. But Obi does not care about all that nonsense. What Umeh should do is to withdraw from the contest. So whatever Umeh is saying, he is only giving Obi more credibility. He had better withdraw from the race because it is a no-win situation for him.



# From the states

## Still on herdsmen menace



Okafor



Achuzia



Fulani herdsman

Special Correspondent, **ONWUKWE EZERU**, writes on the continuing condemnation of the recent attack on Nimbo, Enugu community, by suspected Fulani herdsmen.

Indigenes and residents of Umunneochi Local Government Area, Abia State, as well as other boarder communities with Enugu State where herdsmen invaded and killed over 50 natives recently are living in fear. Aside apprehensions of being visited with the same mindless attack as their Enugu State neighbours, their fears also derive from the fact of Fulani herdsmen residing at Lokpanta in Umunneochi where they carry out their trading activities on cattle.

Our reporter gathered that following the recent mayhem at Ukpabi-Nimbo Community in Uzo-Uwani by the Fulani herders, residents of the affected Abia communities have not been having the best of times.

Elsewhere in Abia, the story is the same. For instance, the paramount ruler of Obinolu Autonomous community, Eze Luke Uche, who spoke on the issue in Umuahia, the state capital, last week, remarked that if the excesses of the Fulani 'warlords' were not checked, the peace of the area may be in jeopardy.

He, thus, called on the federal and state governments to take necessary actions now to save lives and banish the psychological fears that affect the people negatively.

The state government, TheNiche learnt, is incidentally, not taking the matter lightly. In fact, piqued by the unwholesome activities of the herdsmen, the House of Assembly has

passed a resolution mandating all security agents in Abia to always search all trailers and trucks coming into the state to ascertain their content.

The House also mandated the traditional rulers and the Transitional Committee Chairmen of the 17 local government areas of the state to form vigilance groups that would guard the communities against evasion by the pastoralists. The lawmakers also enjoined the head of Fulani community in the state to ensure effective control of the herdsmen operating in the state.

As with other concerned groups and organisations in Abia, the legislators took grave exception to the antics of the criminal elements among the herdsmen, warning that the trend would not be tolerated.

Arguing on the same line, the Chairman South East Traditional Rulers Council, Eze Eberechi Dick, condemned the assault on Enugu communities by the herdsmen and called on the federal government to intervene immediately before the tension occasioned by the incident assumes a dangerous dimension.

He advised the governors of the South East to rise up and stem the tide of insecurity in the zone, adding that the traditional rulers were disturbed at the uncertain turn of events in the country.

Abia State Chairman, Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), Bishop Goddy Okafor, who reacted to the recurring

killing of innocent Nigerians by the marauders, condemned the act, noting that it was capable of snowballing to war among some communities in the country.

He called on the South East governors and leaders to rise against the menace in the interest of the zone.

Meanwhile, Abia State governor, Dr. Okezie Ikpeazu, has sent his words of consolation to his Enugu colleague, Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi, on the Nimbo incident.

In a release by his Chief Press Secretary (CPS), Godwin Adindu, the governor condemned the dastardly attack on Nimbo community by the herdsmen as well as similar actions across Nigeria, warning that the situation could degenerate into a national crisis if drastic measures are not taken by the federal government to check the menace.

Ikpeazu noted that the herdsmen's cowardly attacks on communities and farmlands all over the country constitute another national security challenge and pose grave threat to the peace and unity of the country, stressing that the trend is a time bomb waiting to explode.

He expressed worry on how the security apparatus of the country treats the dangerous trend with kid gloves, resulting in more invasion by the herdsmen on such communities as Agatu, in Nasarawa, Ondo, Delta, Benue and now Enugu.

The governor further observed that the herdsmen could be another

disguised form of terrorism and insurgency, and called on President Muhammadu Buhari to nip the trend in the bud before it gets out of hand like Boko Haram.

Since the latest attack by the herdsmen, Nigerians of all persuasions have risen in condemnation of the attack. Last Tuesday, for instance, Nigerians resident in the United Kingdom rallied in London in protest against the menace. Similar action had earlier taken place in Enugu, a day earlier where the Igbo gathered to register their anger against the awkward trend.

Some even see the unfolding development as pogrom, warning that every effort should be made to nip it in the bud. For example, ex-Biafran commander, Joe Achuzia, observed that the Ukpabi-Nimbo invasion amounted to pogrom.

"The killings by Fulani people is reprehensible. Before, we knew them as nomads that carried cattle from place to place. Now they have started killing people. I make bold to say that this is a similar way our people were killed in the North. What is happening now is pogrom," he remarked.

Buhari has incidentally assured that his administration would spare no efforts in ensuring that the criminals are apprehended and treated accordingly.

# Analysis

## Long walk to Budget 2016



Buhari signing the 2016 budget

After months of political intrigues between the Presidency and the National Assembly over the passage of the 2016 Appropriation bill reason finally prevailed on Friday as President Muhammadu Buhari assents to the document. But will the present economic hardship subside with the passage of the budget, writes Assistant Politics Editor, DANIEL KANU.

There was euphoria on the morning of Tuesday, December 22, 2015, when President Muhammadu Buhari, in person, presented a N6.08 trillion budget for the 2016 fiscal year before a joint session of the National Assembly in Abuja. Of course, the previous two budgets were presented on behalf of then President Goodluck Jonathan by the then Minister of Finance, Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala.

But all the ovation that greeted the 2016 Appropriation Bill presentation went dead with the padding controversy that followed. Buhari refused to sign a padded budget, and the lawmakers revealed in what the masses saw as selfish interests. And in what most political analysts saw as "ego show", neither the National Assembly nor the Presidency was ready to shift ground.

The result has been that of untold economic hardship on the people, making Nigerians to be apprehensive of the change they voted for under the party in power, the All Progressives Congress (APC).

#### Reason prevailed

Latest political development shows that reason has finally prevailed, as both parties struck a compromise on the issue on Thursday.

TheNiche gathered that after trading blames for weeks, the leadership of the National Assembly and the presidency met last week and resolved to end the budget impasse by constituting a reconciliation committee comprising members of the executive and the presidency.

"Having reached acceptable concession, all the grey areas have been resolved, and with the submission of the details of the budget and the two follow-up meetings, work was expected to be finalised on the budget details

last night (Wednesday).

"Upon the completion of work, the budget details ought to be signed this week as it does not appear to be another delay in sight," the source revealed.

Another source in the legislature revealed that the compromise reached was to retain the main underlining figures and parameters of the budget, but the executive gave some room to the National Assembly to alter, where necessary, up to 20 to 30 per cent of the budgets of federal Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs).

The reason, according to the source, was in recognition of the independence of the legislature, with respect to appropriation, so that it does not end up being a rubber stamp of the executive.

Based on this principle, the source disclosed further that the joint committee of the National Assembly and the executive reviewed the subheads of the MDAs to ensure that where budget cuts or additions exceeded the 20 to 30 per cent threshold, they were

amended in line with the agreement reached on the budget.

Although the source declined to provide insight into some of the major changes made in the budget by the reconciliation committee, it disclosed that with the resolution of the grey areas, the 2016 budget would meet the yearnings of Nigerians.

#### And Buhari signs budget

The President signed the delayed 2016 budget at the Presidential Villa on Friday with Vice President Yemi Osinbajo, Senate President Bukola Saraki, Speaker of the House of Representatives, Yakubu Dogara, and Finance Minister, Kemi Adeosun, among others as witnesses.

The record N6 trillion budget is expected to stimulate the nation's slowing economy which took a hit as the price of crude oil, Nigeria's main export, collapsed in the global market.

The Osinbajo leak  
Osinbajo had confirmed that

Buhari would assent to the 2016 budget soonest, likely last week.

He gave the assurance at a non-denominational conference by the Covenant Christian Centre in Abuja.

"The budget will become operational in the next few days," Osinbajo had promised. "People now wonder: where is the change that formed the crux of our electioneering campaigns. But they fail to understand that patience is also a virtue that they must have as a people."

#### Earlier apprehension

Before Buhari presented the budget, Nigerians were already agitated on his delay over very critical issues that would assist him to hit the ground running, considering that he took over in May 2015 and was unwilling to nominate his ministers.

Buhari even admitted that he was aware Nigerians were losing confidence in the government. "But I promise the 2016 budget would address the problems," the



# Analysis



Adeosun

President said. "We are here to serve Nigeria and indeed Nigerians will get the services they have longed for."

According to him, the budget would ensure reduction in taxes for small businesses.

While reiterating his commitment to economic diversification, he said farming and mining would be given special focus.

He also promised that 500,000 new teachers would be recruited, assuring that the Nigerian economy would cease to be oil-dependent and would instead be characterised by inclusive growth.

"We must deliver security, jobs and infrastructure," Buhari had promised.

On the hardship been faced by Nigerians as a result of fuel scarcity, the President had apologised for the situation, admitting he was aware the scarcity had caused social dislocation across the country.

He blamed the scarcity on speculators and those "resisting change" and assured that government was working hard to cushion the

difficulty.

On every sector, he made a firm promise that things would change for the better to improve the lives of the average citizen.

But critics have continued to pummel the Buhari administration as one that does not match promise with action.

The people's verdict

Sylvan Ebigwei, President-General, Aka-Ikenga, intellectual think-tank of Ndigbo, was not expecting any magic from the passage of the budget. He said the conflict between both parties, which lingered for months, was unnecessary, urging the Buhari government to endeavour to put in place projects that would provide real transformation.

He had told TheNiche "I don't think there will be any magic. What is a budget in the first place? It's simply an intention or expression to spend money. Year in year out, budgets have been drawn, money appropriated; but usually there is nothing to show for it."

"So since we now have the slogan of change, let us hope that this change will bring the desired and genuine transformation that we as Nigerians need. Seeing is believing, let's wait and see what the APC will give us. They have inundated us with so much promises, so much sweet talks. What Nigerians are waiting for now is its translation to reality, its ability to positively touch the lives of Nigerians."

"There has been so much needless brouhaha over the budget which I see more as ego trip. They should talk less and do more. The political class, I think, over-stepped their bounds by trying



Ebigwei

to introduce items, projects that were not there when the budget was presented to the National Assembly by the Presidency.

"The executive, perhaps knowing their right, felt that the National Assembly was trying to usurp the constitutional right of the executive and that has resulted to the confusion we witnessed."

Former member representing Badagry Federal Constituency, Lagos State at the House of Representatives and APC stalwart, Idris Kosoko, said the passage of the budget would inject finance in the system, thereby boosting the economy.

For Ekiti State Governor, Ayodele Fayose, the delay was an indication that the government in power lacks focus, with no action to deliver. He described the 2016 Budget as confirmation that the APC and Buhari were never prepared for governance.

"If a government cannot prepare a common budget, it should just be concluded that those in the government never prepared for governance and such a government may not be able to achieve anything."

Fayose said padding of the budget with strange figures, which was denied by ministers, was a clear intention to steal. "What those who prepared the budget did was to steal in advance. It is clear advance fraud and be it civil servants, political appointees or consultants, those responsible for this national embarrassment must be fished out and prosecuted."

In a statement issued by his Special Assistant on Public Communications and New Media, Lere Olayinka, the governor had said: "There will be nothing special to expect from them, even when they pass the budget."

Former Finance Minister, Kalu Idika Kalu, is more

## Buhari's remarks at the budget signing

It gives me great pleasure today to sign the first full-year budget of this administration into law. I thank the leadership of the National Assembly, in particular, the Senate President and the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and indeed all members of the National Assembly for their cooperation in making this a reality.

The budget is intended to signpost a renewal of our commitment to restoring the budget as a serious article of faith with the Nigerian people. This administration is committed to ensuring that henceforth the annual appropriation bill is presented to the National Assembly in time for the passage of the Act before the beginning of the fiscal year.

Through the 2016 budget, aptly titled 'Budget of Change', the government seeks to fulfil its own side of the social contract. The budget I have signed into law provides for aggregate expenditures of N6.06 trillion. Further details of the approved budget, as well as our Strategic Implementation Plan for the 2016 budget, will be provided by the Honourable Minister of Budget and National Planning.

I shall be speaking in more details about the budget, its implementation and the over-all national economic and social policies of the government in my address on May 29, God willing.

In designing the 2016 budget, we made a deliberate choice to pursue an expansionary fiscal policy despite the huge decline in government revenues from crude oil exports. This is why we decided to enlarge the budget deficit at this time, to be financed principally through foreign and domestic borrowings. All borrowings will however be applied towards growth-enhancing capital expenditures.

The signing of the budget today will trigger concerted efforts to reflate the Nigerian economy, a key element of which is an immediate injection of N350 billion into the economy by way of capital projects. To illustrate our renewed commitment to infrastructural development, the 2016 budget allocates over N200 billion to road construction as against a paltry N18 billion allocated for same purpose in the 2015 budget.

Despite the current difficulties we will work extra-hard to achieve our revenue

projections. Our revenue generating agencies are coming under better management and are being re-oriented. The implementation of the Treasury Single Account (TSA) is expected to contribute significantly to improving transparency over government revenues.

Our determined fight against corruption is resulting in improvements in the quality of public expenditure. The work of the Efficiency Unit (E-Unit), as well as other public financial management initiatives, are also contributing in this regard. The continuing efforts to reduce recurrent expenditures should hopefully free up more funds for capital expenditure in 2017 and beyond.

As I said in my New Year message, living in State House does not in any way alienate me from your daily struggles. I read the newspapers and listen to the television and radio news. I hear your cries. I share your pains.

We are experiencing probably the toughest economic times in the history of our nation. I want to commend the sacrifice, resilience and toughness of all Nigerians, young and old, who, have despite the hardships, continued to have hope and confidence of a great future for Nigerians. But permit me to say that this government is also like none other. We are absolutely committed to changing the structure of the Nigerian economy once and for all.

We are working night and day to diversify the economy, so that we never again have to rely on one commodity to survive as a country. So that we can produce the food we eat, make our own textiles, produce most of the things we use. We intend to create the environment for our young people to be able to innovate and create jobs through technology.

I cannot promise you that this will be an easy journey, but in the interest of so much and so many, we must tread this difficult path. I can assure you that this government you have freely elected will work with honesty and dedication, day and night, to ensure that our country prospers and that the prosperity benefits all Nigerians. God bless the Federal Republic of Nigeria.



KALU

# Feature

## Unceasing fuel crisis and APC internal politics



Tinubu



Kachikwu



Fuel queue

Persistent fuel scarcity in the country, even after Minister of State (Petroleum), Ibe Kachikwu, had literally been forced to give a shorter timeframe on the matter, exposes the internal contradictions in the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC), Assistant Editor (South South), JOE EZUMA, reports.

**T**he outcry and even calls for resignation on the Minister of State for Petroleum, Ibe Kachikwu, over his statement that Nigerians should not expect a quick fix to the lingering queues at filling stations, were not without reasons.

That Nigerians still bear the brunt of fuel scarcity, long queues at stations and high pump prices into the second week of May easily stand as a reason for the unease in the sector.

The agitation and call for the minister's resignation incidentally came mostly from the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC), which ordinarily should have risen in support of the official that is serving its government.

Analysts, thus, see the verbal attack on Kachikwu as indicative of the schism in the APC.

Kachikwu had at the peak of the biting fuel scarcity in March informed Nigerians that the crisis would linger till late May. The minister, a technocrat though a neophyte in the country's politics, thought he was being realistic when he made the disclosure.

He was, in fact, echoing the position by petroleum downstream sector stakeholders who had earlier painted a grim picture of the fuel situation. They had at a forum in Lagos warned that the fuel crisis may linger till the third quarter of 2016.

His words: "It is even a magic that the stations are still getting volume of products they dispense to the public, judging from the prevailing circumstances at Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC). One of the trainings I did not receive is that of a magician, but I am working very hard to ensure some of these issues go away."

That, incidentally, was a casual remark the minister made that promptly set him on colli-

sion course with certain interests in APC.

Former Lagos State governor, Bola Tinubu, for instance, descended on the minister, alleging that by his remark he had exhibited total detachment with the toiling Nigerians and what the party stood for.

Tinubu said: "Kachikwu's flippancy was out of line. He was basically telling Nigerians that they should be lucky that they are getting the inadequate supply they now suffer and that they should just be quiet and endure the shortage for several weeks more."

"Kachikwu's intervention was unhelpful. It panicked and disappointed the public as to the duration of the crisis. It insulted the people by its tonality. He spoke with the imperious nature of a member of the elitist government the people voted out last year and not the progressive one they voted in."

Senate Committee on Petroleum Resources, Downstream, joined the fray by summoning the embattled minister for questioning on the fuel situation.

At the forum, the minister explained that he did not make the statement in bad faith but on account of the realities on the ground.

Even with the explanation, Kachikwu was still forced to play the politics of the matter by setting two weeks to ease the crisis.

Enter ethnic politics

Even at that, entrenched interests in the party were hardly appeased. Party leaders, incidentally from the minister's South South, insisted on his resignation, even when South East members argued to the contrary.

The opposition Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), on its own, mocked APC to look inward and solve the country's problem rather than clutching at straws.

APC National Vice Chairman, South South, Hilliard Eta, particularly took on Kachikwu for

reasoning in line with his former party, the PDP, in actions and words, arguing: "In the light of the foregoing, Kachikwu must not be a cog in the wheel of progress and should do the needful by resigning honourably."

South East wing of the party, in a statement by its spokesman, Osita Okechukwu, however, disagreed, reminding those demanding the minister's resignation not to forget that he had brought transparency in the fuel supply chain, in the process, saving the country about N500 billion.

In the face of the buck-passing, an Abuja-based civil society group, United Nigeria Civic Front (NICIF), intervened and urged Nigerians to shun the attempt to personalise the petroleum crisis, but rally behind President Muhammadu Buhari and Kachikwu in their effort to find a permanent solution to the issue.

The group's Publicity Secretary, Johnson Olumide, described the call for Kachikwu's resignation as a cowardly attack on President Buhari who doubles as Minister of Petroleum.

"This is actually an ill-motivated and cowardly attack on the President, an attempt to question his capacity to solve the current energy crisis in the country by those who lack the courage to assail him directly. We are aware that it has nothing to do with patriotism or a wish to see a quick end to the current fuel crisis," Olumide said.

Motion without movement

More than 50 days after Kachikwu had urged Nigerians to brace up for more epileptic fuel supply regime, events seem to prove him right as supplies are yet to normalise.

Survey by TheNiche during the week indicated that products were still not available at filling stations. Even where products were available, the prices had been adjusted for between N130 and N140 per litre, in Port

Harcourt, Rivers State, and environs. Those selling outside the fuel stations or the so-called black market operators sold at N500 per litre with the added risk of consumers buying adulterated products. A man was recently caught selling kerosene mixed with palm oil and little petrol as petrol.

Some professionals who spoke on the situation, expressed sadness at the development, blaming ethnicity, politics, selfishness and inordinate ambition among Nigerian politicians for the trend.

Eddie Williams, Port Harcourt-based publisher, regretted that over 55 years of nationhood, Nigeria is still grappling with problem of fuel supply and pricing. He challenged the APC to translate its change mantra to reality in making life easy for Nigerians.

He specifically reminded the party that its change mantra should also involve being transparent, working to gain the confidence of the people, so that they could be carried along in the administration's policies.

It is also argued in some quarters that with nearly one year in office, chieftains of the party should start thinking more of how to fix the country in the remaining three years of APC tenure and not blaming themselves or the previous administration.



# Judiciary

## How criminal justice system can be strengthened, by Quakers

Norrison Ibinabo Quakers, a Senior Advocate of Nigeria (SAN) was called to the Bar about 25 years ago. Before setting up his own law firm, he worked with Iwelumo and Iwelumo, and later joined Olisa Agbakoba and Associates. In this interview with Senior Correspondent ONYEWUCHI OJINNAKA, he speaks on stringent bail conditions, plea bargain and multiplicity of charges, among others.



Quakers

**W**hat is your take on stringent bail conditions imposed by the courts? The grant of bail is constitu-

tional and there is a presumption of innocence on any accused person. When a court grants bail, it is part of the constitutional rights of the accused person. What is the principle for granting bail? It is to ensure that an accused person is present in court for his trial. In the event that he absconds or he is not available for his trial, the assets involved in the bail attached will be forfeited to the state. That is the principle. But some schools of thought are of the opinion that the condition attached to the grant of bail presupposes that an accused person is adjudged guilty without a hearing because the bail conditions sometimes appear to suggest that a court has taken a position and that the accused person is guilty of the alleged offence, and it is for him to establish his innocence.

There is, however, a provision that says that if an accused person feels that his bail conditions appear harsh, he could approach the court with cogent and verifiable reasons. Sometimes we compound very simple legal issues. So, if you feel that the condition is too harsh, you can go back to the court. If the court that granted the bail refuses, you can go to the Court of Appeal, and if the Court of Appeal refuses, you can proceed to the Supreme Court. We have what you can call hierarchical court structure to review condition of bail.

For instance, a man has been arraigned for stealing N500 million and you ask him to bring two sureties whose total assets will be N500 million. What you are simply saying is that the accused person stands guilty and it is for him to prove his innocence. That for me should be

looked into.

Many of your colleagues accuse the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) of multiplicity of charges.

I would not comment on on-going criminal cases. I am one of those who believe that some of the charges by EFCC offend the rules of drafting. The beauty of our legal system is that we have rules and regulations in terms of judicial process that we file and in terms of information in a charge. We must comply with those rules. I find it shocking that we could have 50-count charge, 150-count charge, and 200-count charge. For me, it offends the rules of drafting. I think the time has come for prosecutorial agencies to get experts in legal drafting to micro-manage the case put forward to the court.

Most times, hours are wasted in reading out the counts and by the time they finished reading out the 120-count charge to the accused persons, you have already spent hours. So, aside conducting in-house training, our prosecutorial agencies must also be exposed to international best practice in criminal litigation. We cannot continue doing things the way we are doing it. I am one of those who believe that when a case is very clear, there is no point wasting precious judicial time, an accused person could enter into plea bargain.

How would you react to the suggestion that plea bargain is like giving a criminal a slap on the wrist?

It is because we have not done it well. You do not strike a deal that will make people feel that the accused has kept his loot. There is something called interim forfeiture of assets. So, what is expected of an anti-corruption agency is to investigate and discover the assets before the criminal case is instituted. Without his knowledge, you ap-

proach the court ex-parte and get a freezing order to stop the accused person from having access to those funds to fight back. I like to commend the EFCC because, to that extent, they are working.

For me, plea bargain is not a slap on the wrist. Because Nigeria is a country where we sometimes abuse certain privileges and take advantage of loopholes in our laws, some do not believe in plea bargain. Why do you plea bargain? It is because you want to avoid the rigour of trial. How many former governors have been convicted from 1999 till date? It is only one. Rather we have trials that have been lingering. Are we saying we do not know what to do?

Suggest ways the criminal justice system can be strengthened?

First, you cannot strengthen the criminal system without the reinforcement of the institutions. President Barack Obama said the challenge with Africa is that our institutions are not strong. I like that. It is like a situation where institutions are built around human beings. And when a particular head of such institution is no longer there, it will nose-dive. EFCC under Nuhu Ribadu was quite effective; but when he left, EFCC began to nose-dive. The institution became another story entirely.

When the institutions are reformed, the laws become effective. In America, it is not about the man heading the institution, people may not know you, but the point is there is more emphasis on the institution itself. What I am saying is that the laws are there, all we need is to strengthen the institutions.

Can you assess the Administration of Criminal Justice Act (ACJA), a year after it became operative?

Incidentally, I was in the committee that worked on the ACJA. It was passed into law to address chal-

lenges in criminal litigation. Have we fared well since the law was passed? I would not say no, because we have tried to the best of our ability. Our major challenge has always been our attitude, the law can only work when people have positive disposition towards it. A law can only be effective when we believe in it; when we apply ourselves to it. Our attitude towards the efficacy of law is what has made the law to appear ineffective and inefficient. For example, if the law says, once criminal trial commences, it must be heard day to day, as defence counsel, I am enjoined to co-operate with the prosecution in ensuring that the matter is determined day to day. Assuming one day I leave for court and I am held up in traffic. I am unable to get to court for the matter to be heard and the matter is adjourned. Can you attribute that to a deliberate attempt to delay? Assuming the judge on the day fixed for hearing of the case suddenly gets a call that he has to be in Abuja and I get to the court only to be told that the court is not sitting.

Again, if a charge is defective, why must I go through the whole gamut of trial? Those are the issues. We must not be seen to unnecessarily apportion blames. Criminal trial is serious work. I remember one of our judges that said "it is better for 10 people to walk away free than for an innocent man to be convicted". So, we need an all stakeholders' meeting. We must all believe in the Administration of Criminal Justice Law. If we are driven by the mindset that foreigners must have trust in our justice system, we will work together. Take a look at the Civil Procedure Rules, whose primary objective is to ensure that things work smoothly. But how many trials have we had or completed in record time? If we do it well, no trial should exceed one year.

Some lawyers have faulted the ACJA because it states that court must not stay proceedings in criminal matter.

But, what if the jurisdiction of the trial court is challenged?

The new law says the court will not stay proceedings. There are settled principles of law in relation to jurisdiction of the court. It is trite that once an appeal has been entered, the lower court's power to proceed is frozen. Reason: the lower court is expected to defer to the higher court. So, if you stay proceedings, it is to await the outcome of the matter at the Court of Appeal. So, the trial court is expected to stop. So, you do not go on appeal for the purpose of stalling the trial at the lower court.

Criminal trial enjoys speed, even at the appeal level. So, a lawyer must show industry for the court to hear the matter once and for all. In a jurisdictional issue, the Supreme Court has said in plethora of cases that a man must not be subjected to the rigour of criminal trial when you do not have jurisdiction to entertain the case. Because, if at the end of the day, it is found that you did not have jurisdiction, you have wasted precious resources and time. For instance, if a case of copyright is filed against a person at the state high court and the defendant filed a preliminary objection challenging the jurisdiction of the court to hear the matter, but the court says no, under the administration of criminal justice law, the matter must be heard day to day. The accused person has the constitutional right to go on appeal over that decision. Once you get the nod of the court, you compile your records.

# Editorial

## As Erediauwa joins ancestors

**T**he announcement of the death of the Oba of Benin, Omo n'Oba n'Edo Uku Akpolokolo Erediauwa, last week marked the beginning of the end of what can rightly be described as the golden era of the traditional institution in Nigeria.

And it is no wonder that the fact of his death at a ripe old age has not diminished the grief of the people of Benin.

In an era where no one lays stock on values anymore, perhaps the greatest tribute came from his first daughter, Theresa, who said: "My father was a great man. He upheld our values."

That is at the core of Erediauwa's essence and why his people will never forget his era. Formerly Solomon Akenzua, he succeeded his father, Akenzua 11, in March 1979 as the 38th Oba of Benin.

In all the 37 years he spent on the throne, he brought dignity and panache to bear on the office.

A quintessential civil servant and bureaucrat par excellence, the then Prince Akenzua reached the apogee of his career as a federal permanent secretary before retiring.

One of the palace chiefs and the *Obadolagbonji* of Benin, Omon-Osagie Utetenejiabi, said Erediauwa was the best thing that happened to the kingdom in both modern and ancient times.

"Erediauwa is the Oba of peace, the Oba who brought prosperity to his people, the *Oba* who understood his people. He made sure that no one was offended.

**Erediauwa was a man of peace and justice who believed in equity. Perhaps, without him the administration of Oshiomhole may have taken a different trajectory.**

**So, the biggest respect the governor can give to him is to ensure that the upcoming governorship election is transparent and the result reflects the will of the people.**

"The Oba could sit in judgment and give judgment against his own son for a commoner. It is rare.

"Erediauwa is the best thing that has happened to Benin kingdom in the last 1,600 years."

The same point that Edo State Governor, Adams Oshiomhole, made when he described Erediauwa as "an accomplished Nigerian, a seasoned bureaucrat, quintessential unifier, unique personage and exemplary Omo N'Oba, whose reign brought distinction, immense class, finesse and integrity to the traditional institution in Edo State and the country at large."

As the people of Edo and their well-wishers mourn their beloved Oba, TheNiche, while empathising with them also urges them to ensure that his legacies of peace, good neighborliness, dignity and prosperity do not die with him.

Erediauwa was a man of peace and justice who believed in equity. Perhaps, without him the administration of Oshiomhole may have taken a different trajectory.

So, the biggest respect the governor can give to him is to ensure that the upcoming governorship election is

transparent and the result reflects the will of the people.

If the political gladiators in the state have any respect for Erediauwa as they claim, then this is the time to sheathe the political sword and abide by the rules of the fight.

The dogfight between Oshiomhole and his Deputy, Pius Odubu, simply because the latter is aspiring to succeed his principal is uncalled for.

While the governor has the constitutional and moral right to support any aspirant of his choice, he has no right to use state resources to muzzle other people out of the race as he is trying to do.

That is political corruption and runs against the values Erediauwa lived for.

Orchestrating all manner of political shenanigans to achieve predetermined goals is anti-democratic and does not promote equity.

If the political actors are indeed the disciples of Erediauwa as they proclaim, then they should pause and ask themselves what he would have considered the right thing to do in the circumstance and do same.

That is the only way they can immortalise him and his pristine values.

The Oba is dead. Long live Omo n'Oba n'Edo Uku Akpolokolo Erediauwa.



» PoliticsXtra

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## That headline was a head-turner

**I**n the fast-emerging Abuja traffic this past Thursday, as I made my way out of Transcorp Hilton, a newspaper seller appeared from the shadows and thrust a pack of magazines straight into my face.

I can't really recall the name of the magazine since I was on the move. But the headline I saw almost made me hit the car in front of me. It wasn't exactly this way, but I can recall seeing something like: Obasanjo plots against Buhari.

I'm trying to convince myself that it was one of those headlines meant to sell the paper without much regards to facts. But what if it is true that the old war general is already tired of his partner in patriotism!

However, it would be interesting to know how and why, so quickly, the former president has become tired of his adopted political messiah. I recall that as President for eight years, Olusegun Obasanjo and Muhammadu Buhari were not the best of friends.

However, it is interesting to note that both Obasanjo and Buhari are the only two Nigerians to have served as heads of state twice.

Obasanjo was the first to become a military head of state and voluntarily retired in 1979. He handed over power to Shehu Shagari; a democratically-elected president.

Buhari engineered the sack of Shagari four years and three months later and took over power. He brought the nation under the crushing might of military dictatorship. Everybody was a demon. Only those in uniform were saints.

On August 27, 1985, Buhari was sacked by his comrade-in-arms, Ibrahim Babangida, and his co-adventurers.

So, while Obasanjo retired into international diplomacy, writing books and gaining recognition worldwide, Buhari was forced into silence.

Both of them were farmers. It is not clear what has happened to Obasanjo's farm; but we all know that Buhari's cows are still multiplying.

Then in 1999, Obasanjo became an elected president. Before then, he had been condemned to death by the brutal administration of the late Sani Abacha. He was accused

of planning a fictitious coup to sack the man whose demonic style of governance was legendary.

In fact, it has been said that Obasanjo and others fingered in the phantom coup were billed to have their death sentences confirmed on the day Abacha died. That was really the finger of God at work. The man who was condemned to die became the next president of Nigeria through a democratic process.

For eight years, he governed Nigeria with the strong hand of a military general; but under the Constitution. He even tried to have a third term. Everything was done by his political jobbers and spin doctors to actualise that unguarded ambition; but it failed.

What Obasanjo did next was to ensure that his Deputy, Atiku Abubakar, who spearheaded the death of third term, did not succeed him. He fought Atiku to a standstill; and like everything Obasanjo, he had his way.

To further cement his authority, he went ahead to hand-pick a successor; the late Umaru Yar'Adua.

On taking office, Yar'Adua decided to pull down most of the structures put in place by Obasanjo in a bid to free himself from the political grip of the old war horse.

Unfortunately, he died before completing his tenure. His Deputy, Goodluck Jonathan, who was equally handpicked by Obasanjo, succeeded him.

Before completing his boss' tenure, Jonathan came under fire from both his party and some political heavyweights from the North who did not want him to seek election as president.

Again, Obasanjo stepped him and rescued his boy from the hawks. One thing led to another, and Jonathan was cleared to contest. He did, and won.

If Obasanjo thought he was going to control the Ogbia zoologist from his Ota Farm, he must have miscalculated. The honeymoon did not last beyond the euphoria of the wedding.

After about a year, Jonathan decided to put his foot down and call the shots as the elected president that he was. That did not go down well with Obasanjo. He started doing what generals do best: fight back with all the might he could muster.

## Observations from...

### Our leaders need to return to God

Kindly allow this publication for public consumption of Nigerians. The need for our leaders in all the three tiers of governments (FG, State and LG) and others in their various helm of affairs to rule in the fear of God and see the staff in their hands as an opportunity to serve the masses, just as they are accountable to God is important.

Going through Nehemiah 5: 14 - 15, on the confession of Nehemiah, the Governor in the Land of Judah that, position of authority is a position of service and an opportunity for you to strengthen the weak, to be a mouth to the dumb and a feet to the lame.

Many leaders were given staff of office like Prophet Moses, instead of using it to divide the red-sea for their people to pass, from fear of security, poverty to prosperity, failure to fulfillment, they use the staff to hit their heads, and to oppress them, and they only rule instead of serving.

Many leaders instead of reducing the

pains of their people, they remove the soothing and anti-pain. Leaders should understand this fact, that no matter how long, there is an end to everything, posterity will eventually judge. You may escape giving account to man, but, God will ask.

If you rule with fear of God in your domain, it will earn you credits, good conscience, boldness, keep you from evils and make you a good leader. Nigerians should pray ceaselessly and fast for people in government, so as not to mislead them - for the destruction of the plans of the devil in individual's life, work and home, towards a virile nation.

Beaten by hunger and misgovernance, Nigerians have no option but to turn to God, to gain God's favour and seek divine forgiveness for their sins. Both the leaders and followers should repent our sins and ask God to put an end to the fasting of poor Nigerians.

• Oladipupo Funmilade-Joel



## On the beat

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# Is South East still in PDP?

Jonathan became so distracted that it took him the next one year to realise that he needed to muster some presidential courage and initiate projects that would thrust him into the next election. But it was getting late in the day.

In 2015, Jonathan was voted out of office. The he made that historic phone call to Buhari, congratulating him for his victory at the poll.

Meanwhile, having fallen out with Jonathan, Obasanjo quickly aligned with Buhari. He publicly had his Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) membership card torn as though he was tearing Jonathan's kingdom into shreds.

At the end, Buhari won the election; and Obasanjo became a distant kingmaker.

So, these two men have something in common. My concern, however, is that Obasanjo's candidate has never been a successful president. From Yar'Adua to Jonathan, and now Buhari, the story is likely to be the same. Whoever he supports has always ended up as a not-very-successful president.

While it is too early in the day to judge Buhari, we can only hope that Obasanjo will make a mistake this time around; by supporting someone who will make a difference; someone he will not distract and confuse.

We also hope that the headline in that magazine is wrong both in fact and in judgment. If not, the present fight against corruption may soon be made to cover the period from 1999 to 2015.

Watch my lips.

**T**he Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), once a political behemoth that loomed large in Nigeria which boasted as the largest party in Africa – but now in the opposition – is at it again.

It is working to recover from what hit it in last year's presidential election when, surprisingly, it succumbed to the All Progressives Congress (APC), which is now in the national leadership saddle, basking in the euphoria of change.

Last week, it released its new zoning arrangement ahead of the 2019 presidential election which its leaders have bragged they will win with ease.

It appears the PDP is yet to learn from its mistakes and from its new zoning formula, another fresh seed of crisis has been deliberately sowed or about to be sowed. And that is the thrust of my argument today.

Those who analysed the exchanges between Governor Ayodele Fayose of Ekiti State and a chieftain of the PDP, Olabode George, on Politics Today on Channels Television last week will easily conclude that the PDP is still far from being cured of the disease that befell it in the build up to the 2015 general election.

The disease that afflicted the PDP in the past? Selfishness. Greed (Avarice). Inordinate ambition. Hatred. Ethnic and tribal bigotry. Godfatherism. Politics of imposition.

These and others were the problems the APC saw as a window of opportunity and leveraged on to sell the dummy of change to Nigerians.

It is said that a man who does not know when rain started to drench him may not know when it will stop.

Most PDP watchers are looking forward to the so-called zoning arrangement and by extension, the party's ward, council and state congresses to see if what the leaders are saying about their preparedness to return to power is real or a fluke.

Feelers from across the nation on its recent congresses are hardly encouraging.

The stories we hear are not different from the ones we used to hear before which are reminiscent of the characters that most PDP leaders exhibit during election.

That is why many of the leaders are calling for the cancellation of the congresses.

Adamu Waziri, former minister of Police Affairs and a member of PDP Board of Trustees (BoT), said: "As one of the founding fathers of the PDP and long-time member of the Board of Trustees, I wish to express serious concern over the procedures leading to the national convention of our party; the last Saturday congress was a false start.

"In my state, Yobe, materials arrived there very late; the congresses were not conducted in line with the party's guidelines, and being a veteran in the game, I know the congresses were skewed to achieve a particular purpose.

"And after due consultation with our supporters, I wish to reject the outcome of the congresses in Yobe State."

Waziri also frowned on the zoning, saying the decision of the National Executive Committee (NEC) did not have input from the PDP BoT and other stakeholders. That is the same feeling George holds but which Fayose sees nothing amiss.

In Ogun, factional executive members suspended state PDP Chairman, Adebayo Dayo; and Secretary, Semiu Sodipo, for alleged gross misconduct.

Crises were said to have trailed Anambra congresses with state party Chairman, Ejike Oguebego, claiming that there was no congress election in all the 326 electoral wards in the state.

He alleged that Ladi Edun, the congress committee chairman appointed by the national PDP, sabotaged the exercise by failing to liaise with the state executive.

Rising from a news conference in Awka, 21 members of the state executive wrote a petition to the chairman of the PDP ward congress appeal panel asking for the cancellation of the exercise and the conduct of a fresh one.

The story is the same in all PDP con-

trolled states.

As Ben Heineman would say, "the mantra for all leaders in crisis management must be – it is our problem the moment we hear about it. We will be judged from that instant forward for everything we do – and don't do."

But going by what transpired at the congresses and the feedback on the new PDP zoning arrangement, it is doubtful if the party has learnt anything in crisis management and if at all PDP minds will see any reason to pursue any challenge as a common problem.

Many PDP chieftains are more interested in what comes to them, their camp or their zone rather than what is public good. They are in complete alignment with Elbert Hubbard's thinking that, "power flows to the man who knows how, responsibilities gravitate to the person who can shoulder them."

To them, they are the ones who know how power ought to flow as well as the ones ordained to shoulder others' responsibilities without sparing a thought on how much damage they have done to the soul of the party.

They have been doing it since 1999 and because it has become a habit, which dies hard when formed, they will continue at it.

Now in interrogating the zoning arrangement, which has chiseled the Igbo, a major ethnic nationality in Nigeria, out of relevance in political dynamics of the PDP, what comes to mind is what the designers intend to achieve.

Only three miserable offices – Deputy National Financial Secretary, National Organising Secretary and National Youth Leader – are assigned to *Ndigbo*.

This is the same South East which, less than a year ago, provided the PDP with the shoulder it leaned on when all other zones plotted mischief that saw to the defeat of former President Goodluck Jonathan in particular and, the fall of the PDP in general.

Here are the offices zoned: National Chairman (North East), Deputy National Chairman (South South), National

Secretary (South West), Deputy National Secretary (North Central), National Legal Adviser (North West), and Deputy National Legal Adviser (South South).

National Treasurer (South South), Deputy National Treasurer (North West), National Financial Secretary (North Central) and Deputy National Financial Secretary (South East), and National Woman Leader (North-West),

Deputy National Woman Leader (South South), National Auditor (South West), Deputy National Auditor (North East), National Publicity Secretary (South West), and Deputy National Publicity Secretary (North Central),

National Organising Secretary (South East), Deputy National Organising Secretary (North Central), National Youth Leader (South East), and Deputy National Youth Leader (North West).

The PDP is simply saying with the zoning that the South East has little to contribute to its preparation for 2019.

It is sad. This zone has produced national leaders, including Nnamdi Azikiwe, Michael Okpara, Akanu Ibiam, Mbonu Ojike, Chukwuemeka Odimegwu Ojukwu, Sam Mbakwe, Chuba Okadigbo.

The picture the PDP zoning arrangement presents is akin to what the APC did a few months ago.

While George and Fayose were washing their dirty linen in public, they made us understand that it was their personal interest or the interest of the zones they come from that was at stake.

Not surprisingly, on May 4 the South West PDP leaders came together in Akure to back the current zoning arrangement notwithstanding that other zones are kicking against it.

It is about them, their zone, and as far as *Ndigbo* are concerned, they can stay in the cold.

Rather than go for powerful positions that will enable them appear more relevant in 2019, South East PDP members kowtow to the whims and caprices of their colleagues from other zones thinking the vice presidency will come to them. Who says?

## Funny World



# TheNiche

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# Could showing too much honour be bad for a society?

**T**In October 1996, I returned to Nigeria after a 12-month research stay at the Johannes Gutenberg University in Mainz, Germany. It was a very productive year for me, one which ended up having a significant effect on the path which my academic career took from then on. I will forever be grateful to the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, the German organisation whose generous fellowship made that life-changing experience possible.

One interesting difference between my life in Ile-Ife and the one I lived in Germany was brought home to me clearly just within a couple of days of my returning to the country. I had gone to the post office on the campus of the Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU) where I worked, and had reason to remonstrate with the attendants for some slackness in the performance of their job. I spoke to them in an authoritarian voice, and they accepted it humbly, offering their excuses profusely. As I stepped out of the post office, a voice whispered into my ears: "When you were dissatisfied with the service you got at the post office or any other public office in Germany, what could you do? Even if you complained, would anyone have offered you the kind of apologies you just got now?" Hardly likely. It occurred to me that one of the "benefits" of living in your own country, at least a country like Nigeria, is the power you get to exercise once

you have attained a certain position in society.

Part of the reason, to my mind, is that our culture is one that practically worships position. We have no problem at all with the stratification of society, and those who are on the lower strata accept that they have to "honour" those who are above them, and this they do in a multitude of ways. Since it is our duty to "show honour to whom honour is due" (one of the most frequently used expressions in our public life), you find us falling down prostrate before obas, giving titles like "Honourable" and "Your Excellency" to political office holders, never caring to reflect on what those words actually mean, nor checking to see whether the bearers of those titles portray those qualities in their comportment. When we hold public gatherings, it must be obvious that some people are "more equal than others", like the animals in Orwell's *Animal Farm*. Thus, it becomes our bounden duty to transport huge armchairs to the venue for their "excellencies" to sit upon comfortably; how could you expect them to sit on ordinary chairs?

This issue is being raised here because I am beginning to question what effect it has on our development. Is there not a certain kind of attitude necessary for the effective and efficient conduct of society's business? When there are always people

rushing to carry others' handbags or briefcases, the society is not set up along egalitarian lines. Thus, those who are above assume an air of benevolence while those below comport themselves as beggars. A photograph was circulated online a couple of years ago with three world leaders: President Barack Obama and Prime Minister David Cameron were shown carrying their own briefcases, while then President Goodluck Jonathan held a walking stick, followed by a military detail carrying his briefcase. When a society does not work to entrench the principle of equality, how could it ensure that justice would truly be blind? Is it any surprise, then, that the conduct of people who are alleged to have looted our treasury and are currently being prosecuted by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) shows that they almost feel offended for being called to answer for their actions? For many, their energies are devoted to seeking to thwart the legal process and wriggle out of it, rather than working to prove their innocence.

Whenever I raise these issues, as I did recently during a live radio interview, people always raise the culture flag, insisting that showing respect is an important aspect of our culture. I hope I am not coming across as someone who despises our culture; far from it. But I believe very strongly that it is our responsibility to

interrogate our culture in the light of our current realities. Culture itself is dynamic, and there is no race on earth that has not had to change aspects of its culture given the transformations that have occurred in their society. For example, the constraints of living in big towns or even megacities entail realities that are incongruous with the practices that prevailed in the hamlets in which we once lived. A big challenge before us, I believe, is one of rationality, and I have often seen its apparent deficiency in the conduct of our affairs as a failure of our education system. We need to learn to reflect deeply on issues.

As I drove past a security post on the campus of our university sometime last week, the three men manning the gate and who were sitting under a tree all rose up to greet me as my car approached them. Why was that necessary, and how many times during the day would they rise to greet people driving past? Was that part of their job? This is another instance where one would wish to call upon our sociologists to probe this kind of social behavioural pattern and show us what consequences it may be having upon our progress as a people or as a society.

## Quit politics, face governance

By Fred Nwaozor

**L**ast time I checked, it was Ecclesiastes 3 that said: "There's time for everything under the sun." Needless to reiterate that whatever one intends to do or embark on here on earth, he or she must acknowledge that there is a specific time such intended action is meant to be taken.

The above assertion implies that every activity, either proposed or ongoing, is highly and strictly depended on time. In other words, every thought, action or inaction abides by the supremacy of time.

I have come to realise that the reason we often fail in so many projects we embark on is simply because we usually do the right thing at the wrong time; and that is the basis of this piece. Unequivocally, we invariably tend to fail in our various endeavours owing to the fact that we take the aforementioned biblical or divine assertion for granted.

It's no more news that in several facets across the federation, various politicians have already commenced politicking against 2019, thereby making the entire polity seem nauseous and unreasonable when it is meant to be loveable. How do you reconcile this? Frankly, it's really pathetic that most Nigerian politicians are yet to contrast between politics and governance.

In Imo State, for instance, in several quarters, people, including government

functionaries, have started debating or agitating for who would emerge as the next governor. It's even more pitiable to observe that the electorate who are expected to be the main solicitors of governance happen to be the major actors in the ongoing drama.

To say the least, we seriously need to re-examine ourselves, both mentally and otherwise. Undoubtedly, there's urgent need for proper diagnosis to ascertain our actual plight. We need to ascertain what prompted the proclivity for such lifestyle; we need to find out if it is an inborn anomaly or self-indulgence, because we can't continue like this. Honestly, failure to diagnose this lingering societal endemic may cause us a monumental self-inflicted injury.

Right now, rather than constituting un-called political agitations, what is required in every quarter, be it a state or national issue, is a viable and proactive opposition. A viable opposition would strongly help to ensure that the ruling party maintains a participatory democracy in all ramifications irrespective of the circumstance. It's only a participatory democratic setting that can yield a wholesome administration.

On the contrary; instead of working assiduously towards forming a formidable opposition, the politicians are only concerned with how and when to defect to the ruling party with a view to ensuring that the 'national cake' does not pass them by. On a daily basis, what we hear among the political class remains nothing but outright

defection. It's no doubt an ignominy that an average Nigerian politician invariably wants to be a member of the ruling party.

A certain political party cannot rule at all times or forever; leadership is about 'soldier go, soldier come'. Besides, if everyone rules, who would serve or stand in as the opposition? We really need to note that without a sound and firm opposition trailing a certain leadership, the administration of the leaders in question would definitely be porous. There are no two ways about it. It's indeed needless to state that we seriously need to learn more about leadership prospects, challenges and crisis.

It's the opposition and other concerned bodies that are meant to motivate the followers towards ushering in the desired change. Suffice it to say that good governance is a product of adequate cum reliable opposition and genuine followership. The followers would continue to be docile or marred by apathy unless they are thoroughly informed, educated as well as duly activated; and such role is the function of the opposition, analysts, civil society, religious groups and what have you.

Due to lack of active participation by the citizenry, presently you would notice that implementation of good governance is usually a mirage. The citizens need to fully comprehend that the leaders are answerable to them; they must note that leadership and followership are inevitably interwoven. We can't sit on the fence and expect miracles or

wonders to take place; the leaders are human, so there's need for reminder, criticism, when necessary. Thus, we must be ready and willing to call them to order whenever they err or go astray.

The church or mosque, or as the case may be, isn't supposed to participate in politics, but governance. It's obvious that the former begets the latter; but we need to comprehend that both factors, which are conspicuously two needed societal recipes, are just like two parallel lines that have no meeting point. Politics ends at the polls, where governance begins; hence, where politics ends and governance takes over. But it's apparent that in the contemporary Nigerian society, we tend to mix both tools, thus not unlike an aberration.

Nigerians must understand that this is the time for governance, and not politics as has been observed in most quarters. Thus, everyone ought to live up to the expectation towards ushering in the awaited change if we are truly ready to see a changed Nigeria in its entirety. Surely, this is the right time for the change mantra to be practicalised. Think about it!

• Nwaozor, public affairs analyst, wrote in from Owerri, Imo State.



# A look at the sexual harassment bill

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with Emeka Alex Duru

One thing that is never lacking in Nigeria is action. Whether for good or bad, there will always be certain action in the country, at any time. When the particular action is in place, it becomes a trending agenda of sorts.

Often, the action may not go beyond attracting initial headlines. The essence may also not be properly defined or explained. But while it lasts, it becomes the topic for the season and fizzles out after a while. And life goes on.

For the greater part of last week, the dominant issue in public domain was the murderous invasion of Nimbo, Enugu community, by criminally-minded Fulani herdsmen. The incident, which took place late April, left over 50 natives dead and more wounded.

In the hysteria of the time, many pronouncements were made by state and federal authorities. Enugu State governor, Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi, who visited the devastated community, got more devastated by the sight of broken limbs and dead bodies. And he wept.

From Abuja, President Muhammadu Buhari threatened tough actions against the marauders.

But by the close of last week, no record of any arrest in connection with the cowardly incident was known. There really, may be none, after all. It is the injured and bereaved in Nimbo that will carry on with their lot. And the nation moves on.

As fate would have it, there is already an agenda for another ad-hoc national convocation. This time around, it is coming from the

Senate with its bill against sexual harassment in the country's institution of higher learning.

According to the story surrounding the bill, it was envisioned as part of measures to prohibit sexual harassment of students in institutions of higher learning, and bring to an end a major distraction to academic pursuit on campuses.

The bill proposes a compulsory five-year jail term for any lecturer who sexually harasses a student, while heads of institutions of learning where such activities take place would be held liable too.

By the proposed law, vice chancellors of universities, rectors of polytechnics and chief executives of sundry institutions would go to jail for two years for failing to act within a week of complaints of sexual harassments.

The bill, introduced by the senator representing Delta Central, Ovie Omo-Agege, is said to have received sponsorship of other senators from different parts of the country.

Omo-Agege, the only senator elected on the platform of Labour Party (LP), explained the essence of the bill.

"We need to protect our students, particularly our daughters, from sexual perverts who use unethical and coercive means to instil fear in them and compel acquiescence to sexual liaisons," he said.

The senator disclosed that the bill was a product of research commissioned on the issue, stressing that it has become imperative to restore faith and decency to the country's learning environment.

Coming at a time academic pursuits in the universities seem to have given way for moral depravity and licentious engagements, Omo-

Agege deserves commendation from all. He has, in a way, taken the bull by the horn.

Sexual immorality and deficiency in learning are two major issues currently plaguing the nation's higher institutions. Gone are the days when students of tertiary institutions were easily identified by their cute dressing culture and commendable comportment. Gone are the days when college students exuded knowledge in their fields of study. Gone are the days when the relationship between the lecturer and the student was strictly defined.

These virtues appear to have gone with the winds. There are still responsible lecturers and committed students, no doubt. But the figure is few, if not totally insignificant. The trend now is essentially more of trade by barter. The girls trade with their bodies, while the teachers trade with their marks, and trade off their respect. The boys, in some cases, come in as pimps.

Some explain this illicit liaison as consensual. But is it, really? Harassment may not necessarily come with manifest force. It may be subtle but aimed at coercing somebody into an action that he or she would not indulge in, ordinarily.

For now, it is not known if the bill before the Senate covers the entire gamut of the inane relationship. It is also not known how far the bill intends to protect victims of the dastardly act, aside encouraging them to seek legal redress.

Of course, it may not be certain how far the bill will go in the upper lawmaking house. If it survives the expected intrigues in the chamber, it will remain a mystery. But if it dies at any

stage, it will not come as a surprise.

Some of the senators and the university teachers are guilty of the same offence. While the lecturers withhold their marks to have their way, the lawmakers flaunt their influence for the same action. There is hardly any difference between a lawmaker who engages in juvenile marriage and the college teacher who forces his way through a student under his care. None of the liaisons, strictly speaking, is consensual. The same goes for lawmakers who demand sex from their constituents as condition for attending to them. They are products of intimidation; they are satanic and morally condemnable.

So, in going about the bill, the senators must look inwards and engage in serious introspection. This may also be the time for the lawmakers to realise the full import of the gender equality bill that they mocked at and threw away with ignominy. It should also provide the sponsors of the rejected bill the opportunity to do the necessary homework and reintroduce it.

The second attempt should make the senators understand that the gender equality bill is not aimed at displacing them from their position in the family. It is not for contest over power in the family but about empowering our mothers, our wives, our sisters and our daughters. By that, they will be in position to deal with the amorous antics of the ravenous lecturers.



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## APC govt: A continuous assessment

caust called the PDP, capitalising on the gullibility of the average Nigerian and our poor sense of history. The APC provided a unique campaign style, supported by the 'Change' mantra, which we had all expected to be

positive. They boasted of bold politicians, cerebral technocrats working behind the scene, the goodwill of their presidential candidate (now President Muhammadu Buhari) and the affluence of some political businessmen and jobbers.

The APC has been in the saddle for 11 months, and it is not too early to analyse the emergent signs, so that where necessary, all Nigerians can quickly support or condemn any action of the government as dispassionately as possible, to avoid the type of collateral damage of the past regimes. The early signs are worrying, if not traumatising.

Many Nigerians are beginning to realise that the APC is made up of mere politicians whom we had inadvertently clothed in a cure-all medicine. The president appears to be a cloned OBJ, seeing every other person as corrupt except himself. This sweeping belief does him no favours; it rather creates a dual and conflicting personality for himself as a Saint-President ruling over a corrupt nation and wooing foreigners to come and do business with us. We are gradually coming to terms with how he treats us with contempt, telling us about ourselves only in foreign lands. Our ministers have largely remained anonymous, maybe, to prove the President, who had labelled them mere noise-makers, wrong.

In a fit of unprovoked test of ability, the President in August last year had ordered the military to see to the end of insurgency in the North East by the end of November. A post-insurgency reconstruction programme was announced immediately

thereafter. The order was tactless as the situation today suggests. The PDP was accused of lack of cohesion, but the APC has fared no better. With a majority in the National Assembly, the President has not been able to get the 2016 budget passed. Those accused of budget-padding are not ghosts; they are most probably APC ministers and other sundry card-carrying members. The trial of the Senate President, Bukola Saraki, does more harm to the APC than it can be claimed to be a clear determination to fight corruption. If we endured darkness under the PDP, what we have endured in the past six months is a total eclipse of the sun. The numbest approach of the APC government is the old, irritating, brainless resort to blaming saboteurs for our lack of electric power and petrol. You are to bring positive change and not to plagiarise the PDP's thesis on failure.

President Buhari has told us that his age is one of his draw-backs, together with our legal system which has tied his hands in his fight against corruption. This is cheap talk! He did not tell us this during his electioneering. The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and the Department of State Security (DSS) have been hounding Nigerians into various detention camps, accusing some of them of keeping millions of dollars in water tanks, under their beds, and inside their tummies. Such allegations are now routine and less believable. We have been told that many corrupt Nigerians have returned looted funds. Instead of making the details public and receiving some acclaim, the government, not trusting itself, appears to have stopped spreading the unconvincing propaganda.

Has it been all gloom these past 11 months? Not totally. Former President Jonathan's lack of political sagacity was compounded by an insidious and colourless Namadi Sambo as Vice President. Nigerians today have an erudite Professor Yemi Osinbajo as

Vice President, who possesses oratorical excellence and intellectual endowment to mellow down the harsh criticisms of President Buhari as an ethnic/religious irredentist and lacking in non-military acumen. The political will of the APC government to implement the Treasury Single Account (TSA) is worthy of praise, as it is expected to give government the opportunity of knowing at a glance the finances of the Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs). The increase in allocation from 18 per cent to about 30 per cent of our national budget for capital expenditure shows a desire to tackle our decrepit infrastructure.

In all honesty, the APC is already living tenuously on the residual goodwill of a few of its members, and on the patience of Nigerians. Unfortunately, the PDP has no moral standing to criticise this government, having itself presided over our worst period of developmental inertia. Can the APC government turn things right? It is possible, albeit the morning does not as yet offer a quantum leap to our "change" expectations.

On May 29 (three weeks from now), let us all pay attention to the President's speech and see what the APC has achieved in 366 days. Hopefully by then, the government may have re-purchased the Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN), flooded everywhere with petrol and begun to deploy the Chinese loan to paying the N5,000 monthly stipend to poor Nigerians.

FREE  
SPEECHBetween Boko Haram  
and Fulani herdsmen

By Tayo Ogunbiyi

These, indeed, are strange times for our beloved nation. Harsh economic realities occasioned by sharp decline in global price of oil, coupled with incessant fuel scarcity, unemployment, inflation, hunger and poverty, have continued to make life tough for the people. To complicate things, political situation remains as charged and volatile as ever. However, of all our nation's current troubles, insecurity is, perhaps, the most complex.

Until recently, terrorism is alien to our culture. But recent occurrences have since altered the equation. No thanks to the dastardly acts of the Boko Haram sect, Nigeria is, today, a focal point of global terrorism activities. Through a series of callously designed and devilishly executed bloodletting operations, unrivalled in the annals of the country, the sect has thrown the country into protracted volatility.

To underline its wide acclaim as a globally recognised terrorist body, the sect was designated by the United States Department of State as a terrorist organisation in 2013. In the first half of 2014, Boko Haram killed more than 2,000 innocent and hapless civilians, in about 95 attacks. In the last three years, more than 3,000 people have lost their lives as a result of Boko Haram operations. A recent research claimed that Boko Haram attacks have left at least 12,000 people dead and 8,000 crippled in the last three years while hundreds of thousands have fled their homes for the fear of the insurgents. The over 260 secondary school girls, kidnapped in a most notorious man-

ner from their school, Government College Chibok, Borno State, have been in the den of Boko Haram for well over two years.

As the nation continues to grapple with the arduous task of containing the activities of Boko Haram, out of the blues came yet another menace of a different kind, but with an equally potent capability to coldheartedly waste human lives. Take the back seat Boko Haram; enter Fulani herdsmen, the new blood merchants in town! Though the bloody acts of Fulani herdsmen have been around for quite some time, its intensity, of late, is quite alarming.

From Agatu in Benue State, Akure in Ondo State, Bukuru area in Plateau State, Oke Ogun area in Oyo State, Gassaka and Bali local government areas in Taraba State to Nimbo in Enugu State, rampaging Fulani herdsmen seem to be on a mission to draw blood. And blood they are getting. Everywhere they go, sorrow, tears and blood trail them. Curiously, they operate in such audacious fashion that makes mockery of our national security arrangement.

From the way things are, there seem to be a thin line between Boko Haram and Fulani herdsmen. Both are agents of death that regale in inflicting pains and sorrow on their victims. Think about many orphans and widows that the duo have unleashed on the society. Perhaps more fearful is the fact that they both seem to be above the laws of the land.

Sadly, as it was the case at the onset of Boko Haram insurgency, the dastardly acts of Fulani herdsmen have not been accorded the requisite handling by appropriate authorities. For instance, it took President Muhammadu Buhari 'ages' before he eventually came out with

a precise position on the appalling activities of the Fulani herdsmen. The motive behind such costly silence, in the face of acts capable of disintegrating the country, remains a mystery to ordinary Nigerians. It is exactly the same pattern of belated response that gave Boko Haram the impetus that turned it into such a monstrous group in the country. The reason(s) our leaders often wait pointlessly for the blood of hapless compatriots to be spilled in needless circumstances before stemming the tide would continue to be a mystery.

This brings us to the thorny issue of the modus operandi of both Boko Haram and Fulani herdsmen. The method of operation of the two groups is quite curious. As for Boko Haram, since it has now assumed the status of a global terrorist body, the sophisticated nature of their arsenal and operation is no longer unusual. What is, however, odd is the kind of rifles reportedly used by rampaging Fulani herdsmen across the country. It becomes curious as to what herdsmen could be doing with such combat-purposed assault rifles like AK47.

What could be the source of such dangerous weapons? If there is, indeed, a source, then, like Boko Haram, there would definitely be sponsors. If there are sponsors, the next puzzle is: what could be their motives? Could it be that purported skirmishes by Fulani herdsmen across the country are just clever ploys by some 'evil genius' to further throw the country into prolonged chaos? Could it be that recent upsurge in Fulani herdsmen atrocities is being orchestrated by some 'powerful' people with sinister intent to derail the country?

The implication of the foregoing is that appropriate authorities need to methodi-

cally investigate recent increase in the reprehensible activities of Fulani herdsmen. In as much as recent directive by President Buhari for relevant security agencies to appropriately deal with unruly Fulani herdsmen is welcome, (though belated), it is vital to emphasise that military or police action alone might not suffice in thoroughly getting rid of the nuisance of Fulani herdsmen. Sufficient intelligence must be gathered to really understand their motives, sponsors (if any) and grouses. It has been argued in some quarters that some of those at the forefront of current herdsmen 'insurgence' in the country are from neighbouring countries. This claim must be properly verified and appropriate action taken if it is found to be real.

Before Fulani herdsmen transform into another Boko Haram, thereby complicating our peculiar socio-economic and political situation, now is the time to decisively deal with them. According to Aristotle and Plato, what it takes for evil to triumph in a given society is for evil to continually go unpunished. Therefore, appropriate government agencies must rise up to the occasion by reprimanding Fulani herdsmen and their promoters. We have had enough of impunity in the country. This is the time to act determinedly against Fulani herdsmen. Enough is enough!

• Ogunbiyi is of the Features Unit, Ministry of Information & Strategy, Alausa, Ikeja.

## Addressing the dwindling fortune of Nigerian graduates

By Funmi Fasipe

According to the 2006 provisional census figures, Nigeria has a youth population of over 80 million, or 60 per cent of her total population. Of this population, more than 80 per cent are unemployed while about 10 per cent are underemployed. Data provided by the National Manpower Board (NMB) and National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) indicate that only about 10 per cent of the graduates released into the labour market annually by Nigerian universities and other tertiary institutions are able to secure paid employments.

By definition, a graduate is a person who has successfully completed a course of study or training, especially a person who has been awarded a first academic degree in a higher institution.

According to a World Bank statistics, youth unemployment rate in Nigeria is 38 per cent; but realistically, 80 per cent of Nigerian youths are unemployed with secondary school-leavers mostly found among unemployed rural population accounting for about half of this figure, while university and polytechnic graduates make up the figure. What seems to be more worrisome is that the nation's universities and polytechnics continue to churn out more than 150,000 graduates – both Bachelor's degrees and Higher National Diploma (HND) – annually and job creation has been inadequate

to keep pace with the expanding working age population.

What makes the situation a bit complicated is that employers of labour now believe that the standard of education in Nigeria has plummeted considerably over the past decades and that university degree is no longer a sure guarantee of effective communication skill or practical technical competence. These days, graduates who are trained outside the country are given prominence in terms of employment and are offered better paid jobs ahead of their colleagues from the supposedly best universities in the country. Mostly, when prospective employers cannot afford to risk training new employees because of high operating cost and the fear of losing a trained employee, they simply source for always-available, suitable candidates overseas.

As of January 1, 2016, the population of Nigeria was estimated to be 182,307,178 people. This is an increase of 1.94 per cent (3,465,943 people) from previous year's 178,841,235. The available facilities in the universities, especially the government-owned ones, cannot accommodate the number of students that apply for admission, thus different measures are used to shortchange some unlucky candidates. Some of the students that are admitted are not offered courses of their choice.

Gone are the days when companies and top organisations select fresh graduates for employment on the day of their convocation cer-

emony. Now, a brand ambassador for top organisations doesn't need to go through the four walls of any institution as long as their identity can attract sales.

As a result of frustration mostly emanating from economic hardship, some graduates have lost grip of their focus and values. Some of them have given up and stooped so low to hawk fruits on the highways, riding commercial motorcycles or tricycles and working as attendants in supermarkets and restaurants, receiving peanuts at the end of the month. Capitalising on the unemployment situation in the country, some employers simply exploit these young brains by underpaying them and over-using them due to their desperate need to find a means of livelihood.

A major issue in the dwindling fortune of Nigerian graduates is that too much emphasis is placed on theoretical applications in most of our tertiary institutions. But for a few, most tertiary institutions in the country place heavy premium on theory at the expense of practicals. This explains why we have continued to produce engineers but have not been able to make any appreciable technological breakthrough as a people. We produce engineers and other professionals that would end up seeking employment in government agencies where they concentrate mostly on paper works. There is clearly a failure in the school curriculum to place emphasis on practical concepts of entrepreneurship. Too

much emphasis is on theoretical education. Added to this is the fact that some of the courses on offer in most of the nation's higher institutions are clearly outdated. We no longer have any need for them in a 21st century world.

There is, therefore, an urgent need to alter the curriculum of our tertiary institutions to do away with courses that no longer fit into present day's socio-economic reality. Indeed, we need to lay more emphasis on technical education as well as courses that de-emphasise the craze for non-existing white collar jobs. Similarly, we should make effort to promote entrepreneurship among our undergraduates. This could be done through the establishment of internship programmes aimed at giving them the opportunity to learn valuable skills in contemporary fields such as information communication technology (ICT), fund development, public relations, programme development, management and much more.

Further, there is need to extend the period spent at the orientation camp by graduates that take part in the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) programme beyond what presently obtains. This is to ensure that, apart from the paramilitary training on offer at the camp, corps members could spend more time to be trained in different vocations that could make them economically empowered upon completion of the programme. This becomes very vital as a result of the dreadful state of

unemployment in the country. It has now become quite clear that certificates alone are no longer sufficient for economic empowerment. Thus, every avenue through which the youth could be empowered for economic survival should be taken hold of.

It is equally important, especially in the case of public institutions of higher learning that both federal and state authorities promote a harmonious relationship with both academic and non-academic staff of the various institutions to encourage industrial harmony. It is no longer a secret that incessant strike actions over various unresolved issues have, in no small measure, hampered tertiary education in the country.

According to former United Nations Secretary General, Dr. Kofi Annan, "Education is a bridge from misery to hope. It is a basic tool for daily life in modern society. It is a wall against poverty, and a building block of development. It is a vehicle for the promotion of cultural and national identity." It is in view of this truth that all stakeholders must unite to give a new lease of life to tertiary education in the country.

• Fasipe, a Library Scientist, wrote in from Anthony, Lagos.



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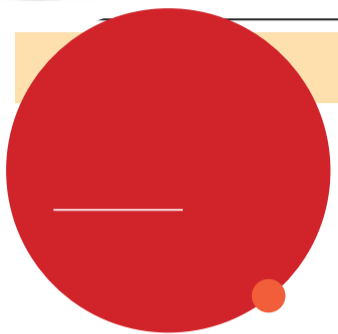


# Spotlight

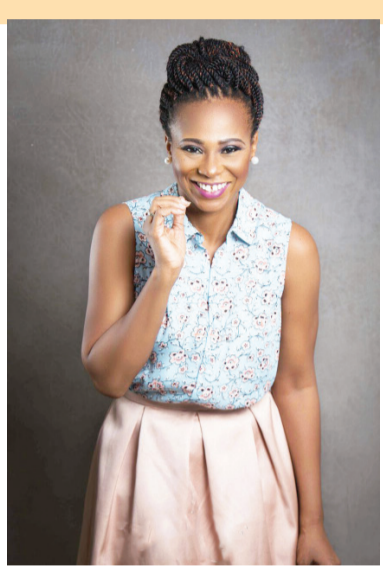
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Shun  
unrighteous  
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admonishes



'We're telling the Nigerian  
story through people's voices'

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# Donald Duke: E outside public o

The quiet life of the former chief executive of Cross River State, Donald Duke, bespeaks of the nobility expected of pastpolitical leaders in the country, writes Correspondent, SAM NWOKORO

**W**in Nigeria, the profile of former political leaders is replete with all sorts: instigation of groups for selfish political gains and jumping from one political party to another to remain relevant, even if it means sabotaging the larger interest of his constituency. Other abnormal behaviours of Nigeria's past political leaders include not finding other vocations to occupy their time and contribute meaningfully to society after power, sowing seeds of discord among politicians, and constituting unnecessary distraction to their successors. Of course such politicians are replete in Nigeria, especially since the return to democratic rule in 1999.

Former governor of Cross River State, Donald Duke, is one political office-holder who set up foundation to advance the cause of humanity. His out of power engagement has been exhilarating, sending virtuous message to his colleagues.

#### Philosopher leader

The kind of vocation a former leader engages in after leaving office says so much about his spirit, philosophy and, in general, his world view. For instance, former United States President Jimmy Carter is a famous surgeon. His regime was characterised by numerous crises spewing out from the international scene, especially from the restive Middle East Arab and Palestine. Since he left office, Carter has concentrated on mending people's lives all over the world through his various foundations and philanthropic works. He neither embraced politics nor romanced with the idea of a come-back. In 2002, he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his work with

the Carter Center.

Gerald Ford is another example. His work outside power has transformed many lives in education and entrepreneurship all over the world. Same with Rockefeller, Mac Arthur and Bill Gates.

Duke has been conducting himself to public admiration since he left office as governor of Cross River in 2007.

#### Unobtrusive

In the chequered politics of Cross River, the former governor had managed to stay out of the controversies of partisan politicking. He is not known to have foisted any political son on the state, so as to have a steady access to the seat of power and to dictate the manner his successor should run the state. Nor is it on record that he anointed any successor. Yet while he was governor, Duke initiated many landmark projects geared towards making the state grow economically on sustainable basis. His transformative policies enchanted even the federal government under Olusegun Obasanjo who was then always at loggerheads with state governors who he randomly accused of living rascally and squandering their statutory allocations. Obasanjo even at a time considered drafting Duke into the presidential race because of the man's outstanding policy initiatives aimed at mitigating revenue shortfalls accruing to the state after the cessation of Bakassi Peninsula to Cameroon following the world court ruling.

Some of the memorable achievements for which the governor would be remembered was the development of tourism in the state to a status of revenue-earner and global reckoning. The Tinapa Resort,





# Epitome of life in office



the Calabar Carnival, and the Obudu International Mountain Race were some memorable initiatives of Duke which his predecessors are also ensuring they sustain. The Calabar carnival attracts not less than six million visitors and generates billions of naira to the state. Duke not only advocated the development of culture and tourism as easier complement if not total substitute for oil revenue, he actually practicalised it.

His innovations and popularity reached a defining moment around 2007 that several Nigerian groups emerged in far-flung places in Europe and America praising the man's innovation and calling on him to contest the presidential election in 2007. He aspired for president in 2007, but stepped aside for the eventual winner, the late Umaru Yar'Adua.

Duke's visionary policies also touched on the development of the many deep seas in the state to improve regional transportation from the state to other parts of the country. Virtually all the policies his successors have been following were already scripted by his administration before he left office, and his people have been happier for the politics of Cross River which has been adjudged generally peaceful without attrition and witch-hunt.

Jazz, music of philosopher-kings

Perceptive members of the public reason that Duke's love for Jazz is inspired by his peaceful nature. Of course, the quiet spirit which jazz music radiates only magnates the spirit of peace-loving people. Any wonder that while he ruled Cross River, the state did not have bands of militants as witnessed in other parts of Niger Delta, though the state was an oil-producing state and then had the largest reserves before the table turned.

Asked about life after serving as governor, he frankly told journalists: "Like everything in life, you go through an adjustment period where you decide what to do with your life. Thereafter, you must constantly remember that you were doing something before then and these are only phases in your life. So you make the adjustment. So I went to a music school in England to learn how to write and score music for four months. I then went to Houston in Sugarland where I did saxophone recitals. It was fun. But like anything, if you don't practise the scoring of

the music, you lose it. I did another refresher course because my children all write music."

He wants a political culture in Nigeria where ideology is ingrained, so that Nigeria's politics would be issue-based.

"These political parties do not have ideological backing. They are only a platform. They are not based on ideology. Let's take the UK for example. If you take the conservatives, they have an ideology, which is right of the centre. The Labour party is left of the centre or at least centrist. There is an ideological bent. In Nigeria, there is nothing like that. Maybe in future, they will evolve. At one time, PDP boasted of being the largest party in Africa. That went overnight and people moved in droves to other parties. PDP did not change its ideology. It just ran out of favour with people. They felt they didn't have a future remaining in the PDP."

On April 29, 2016, the governor performed his jazz music alongside award-winning legend, Kirk Wharlum, to celebrate the International Jazz Day at Eko Hotels and Suites, Victoria Island, Lagos, and his mastery of the strings left the audience reflecting on the humanism and communalism embed in leadership. He is actively involved in a critical sector of the Nigerian economy, the transport sector where he is partnering with reputable international companies to bring about cable car transport system in chaotic Lagos and later other parts of the country.

Donald Duke was born on September 30, 1961 at 16 Annesley Street, Calabar, Cross River State, to the family of Mr. Henry Etim Duke and Mrs. Genevieve Etim Duke. He is the fourth in the family of five children. His father was the Chairman of the Board of Customs and Excise (now The Nigerian Customs Service) between 1967 and 1975.

He was the governor of Cross River from May 29, 1999 to May 29, 2007.

The saxophonist was born in the East, grew up in the West where he had his early education at Corona and Saint Mary's School in Lagos. His post-primary education was in Sokoto and Ilorin. He returned to the Federal School of Arts and Science, Lagos, for his 'A' Levels. He received his LLB degree in 1982 at Ahmadu Bello University (ABU), Zaria, and a BL in 1983 from the Nigerian Law School, Lagos. He went further for

his LLM in Business Law and Admiralty in 1984 at the University of Pennsylvania.

Having had sufficient exposure in academics, business and law practice in the United States, Duke returned to Nigeria and teamed up with some colleagues to establish the partnership of Onyia & Duke in Lagos. Being in active law practice, he soon assumed full management of the family's shipping business when he became Chief Executive of Hedges International Limited.

Duke entered into public governance for the first time in 1991 when he was appointed a member of the Board of Directors of Voice of Nigeria (VON). This was quickly followed by another appointment in 1992 when Governor Clement Ebrri appointed him a member of the Cross River State Executive Council and Commissioner for Finance, Budget and Planning. The appointment as Commissioner was unfortunately short-lived due to the abrupt change in government in November 1993.

He returned to private life in the course of which he became the chairman of Allied Merchants and Brokers Limited, a sole Africa Franchisee for U.S.-based Uncle Ben's Rice.

Duke has been praised for his contributions to the fields of agriculture, urban development, governance, environment, information and communication, unit investment and tourism. Through his work, Calabar is seen today as the "cleanest city in Nigeria".

He created the idea of Obudu Ranch International Mountain race which became one of the most lucrative mountain competitions in the world.

Duke started Tinapa Resort project to boost business and tourism in the state. Over \$350 million was spent on the first phase before opening in April 2007. The BBC reported in September 2006 that Governor Duke was the only governor specifically mentioned as not being investigated by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC



# TheNicheEntert

## AS+A signs artistes from Nigeria, Ghana

**A**ward-winning Nigerian actress, Nse Ikpe-Etim; award-winning Nigerian director and producer, Tope Oshin; multiple award-winning Nigerian actor, OC Ukeje; and popular television presenter and actress, Joselyn Dumas from Ghana are the latest addition to African Speakers and Artistes (AS+A).

It comes on the heels of the East Africa's leading speaker bureau announcing that it is expanding into Nigeria and Ghana, as it builds its portfolio of West African speakers and artistes for the international market.

Headquartered in Nairobi, and with an office in London, AS+A already represents senior business leaders, artistes and media personalities from across Africa. The newest addi-

tions to AS+A's talent roster are household names in Nigeria and Ghana.

Drawing from a wide range of sectors, from successful musicians to celebrity TV chefs and tech entrepreneurs, other notable names on its East Africa roster include Erik Hersman, technologist and founder of Ushahidi, iHub and BRCK; Bethlehem Tilahun Alemu, founder and CEO of SoleRebels Footwear. There is also Dr. Paula Kahumbu, CEO of Wildlife Direct; Kiran Jethwa, TV celebrity chef, and popular afro-pop music group, Sauti Sol.

"We have been building our base from East Africa, where we already represent a host of exceptional, and world-class business leaders and artistes, but our plan is to sign African talent from all over the continent as we grow, and we believe that the talent within Nigeria can be better

represented on the world stage," said George Issaias, founder and CEO, on the new signings.

He said further that Nigeria's speakers and artistes bring their own perspective and insights to international audiences.

"Our job at AS+A is to connect that talent to global brands, and to bring them worldwide exposure through international events and campaigns. We want our African performers, successful entrepreneurs and creative visionaries to get their share of voice and the international recognition they merit," he said.

"I'm quite happy to say I'm looking forward to the dynamic opportunities and liaisons to be enjoyed on this platform. Even better would be the mutual benefits that linger. A place called 'forward,'" said Ukeje.



Nse Ikpe-Etim

Launched in June 2015, AS+A represents some of East Africa's best known business people and artistes. Demand for African voices is growing exponentially. Universal themes have emerged which AS+A addresses from its roster of inspirational speakers and performers. Chief

among these are creativity and innovation, future and technology, leadership and diversity environment, conservation and development.



9ice

## 9ice, ID Cabasa, others to thrill in Lagos

**T**he Lagos City Mall will be agog when Afro hip-hop artiste, 9ice, leads other stars for a ground-breaking musical concert as Gaise, an Afro-fusion musician, unveils his record label this evening (Sunday, May 8). The concert, which starts with a red carpet at 5pm, will be held at Ace-Olivia Event Hall.

Gboluwaga Akinade Ibuoye, also known as Gaise or Gaise Baba, is an Economics graduate from the Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU), Ile-Ife, who came into the music scene with his self-titled album, GaiseBaba, in August 2011. The Afro-fusion

gospel artiste is a unique and gifted musician whose style is different from others.

Also on the bill are ID Cabasa; Isaac Gerald; multi-talented musician, comedian, compere and song-writer, EmmaohmaGod; Ranti; and Ayodele Okundalaiye, the self-acclaimed Senior Advocate of Comedy (SACO) and a host of other artistes.

Tagged 'Korinsodi – An Evening With Gaise', the event promises the best in music, comedy and other forms of entertainment for those looking for where to catch fun this weekend. The event is supported by Ace-Olivia Hall, Channels TV, Televi-

sion Continental, and the Lagos State Signage and Advertising Agency (LASAA).

The management of Ace-Olivia, one of the sponsors of the concert, said it would afford fun-seekers the opportunity to get quality entertainment in a relaxed atmosphere. Chief Executive Officer of Ace-Olivia, Mrs. Shola Akintoye, said the event would bring together the best in the entertainment industry.

Mall manager, Lagos City Mall, Kayode Ogundeke, said fun-seekers who have smart phones could enjoy free Wi-fi for the first 15 minutes at the venue.



# Entertainment

with Terh Agbedeh

## Bunmi Davies ready with sit-

**B**unmi Davies is set to premiere his latest comedy project, a sitcom entitled 'Jeka Play', on Tuesday, May 31.

Named after popular University of Lagos (UNILAG) restaurant and hangout spot, Jeka Play, which he owns, the sitcom is based on the interesting everyday happenings at Jeka Play, which is the epicentre of the UNILAG social scene. In 'Jeka Play', he reprises his role as the owner of the real life place as he encounters students, lecturers, cool kids and assorted regular patrons at the venue.

Commenting on the inspiration behind the show, Davies said: "My experience of running Jeka Play at UNILAG has been a very interesting one because by nature of the kind of venue it is and the campus environment around, we get some really interesting characters coming in all the time and there is never a dull moment with them around."

"I am the genuinely beautiful girls and guys to the 'I must belong by force' students, right down to the 'aristos', not forgetting the student politicians with good, bad and funny motives, and, of course, a few randy lecturers, it occurred to me that these everyday comedic experiences at Jeka Play should be promoted to a wider audience, thus the idea for the sitcom was born."

The show also features cameo appearances from popular Yoruba movie actor, Hafeez Oyetoro a.k.a. Saka, Wazobia FM Presenter, Nedu, and a host of others.

Davies' prior forays into comedy include 'Stand Up Nigeria', a platform for up-and-coming stand-up comedians to showcase their talents and gain exposure.

'Jeka Play' premieres at 6.30pm on Tuesday, May 31, 2016 on TV Continental, Star Times Channel 115.



Bunmi Davies

## The future of

**T**he future of African music is bright, says a CNN report posted on May 5 entitled 'From Afrobeat to Akon: Why African music finally has the world's ear' by Phoebe Parke. An interesting piece, but that is something the continent has known for a long time now, what with names like 2face, D'banj, Wizkid, Tiwa Savage, Don Jazzy and their counterparts on the continent commanding six figure performance fees and mega online music sales.

In any case, citing a report by PricewaterhouseCoopers, the writer said income from consumer spending on recorded music in Nigeria and Kenya was predicted to reach \$43 million and \$19 million in that order by the end of last year.

Quoting artistes like Lira from South Africa, Nigeria's May7ven and a host of others, the writer makes the case that indeed that the future

would get even brighter if only the industry gets better organised on the continent.

Lira, for instance, said: "My hope is that an African pop star will win a Grammy, and occupy the number one position on a Billboard chart. At the moment, we work as best as we can with the platforms that are available to us, at some point the power and influence of African music will be unavoidable."

Nigerian artiste, Mr. Eazi, who said this is an amazing time for African music, predicted that "Artistes will start getting proper publishing (deals) once the African music scene gets half as organised as that of the United Kingdom, once there's distribution, once there's marketing."

For May7ven, language is a huge advantage for African music.

"When you compare the growth potential of African countries to China and India, the major difference is that English is not the main language in those territories. So

despite their numbers, they may alienate the rest of the world, that's the reason African music and film industry will be the world's largest," she said.

Makes you wonder why the industry has been so slow in actualising all of the above. Stakeholders have often pointed to the lack of unity among artistes in Africa, but it would seem that all that is changing with collaborations taking place between artistes on the continent and the internet shrinking distances artistes used to have to make across the continent.

But as the report points out, African music is on the up, as evidenced by the diverse range of exciting and internationally popular artistes that come from and are inspired by the continent. And before long, that Grammy for an African pop star of Lira's dream will come to the continent.

### Favourites

## Bez Idakula

**Song:** I don't think I have a favourite song now, but I really like Asa's last album, *Bed of Stone*.

**Music Video:** I really don't know.

**Book:** *Outliers* by Malcolm



### Birthday

## Samantha Iwowo

Screenwriter, film director and movie marketing strategist, Samantha Iwowo, will be a year older on May 18. The Ph.D student of film studies at the University of Bristol, England, co-produced *Runs* with Benedict Alli of Kobo Productions last year.

Six women from different backgrounds share their stories of *Runs*, a docudrama that exposes the truth about "runs" in Nigeria, especially on student prostitution.



### New Music

## 'Getting you'

Ghanaian singer Efyfa's single titled 'Getting you' featuring Ice Prince is sure making waves. The song stands out on her debut album *Janesis*.

Efyfa released the album at the end of April and it is full of collaborations with Stonebwoy, Sarkodie, Shaydee and a host of oth-



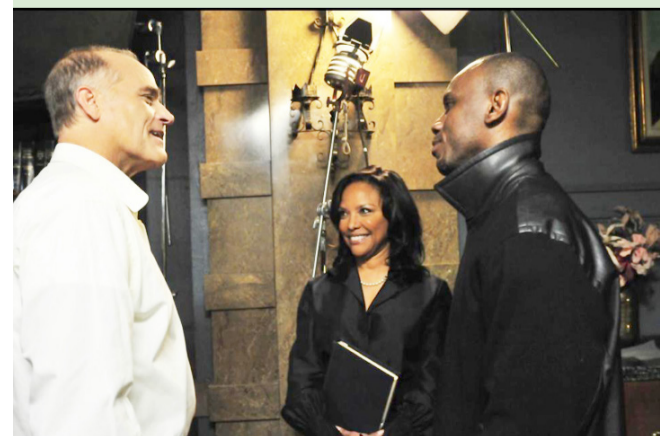
### Location

## BloodLines

*BloodLines*, which explores the consequences of mixing business with pleasure, stars Hollywood names like Billy Dee Williams, Lynn Whitfield, Brian Hooks, Chico Benymon, Doug Williams, Tangi Miller and many more.

Stanley, a member of a gang, falls in love with Lily, a girl with a rich father. He has to choose between the gang and setting his girlfriend's father up.

Directed and produced by Pascal Atuma, the film is a production of the African Entertainment Group (AEG) in association with The Atuma Brothers Company (TABIC) and CraigWal Entertainment. Walter Ojimba, an engineer, is executive producer and Oscar Atuma is the producer.



# Event

## CIPM 47th AGM

The Chartered Institute of Personnel Management of Nigeria (CIPM) had its 47th Annual general meeting (AGM) at NECA House, Ikeja Lagos recently.



L-R: Director, Professional Development, Dr. Charles Ugwu; Head, Learning and Development, Mrs. Titi Ashiru; Director, Special Projects, Mr. Sola Joseph; and a member of the Institute, Mrs. Ifeoma Onwuachu.



President/Chairman of Council, Mr. Anthony Arabome; flanked by the Immediate Past President, Mr. Victor Famuyibo (left) and Registrar/CEO, Mr. Sunday Adeyemi.



Members at the AGM



Leaders of the Institute at the voting station in preparation for elections



First Vice President, Mr. Azuka Diali (right) with Past President, Mr. Abiola Popoola



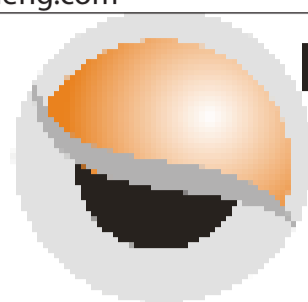
L-R: Director, Membership Development, Mrs. Toyin Ojudun; Mr. Adeyemi; Mr. Arabome; Council Member, Mrs. Nkiru Adesogan, and a Full Member, Mr. Niyi Aromolaran.



L-R: Mr. Adeyemi; Vice President, Mr. Udom Uko Inoyo; Mr. Arabome; National Treasurer, Mrs. Ifeoma Adeniyi; and Mr. Famuyibo



The Registrar and a Fellow of the Institute, Mr. Segun Osinowo.



# The Niche

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14" x 5"	355,000.00	17,750.00	240,000.00	12,000.00	300,000.00	15,500.00
14" x 4"	320,000.00	16,000.00	200,000.00	10,000.00	210,000.00	10,500.00
14" x 2"	180,000.00	9,000.00	140,000.00	7,000.00	150,000.00	7,500.00
10 x 8	400,000.00	20,000.00	300,000.00	15,000.00	330,000.00	17,000.00
10 x 5	395,000.00	19,750.00	300,000.00	15,000.00	315,000.00	16,250.00
10 x 4	375,000.00	18,750.00	290,000.00	14,500.00	290,000.00	15,000.00
10 x 3	300,000.00	15,000.00	220,000.00	11,000.00	230,000.00	11,500.00
9 x 8	388,700.00	19,435.00	285,000.00	14,250.00	290,000.00	14,500.00
9 x 5	355,000.00	17,750.00	287,000.00	14,350.00	270,000.00	13,500.00
9 x 4	290,000.00	14,500.00	230,000.00	11,500.00	240,000.00	12,000.00
9 x 3	230,000.00	11,500.00	180,000.00	9,000.00	190,000.00	9,500.00
9 x 2	150,000.00	7,500.00	110,000.00	5,500.00	120,000.00	6,000.00
8 x 8	340,000.00	17,000.00	237,000.00	11,850.00	240,000.00	12,000.00
8 x 5	290,000.00	14,500.00	197,000.00	9,850.00	200,000.00	10,000.00
8 x 4	200,000.00	10,000.00	150,000.00	7,500.00	170,000.00	8,500.00
8 x 3	180,000.00	9,000.00	130,000.00	6,500.00	140,000.00	7,000.00
8 x 2	130,000.00	6,500.00	100,000.00	5,000.00	110,000.00	5,500.00
7 x 5	230,000.00	11,500.00	180,000.00	9,000.00	190,000.00	9,500.00
7 x 4	180,000.00	9,000.00	140,000.00	7,000.00	140,000.00	7,000.00
Quarter Page	160,000.00	8,000.00	110,000.00	5,500.00	120,000.00	6,000.00
7 x 3	150,000.00	7,500.00	90,000.00	4,500.00	110,000.00	5,500.00
7 x 2	100,000.00	5,000.00	70,000.00	3,500.00	80,000.00	4,000.00
6 x 3	120,000.00	6,000.00	80,000.00	4,000.00	90,000.00	4,500.00
6 x 2	70,000.00	3,500.00	50,000.00	2,500.00	60,000.00	3,000.00
5 x 3	90,000.00	4,500.00	60,000.00	3,000.00	70,000.00	3,500.00
5 x 2	50,000.00	2,500.00	40,000.00	2,000.00	50,000.00	2,500.00
4 x 3	60,000.00	3,000.00	40,000.00	2,000.00	50,000.00	2,500.00
4 x 2	40,000.00	2,000.00	30,000.00	1,500.00	40,000.00	2,000.00
3 x 3	50,000.00	2,500.00	40,000.00	2,000.00	50,000.00	2,500.00
3 x 2	30,000.00	1,500.00	20,000.00	1,000.00	30,000.00	1,500.00
2 x 2	20,000.00	1,000.00	10,000.00	500.00	20,000.00	1,000.00
2 x 1	10,000.00	500.00	5,000.00	250.00	10,000.00	500.00
1 x 1	5,000.00	250.00	4,000.00	200.00	5,000.00	250.00

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10.5 x 10	FR (Back Cover)	1,000,000.00	50,000.00
10.5 x 10	TRC	1,100,000.00	55,000.00
10.5 x 10	FC	1,200,000.00	60,000.00
10 x 8	FRONT PAGE	2,000,000.00	100,000.00
10 x 8	FRONT PAGE	2,500,000.00	125,000.00
FR (day)	2 x 6	700,000.00	35,000.00
BP (day)	2 x 6	600,000.00	30,000.00
FR (week)	6 x 2	700,000.00	35,000.00
BP (week)	6 x 2	600,000.00	30,000.00
6 x 6	FRONT PAGE	1,000,000.00	50,000.00
Rectangle (2 x 2)	FRONT PAGE	400,000.00	20,000.00
Rectangle (2 x 2)	BACK PAGE	300,000.00	15,000.00
SP (day)	UNDER MATTERS	200,000.00	10,000.00
Circular/oval	FULL PAGE	1,400,000.00	70,000.00
Double Spread	FULL PAGE	1,100,000.00	55,000.00
Circular/oval	HALF PAGE	900,000.00	45,000.00
Double Spread	HALF PAGE	600,000.00	30,000.00
Wrap Around	FULL PAGE	22,000,000.00	1,100,000.00
Wrap Around	HALF PAGE	10,000,000.00	500,000.00

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 Fold: Portrait

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 Outside Page: 3 Days prior to publication

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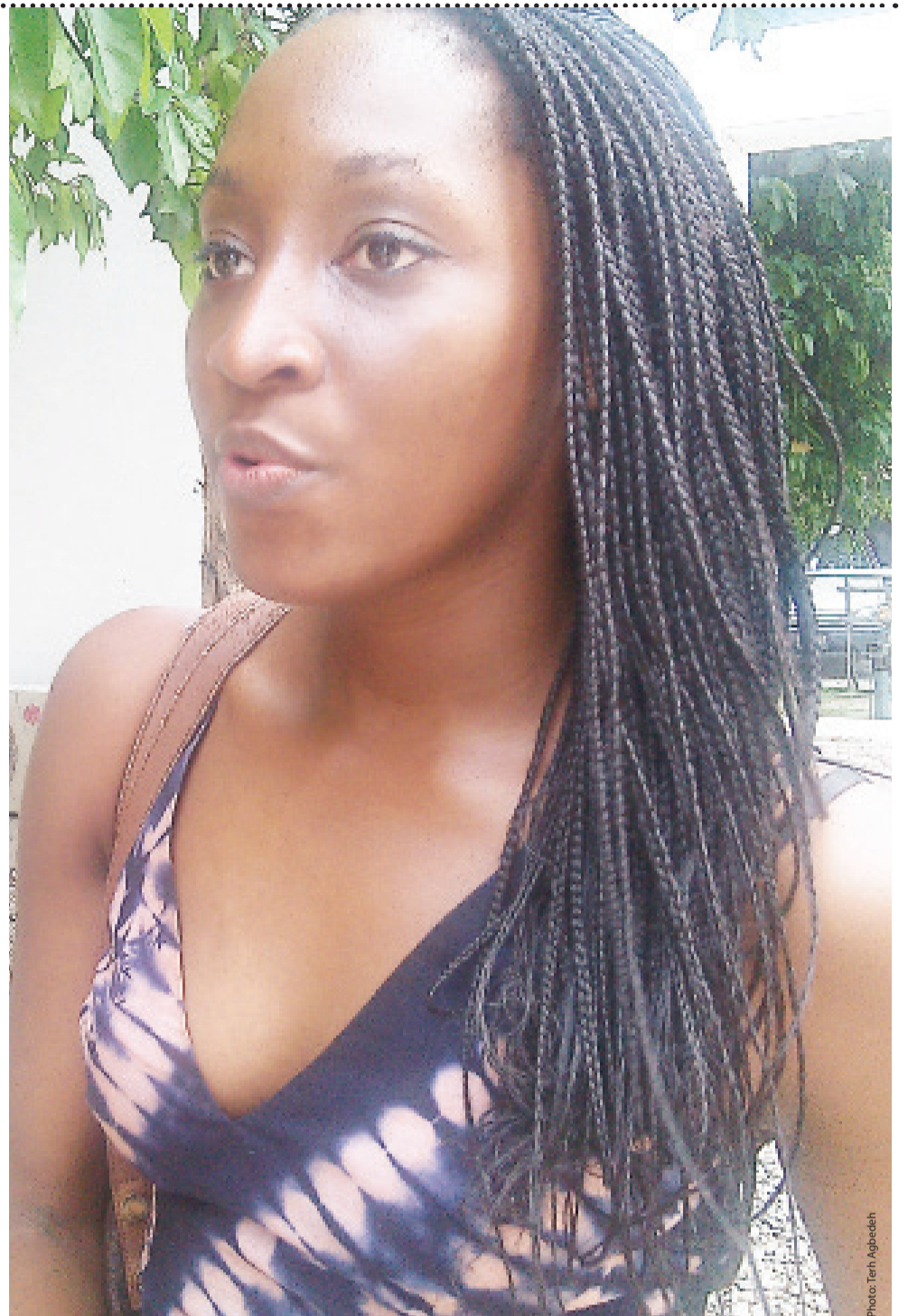
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# Close Up

## 'We're telling the Nigerian story through people's voices'

Ore Disu runs the Nsibidi Institute. Currently involved in the documentation of the Nigerian culture through the Memory Project, her film, *The General*, screened at this year's edition of iREPRESENT International Documentary Film Festival in Lagos. She tells Assistant Life Editor, TERH AGBEDEH, the story of the institute and its Memory Project.



Ore Disu

In the documentary, *The General*, you focused on a family from South South Nigeria; is it that your work is basically on that region?

It was coincidence that it happened to be a family from Calabar, especially one from the Efik royal family. But really, we are actually looking nationwide; we are also interested in stories from the Nigerian Diaspora who have a way of shedding light on how we see ourselves as Nigerians, where all of that came from, our place in such a fast-changing world. So, to clarify, we are not focused on just Efik culture, we are really about the Nigerian society at large.

Is it just documentaries you do or you plan to do books?

We actually just published a book in January. Although we focus very much on culture, we see the Nigerian society as leading a lot more engagement beyond that. So, we look at other topics that are relevant to our development, our perception of ourselves, including focusing on urban centres and how we are shaping the spaces that have become the basis for our society. Also, when we talk about innovation, what is our approach to that to create things that respond to our own local condition and aspirations? So, culture, yes, but also development, urban issues and everything that we find relevant to the society at large.

What were some of the things that

struck you in the course of making *The General*?

It was fascinating to meet a woman who had enlisted in the Biafran army. At that point, I didn't even know that Biafra was producing its own petrol, had an industry set up. Which actually explains why they were able to last so long (in the war), especially being cut off from the supply network. So, for me, it was particularly interesting finding out that this lady who associated with so many different people was also quite inspiring. For me, we sometimes understand Nigerian tradition as very conservative. Women are supposed to be quite toned down; we are supposed to defer to our husbands. But here is a woman who comes from a very traditional setting in the sense that she was part of the royal family, so she had to portray its etiquettes and yet she didn't feel any need to be demure; she didn't bend over backwards. And that is part of her personality, and what I found out later is that it is also part of Efik culture. She is in herself a head of her own sub-family in the Efik kingdom and the question of her being a man or woman was not being raised.

What is your take on the Biafra issue?

We encourage critical questions. We don't involve ourselves in politics, but we believe that if people have questions and have things to say, that should not be silenced because of something that is uncomfortable. I think that is one of the fundamental problems in how we approach Nige-

rian culture and knowledge.

But I would say that I don't personally support that in the sense that I think that there are many disruptions that affect people at the end of the day. So if it is the case of taking it forward and saying, 'look, let's actually remember', that is the importance of documentaries like this one. If you want to become a flag-bearer of a new movement, unless you really understand the impact it has on everyday people, I really don't think you have any right to be in that position. So we are trying to let people know that it is not really about supporting any political agenda, either pro or anti, but to say, this is the impact it has on people. This is how they remember. The process of actually recovering from that trauma is important to also document as well. That is our contribution to this.

The documentary looked very professional; apparently, you worked with professionals to produce *The General*?

I have an aesthetic professional background, so to speak. One of the things that I find personally interesting is that there are so many ways of telling a story and I prefer the pen. I research, I write, but I think pictures are extremely powerful because there are so many things being communicated to you in a sensory manner. It was good to find people who had produced films before, but they weren't really your up-market, fully-formed established cameramen or sound guys. They were really just people who are passionate, young and out to also make some money

out of it. I suppose it was, on my own part, trying to study other films and say, okay, this is the form that I think works; finding an editor that understood that division and willing to work with me and realising it.

This is the fourth film we have made. The other ones are a lot shorter, but it is still an experiment and the next one we will do may be differently. We may involve a different cast altogether.

What about the other films?

They were – I don't know if you know Remi Vaughn Richards; we actually sat with her and had a conversation to do with her own parents. Her father, an interesting personality, was an architect here in Nigeria; a British architect, came here, I believe in the 1950s, and was part of this movement on tropical architecture. This idea of having the modernist approach that was local in terms of the materials, consideration of environmental factors and also portraying the culture.

Sounds so much like Demas Nwoko.

Yeah, but then, her mother as well was a socialite of sorts. She was also one of the first nurses to be trained here and also established a nursing school herself. She was very vocal about environmental issues and I suppose because she was married to someone who was not a traditional Yoruba or conventional man in that sense, she got more opportunities to express herself. They used to have fashion shows in their yard. I thought that was very interesting. It started

in a similar way of focusing on the personal history of her parents and then on into the actual process Remi Vaughn Richards went through in archiving their works.

Are these films part of the Memory Project?

They predate the Memory Project in the sense that we started filming mostly to tell the story of the institute and also found that, you know what, this is a very powerful format. Why not, why don't we get people involved?

The *General* is actually part of the Personal History Series, while the Memory Project is a project of its own but is related in the sense that it is also focusing on the memory of the everyday ordinary Nigerian. The idea is really telling the story of Nigeria through the voices of the people who live them. It is not a filmmaker's project; it is really for anyone – students, journalists, bloggers, photographers – to come on board and take your own devices; if you need help, we have some technical provision. We are also doing short training courses for people who want to take part.



# Relationships

## Trust and transparency; foundations of marriage

Therefore, rejecting all falsity and being done now with it, let everyone express the truth with his neighbour (Eph. 2:25a).

Trust, simply put, is the total belief, confidence and reliability placed on someone or something, a belief that someone will do certain thing(s) or not.

While transparency means the ability to do things in an open, honest and clear way, without secrets, whereby your motives are not being questioned, because they must already know exactly what you are doing or trying to do.

In a relationship, trust is essential. It is actually a form of intimacy. You need to trust one another in order to make the relationship work and stand the

test of time.

Trust is when you know and you are also assured that your spouse is dependable, that he/she can come through for you, be there for you and has got your back. He or she must believe the same with you too.

Trust and transparency, put together, means the ability for people to be confident in what you do, or what you intend or propose to do. Trust and transparency are both foundations of marriage.

Being honest creates a solid foundation in marriage, and this allows you and your spouse to maintain a healthy relationship.

For example, when a couple already does things based on honesty, it will be hard for any outside force to come into their

marriage, because being honest with each other alone shows that they are both united, and they regard, and respect one other.

Deception erodes trust and leads to a breakdown of the relationship. It is therefore important not to keep secrets.

I am not saying, share every second or minute details about your life with your spouse; because that's just not realistic, and it's even impossible. However, there are some things that are just a must to disclose.

These include money, your differences, addictions, family, personality, and so on. In many cases, it is advised to share with your spouse things you know might impact on how you relate with each other.

When you notice you are starting to get attracted to someone else, either physically or emotionally, it is paramount you tell your spouse. Apart from your spouse having the right to know, telling even helps break up this attraction that might cost you your relationship.

You must let your spouse know of any ailment/health condition you might be going through. It is totally not fair to your spouse to come home one day and find you curled up in a foetal position, screaming in agony and pain, due to the fact that you've kept this ailment from him/her from its onset.

In marriage, 'the two become one' extends to your finances. Both parties will have to work

## Tinu Agbabiaka

Certified relationship expert

0817 313 7189  
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together for the financial well-being of the family.

It is important to share money issues such as large debts, bankrupts and credit issues, so that they can be addressed collectively.

Your hidden feelings should be communicated with your spouse, so there is no reason for it to be hidden in the first place. If you are carrying around baggage, resentment, forgiveness or anger towards your spouse, it is important you communicate it.

The longer hidden feelings linger, the greater the likelihood that those feelings will compound and eventually erode the unity of the marriage. Marriage

is based on mutual understanding, so it is important to share your most sincere feelings.

In conclusion, the whole essence of trust and transparency in a relationship is for your spouse to know what is going on with the real you, without being judged, and you getting the support your spouse can offer.

People enter marriage with hopes that it will be loving, happily ever after, which can be achieved only when there are no secrets between you and your spouse.

Secrets and its consequences can weigh a relationship down and/or kill it outright!

## I seduced my best friend's husband; now am pregnant

Dear Agatha

About three houses away from where I live, there is a very secluded guest house where men wishing to hide their affairs come to now and then with their dates.

But for the heavy traffic in the evenings to that place, nothing about the house gives the impression of what it is used for. Being in a very responsible estate completes the camouflage of secrecy.

On my way from work one evening, I noticed a very familiar car. Since it was about three cars ahead of mine I couldn't be sure by the time I drove through our estate security.

I know it entered into the guest house. There was no way I could go and check since I had work to do. Being a single mother of two daughters from two men, I take my job seriously.

I almost forgot until my friend called me around 11.30 that night to complain that her husband isn't back from work yet.

According to her, he was busy with a new project. I almost told her I saw a car like that of her husband in my estate but I kept quiet.

In the first place, the husband doesn't like me too much. He thinks I am a very bad influence on his wife because of my two failed marriages.

Second, he doesn't even know where I live. For some strange reasons I don't want him to find out because around him, I can't trust myself to behave. His maleness is that potent.

I immediately knew what his new project was. That night, I didn't sleep but kept vigil in the bedroom that looked directly over the compound. He left at about 12.30am.

For a month, I kept tab on him. I didn't know what I wanted to do with the information I was gathering because I would be the last to tell his wife anything.

The wife remains my oldest friend and we have been through some wildlife together, boyfriend swapping, and all those naughty things we did as young women, visiting spiritualists to make men fall for and stay with us as long as we wanted.

It was this charm my friend actually used on him the first time they met.

I honestly didn't mean anything to happen until one night I gave in to the temptation inside of me. I called him and gave him the name of the guest house on my street.

Since I knew when he would be coming, I waited for him outside my gate. That started the illicit affair between my friend's husband and me.

It has been a year now. My friend, unknown to her, tells me everything happening between her and her husband, how he doesn't come home anymore. I am always the one visiting her to prevent her from coming to my place.

Seeing how old and depressed she has become I want to end it all but I discover that I am deeply in love with him

and don't ever want to let go of him unlike all the other men in my life.

I deliberately got pregnant to keep him. He was happy at first but in these last couple of weeks, he seems to be withdrawing and don't pick my calls. I know he is my friend's husband but I have always wanted him.

You may condemn me but try to understand that I love him too and help me overcome this.

Idowu.

Dear Idowu

Try putting yourself in the shoes of your friend. Even if you are trying to justify your reason for obviously charming this man into your bed and arms, the fact remains that he isn't yours to keep.

If you had done boyfriend swapping as young girls, is it an excuse for you to do what you are now doing to her? How would you feel in her shoes? And to think she still confides all her matrimonial problem in you?

No matter how attractive this man is he can't be the only one with such charisma. Getting old and more experienced, the ways of life should have told you that the world is governed by responsibilities.

There is no way we can ever get all that we want from life. It would have been better this hurt is coming from an unknown person and not one she considers her intimate friend.

That she did her charms and got away with it doesn't mean you will get away with the one you have done on him.

In the first instance, God is very fair in His judgement. She didn't hurt another woman to get her husband.

You are hurting another woman, your friend, her children and home in the process of you having your wish fulfilled. This isn't right.

Well, you are old enough to handle the pregnancy. It was your choice to get pregnant, so be prepared to face the challenges of telling that child how the husband of your friend became its father.

Begin from now to defend yourself against the condemnation of that child whose foundation is already faulty.

How do you expect that child, if he turns out to be a boy, to feel among his siblings and relatives?

As a mother you should worry about that time when the child is old enough to understand the politics, intrigues and shame that followed his or her birth.

If this pregnancy turns out to be a girl, what moral authority would you have to caution her against following in your footsteps? Don't forget by then, you would no longer view life from this angle unless of course you think your ways remain the best.

There is nothing you can do anymore but to confront the ghost you have exhumed.

It is either you make the choice of staying out of their lives, conceal the identity of the father of your unborn child

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from your friend as well as think of an imaginary father in a far away land who is dead to give your child.

This way, you would be leaving the choice of exposing your affair to this man just as you must be prepared to go to your grave with this secret.

This option gives the child a free and fair foundation to begin life and exist as a product of true love and not a smeary one you planned for it.

You also have the choice to open up your can of worms by telling your friend you are the woman who not only stole her husband but also destroyed the peace of her home.

You can trust this option won't be without a dirty fight, one in which both of you would expire untimely.

Before you consider this option think of your daughters who need you around, who may not be as strong as you might have fortified yourself spiritually.

Your girls may be targets of reprisal attack from a friend if she has your kind of heart and wishes to hurt you as much you have hurt her.

It is unfortunate you didn't think beyond the immediate, but you must now if you even want to be alive to enjoy seeing this child you are carrying. It is only the living who get married and have children.

You have made a costly mistake; don't complicate things further. Life is too fragile, and its tomorrow very pregnant.

For now, go away until you have the baby. Change your number so this friend of yours won't be able to get through to you for a time. By the time you resurface, too much time would have gone for both of you to have the time to be close again.

Since apart from the fact you actually want to end this relationship, your also going away would help your friend and her husband reconcile their differences.

Over time they would find a stable ground to put this time behind them. Once both parties are determined to make it work, incidents like this can be forgiven.

You have had your wish to have a child for him, let him have her wish of a happy home. Having gone through two broken marriages, you should have an inkling into how she would be feeling now; her tension, fears and aches.

You said so yourself that she is suffering emotionally. Don't you feel something die inside of you anytime you behold the face of someone who trusts you so much and thinks you are on her side?

Sincerely, this is the least you can do in this situation and the most honourable thing for you to do first as a woman, and second for the good times you once shared as true friends.

Good luck.

# Faith

## Shun unrighteous social media, Sister



By Temitope Ojo

**C**hristian youths must shun all forms of unGodly addiction and explore all means to feed on worthy things that will build and sustain the God-purity in them. They must be determined to stay pure even online."

This was given to the large turnout of women at Sister's Talk 2016, after they watched a true life clip of a single Christian lady, Chinwe, 26, who got careless with her life because she wanted a Blackberry for her birthday.

The venue was at The Maker's Church, Osu-poro Close, Ojodu-Berger, Lagos.

Chinwe quickly gained followers on numerous social media, especially men, mostly because of her erotic pictures on her timeline. She was popular.

"I felt I was the main

girl, everyone wanted to follow me. I didn't care if it was virtual, it felt good; checking out my profile and having well over 2,000 followers, more than half of which were guys," Chinwe said.

One particular man, Tobi, caught her attention among her followers and she began pestering to meet him in person.

"At this point I had lost my mind. I assumed I was in love with him, and when my boyfriend at the time broke up with me, I really welcomed it. For me, it meant no more sneaking around.

"Tobi eventually agreed to come to Lagos to meet me. All this while he had made me to believe he was in Calabar, and would take time off work to spend a weekend with me in Lagos, when I heard this I was excited.

"He told me to make a hotel reservation for him, stating he would pay me back as soon as he arrived; and also he

said it would make him more committed to the visit and would convince him of my seriousness.

"I bought it all. He was smart, he was cunning, and I was stupid.

Tobi eventually made it to Lagos and they met at the hotel.

"He was tall, handsome, and he convinced me to spend the night with him. I told him I couldn't, because I had a test the next morning.

"Now, at this point I don't know what triggered his anger, but he started to call me foul names, and kept going on and on about how he always knew I was cheap, and he knew I was sleeping with other men.

"The same man who had swept me away, slammed me on the floor. He told me of how he had shown his friends all my nude pictures and how they had watched the videos and listened to the voice notes.

"He told me he had

made a bet with his friends, that I would actually pay for him to have sex with me, just to prove how stupid I was.

"I attempted to regain any little dignity I had left, and so I tried to mouth off at him. Suddenly he punched me in the face, and I tripped over and hit my head on a stool.

"The next thing I remember was waking up on the bed, I was tied up, and he was staring at me. His eyes were dark and he had a sinister smile on his lips.

"He stood up and walked towards me. I tried to scream and realised my mouth was tapped, my head was aching, the unfortunate part was that no one knew where I was."

Days later, Chinwe woke up in hospital with swollen eyes. It took more days for her to open her eyes, and then realised the damage Tobi had done.

"He had plucked out my eye, and cut my face;

he had cut my breasts up real bad that the doctors had to take them out like I had cancer. There was no record of who I was, because he had taken my bag, containing everything I had."

Programme host, Adenike Lamai, a pastor, counseled all not to follow trends blindly, as the internet is meant to be a tool for great good.

She said Daniel (12:4) foretold that "knowledge shall increase", and the internet is part of civilisation.

However, she added, it is becoming more difficult for someone not to have an online presence, given the global drive towards e-commerce, e-banking, e-learning, and so on.

Lamai noted that over the years, social media and cyberspace have evolved to become user-friendly, personalised, and easily accessible across different platforms; and have become fun, especially for young people.

Nonetheless, she cautioned all internet users to be cautious in what they post online. For a Christian, she stressed, what is posted online must conform with the Word of God.

She quoted the following Scriptures:

"Philippians 4.8 clearly says 'Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy – think about such things.'"

"Psalms 1:1-2: 'Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.'"

"James 1:13-16: 'Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with



# Sister's Talk admonishes



evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.

"Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. Do not err, my beloved brethren."

Lamai said it is important for every Christian lady to have her values right.

"When we have our values in place, only then can we make the right decisions. A Christian lady with the right

values must be able to ask herself these questions to help her establish standards when faced with life's difficult choices:

"1. Is it putting God first, conforming to His authority and glory or of the world? (Matthew 6:33; Colossians 3:17; 1 John 2:15-17).

"2. Would my Lord Jesus Himself do it? (1 Peter 2:21; 1 John 2:6).

"3. Would it be a good example? (Matthew 5:14; 1 Timothy 4:12).

"4. Could it hurt my body? (1 Corin-

thians 6:19-20; Ephesians 5:29).

She urged everyone to be mindful of the things they get exposed to, where they go, and what they yearn for, lest he that thinks he stands, fall.

Marvelous Lamai, senior pastor of the church, prophesied into the lives of women.

He said women should stop writing themselves off, no matter their circumstance.

Citing Job 14:7-8, he said no matter where anyone is now, he or she

can still sprout again – even the lady in the clip can still make something meaningful of her life. The only thing is "never allow the wounded soldier die."

The programme was impactful and inspiring, more than words can convey.

Sister's Talk, which began five years ago, is an interactive session where women aged 21 and above are encouraged to share knowledge.

# Moving the hand of God (2)

Continued from last edition.

In Second Samuel 24:14, David told God, 'let us fall into the hands of the Lord for His mercies are great'. When you are in a difficulty, it is the hand of God that you run into.

David had committed a crime, God had become angry with him and God came to David and said, choose three things; either the pestilence destroys you, I put you in the hands of your enemies or let me deal with you myself.

And David told God, "let me fall into the hands of God because His mercies are great".

How do you attract the hand of God?

1. When you build God's house. If you are working for God, God has a duty to help you.
2. When you have touched God in prayer. When you have touched God in the place of prayer, the Bible says that God will make His hands to be upon you. 1 Kings 18:41-46
3. When you are willing for God to lead you, God's hands will be upon you. Genesis 12:1-3 tells us that the reason why Abraham prospered was that he was willing to be led by God.
4. If you are will-

ing to make an agreement with God. His hands will be upon you. In Genesis 28 when Jacob was running away from Esau, (running away from his calamity and destruction,) he ran into God and had an encounter with God in Bethel. Jacob made a vow and the vow ensured that Jacob was preserved.

5. If you avoid sin, God's hands will be upon you. Isaiah 59:1 says, that "Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated you from your God."

6. If you are in sin, God's hands will not be upon you: sin is like an insulator, it prevents God from being able to touch you.

7. If you are totally obedient to God. According to Genesis 26:12 & 13, the Bible says that "Isaac sowed in that land, and received in the same year an hundredfold: and the LORD blessed him."

"And the man waxed great, and went forward, and grew until he became very great".

8. If you are ready to be used of God, God's hand will be upon you. In Judges 6:12 the Bible tells us that, Gideon though was hiding under the winepress was ready to be used of God and had God's

hands upon him.

9. If you are generous, God's hands will be upon you. You must go back to sacrificial giving. The only way that you can get is if you give.

If you give to God and give to the work of God, you give to the man of God, you give to the poor on different levels, God is duty bound to give back to you.

It was when Peter gave his boat to Jesus that he got a breakthrough.

10. If you are ready to go through anything and suffer anything for God's sake, God's hands will be upon you. The Bible says that they put Daniel in the Lion's den but God's hands were upon him.

11. When you know who God is to you. Psalm 23 says that David, because he knew who God was, God stretched forth his hand and blessed him. David said, 'the Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want'; and God said 'Amen' to that.

12. If you are humble, God's hands will be upon you to protect you, promote you and to lift you up.

13. If you are kind and considerate to other people, God will stretch forth His hand to lift you up when you are down.

14. If you ask God, the

## Becoming the best

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Bible says that God will stretch forth His hand to be upon you. In 1 Chronicles 4:10, the Bible says that 'Jabez was sorrowful because his mother bear him in sorrow and Jabez looked around himself and said 'why is there so much sorrow upon me'? Jabez prayed, 'my God bless me indeed and let your hand be upon me'.

And the Bible says that God answered his prayer.

If God does not move His hand in your direction, certain things may happen to you:

1. You may be still born. That is you will have finished at the starting post. David's child born by Bathsheba in 2 Samuel 12:15-19 was still born despite David's fasting and praying for him to live.

If life has been tough for you, you may be still born, spiritually dead on arrival.

2. If God does not move in your direction, your future may be stolen from you and you may never get to where you are going. In Genesis 27:35 Isaac told Esau, "God did not work in your direction, your brother Jacob has taken away your blessing."

3. If you are in constant pain, and your body is

sick all the time, then perhaps God has not moved in your direction. Matthew 9:20 tells us the story of a bleeding woman. She was physically sick and was an emotional wreck because God had not moved in her direction.

Matthew 17:14 tells us the story of the epileptic boy who because God's hand had not moved in his direction, he was constantly throwing himself down, foaming in the mouth and about to kill himself.

It is possible for God to transform your life because when the Lord's hands are upon you, anything can happen. In life, there are some things that you can do.

But then also in life, there are lots of things that only God can do.

A lot of people do not appreciate this fact and think that most things that they have achieved have been by the power of their own hands.

Why then are you struggling with life, when all you need to do is to put yourself in God's good hands because it is the hand of God that will direct the path of your life.

The hand of God is a metaphor for the power of God. Let the hand of God begin to work for you today.

# What Are the Heavens Like? (Part 2)

**A**lthough our responsibility is to lead you to the spiritual world rather than the heavenly kingdoms, we will describe some things about the heavenly kingdoms.

The Bible describes heaven as a place full of light where there is no sorrow, or pain; there is only joy. In the Koran, or more specifically, in the Hadees-E- Qudsi, the heavenly kingdoms are also discussed.

According to the Hadees-E- Qudsi, when one goes to the heavenly kingdoms, one will never age past thirty-three years. People typically don't like to grow old, especially when the aging process brings on all kinds of bodily and mental dysfunctions. So in the higher pleasure abodes you will not have to experience old age.

Here one is constantly pursuing sexual involvement because orgasm is basically one of the highest of pleasures in these realms.

In the Koranic description of the heavenly planets, it is stated that a man will be able to enjoy seventy virgins and that each person will have 80,000 servants. There are amazingly gorgeous women and extremely handsome men.

Your sexual experiences on earth would be like pain when compared with those pleasures. In terms of childbearing, when there is a desire for procreation in the heavenly kingdoms, a child can be brought forth in a matter of minutes.

The child is not a small baby, but a healthy and vibrant youth. There is also a special kind of intoxication there that doesn't leave an unpleasant aftereffect.

In the higher of the heavenly planets, the living entities sometimes live for millions of years, and in the highest of these, the living entities live for trillions of years. (Keep in mind, however, that this is all relative. It's all a matter of the time frame in which we view things as to whether we consider a time period to be short or long.)

Many of the mystic abilities for which we hanker in the material world are common attributes of the beings of the heavenly kingdoms.

They have the ability to make their bodies very small or very large, or even very light. Some of the heavenly beings can enter into this environment and reorient their atoms and molecules in order to manifest in certain ways.

Some of these entities have the ability to travel to other planets or other universes and the ability to acquire things from outside of their immediate environment instantaneously.

Entities of the higher kingdoms have all of these abilities. These are just normal for them – the science of energy conversion. Some people who are now in this universe have the ability to summon souls back into their bodies – commonly called bringing the dead back to life – just as Ezekiel, Elijah and Jesus did.

All of the demigods have this ability.

Some of you have a hunger for mystic perfection because of the

## Self-discovery

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association that you have had in the past with agents of those heavenly kingdoms. You have an insatiable

desire once again to be able to function on that level.

Because of being too preoccupied with these mystic perfections, you have been denied access to them so there can be a focus on the real homework you are to do here.

If you want to focus on these perfections while on earth, when you leave here you will go back to the heavenly planets where those kinds of abilities are common.

In these higher planetary systems, a different aspect of God is worshiped according to the evolution of the beings on that particular planet. In some environments, the aspect of God with which people are familiar is the god of the sun, the god of the moon, the god of water, or the god of air.

We can see the influence on

this planet because even here some people are worshipping one of these aspects of the Godhead.

In some cases it's due to some previous experience on a planet where that particular aspect is dominant and worshiped with reverence and distinction.

If the heavenly environment sounds exciting to you, then maybe that's what you need to pursue in this lifetime. If it doesn't sound quite so exciting, consider that there is something even beyond that environment.

These descriptions of the heavenly realms can give some stimulation, if you want it. Remember, though, that you'll be settling for a mere vacation, because life in the heavenly planets has to come to an end.

Sometimes after a vacation is over, you get more work than you ever expected, and you may even question if it was wise to have taken that vacation in the first place.



# Health

## How to avoid being a glutton



**A**s many of us know to our cost, stuffing down huge quantities of food may seem like a good idea, but the reality is somewhat different.

Not only will over-indulging pile on the pounds, it can leave you feeling bloated, suffering from indigestion, and, if you are unlucky, having to deal with gastric problems.

But unfortunately, for an increasing number of people over-eating is not just confined to festive seasons, it has become a way of life.

This has led to an epidemic of obesity, and many associated health problems.

Gluttony is nothing new. In fact, it was such a problem in the Roman Empire that Emperor Augustus enforced severe laws against extravagant menus or exorbitant spending on food.

But there are less draconian ways to avoid falling foul of temptation.

The best way to avoid pigging down vast quantities of food in a single, rushed sitting is to actually concentrate on what you are eating.

Many people simply shovel huge amounts of food into their mouth, and gulp it down without paying it more than the most cursory regard.

Maybe it's not surprising then

that they find it deeply unsatisfying – and as soon as they finish one mouthful they want more.

However, research suggests that savouring the flavour and sensation of the food, and making sure you chew it slowly and thoroughly is not only a more pleasant experience, it will make you feel satisfied far more easily.

Saliva contains a digestive enzyme called amylase. If you retain your food in the mouth longer, the enzyme has more chance to start the process of digestion.

It takes 20 minutes for your brain to recognise that your stomach is full, so if you rush your food, you can end up eating far more than you really need.

### Over-eating can make you feel bad

But this is not a problem if you mull over every mouthful.

Taking it slowly also lightens the load on your digestive system.

It is also a good idea to focus on eating – and eating without distractions such as the television – at meal times.

When you engage in other activities while you are eating, your blood supply will be distracted to other areas of your body, leading to inadequate blood supply for your digestive

system.

As a result, you might be unable to handle digestion, absorption and nutrient assimilation efficiently.

### More is less

It is also true that the more you eat, the more you want to eat.

You should try to eat only when you are hungry.

Constant overeating will gradually increase the size of your stomach due to excessive stretching of the stomach muscles.

Eventually, you will need to eat much more to feel satisfied.

However, this does not mean that you can't solve the problem – given a little bit of will power.

Waiting until your body tells you that it needs food is a good idea. However, it is not a good idea to put off eating until you are ravenous – you tend to gobble down food, and increase the risk of over-eating.

A good rule of thumb, some say, is to stop eating after the first "burp". This is your body's language telling you that you are full.

According to traditional Chinese and Indian medicine, we should eat only to about three-quarters of our actual food capacity. What is less clear, however, is exactly how you

measure this.

### Regular meals

A massive lunch may sound like a good idea, but you would be much better eating more lighter meals throughout the day.

### Symbol of indulgence

Some experts believe that it is healthier to eat five very small meals a day than opt for the traditional approach of three big meals at breakfast, lunch and teatime.

But opinion on which is best is somewhat split.

However, it is best to try not to eat until the previous meal has been digested. For most people this means three to six hours.

Eating relatively little all day and then bingeing in the evening is not good at all for blood sugar levels. The key is to make sure that you eat regular light meals, have moderate portion sizes and eat the right things.

For instance, some sugary, processed foods release a big sugar rush, but then your blood sugar comes down, and you feel hungry again.

It is best to eat foods with a low glycaemic index such as wholegrain cereals, green vegetables, nuts and pulses. These

**A good rule of thumb, some say, is to stop eating after the first "burp". This is your body's language telling you that you are full.**

foods are absorbed more slowly and are more likely to leave you feeling satisfied for longer.

### Realism

Two mince pies, with cream, and a share of the chocolate box after dinner can add 1,000 calories to the day's total.

It is also important to try to be realistic.

If you absolutely love cheese, then there is no point in trying to give it up completely because the chances are you will fail.

The best approach is to eat a lot less of it – and not to feel guilty when you do.

Above all, moderation is the key.

• Culled from [www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk)

# Kiddies Arena

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## Brain tickler



A bear walks south for one kilometre, then it walks west for one kilometre, then it walks north for one kilometre, and ends up at the same point from which it started. What colour was the bear?

The bear was white because it was a polar bear. The only place on earth where a bear can go south, west and north equal distances and end up where it started is the North Pole. Actually, the bear could go west two or five kilometres instead of one and it would not make any difference – the bear would be making a circle around the North Pole. East and west you travel along parallels which are circles equidistant from the poles. North and south you travel along meridians which are circles that cross both the north and the south poles.

Answer

what am I?



I am a delicious treat.  
Lick me with your tongue.  
I come in a bowl or a cone.  
Don't eat me too slowly.  
One of my flavours is vanilla.

Ice cream

Solution

## Invention



### Zipper

It was a long way up for the humble zipper, the mechanical wonder that has kept so much in our lives 'together.'  
On its way up the zipper has passed through the hands of several dedicated inventors, none convinced the general public to accept the zipper as part of everyday costume.  
Elias Howe, who invented the sewing machine, received a patent in 1851 for an 'Automatic, Continuous Clothing Closure.' Perhaps it was the success of the sewing machine which caused Elias not to pursue marketing his clothing closure.  
As a result, Howe missed his chance to become the recognised 'Father of the Zip'.  
Forty-four years later, Whitcomb Judson (who also invented the 'Pneumatic Street Railway') marketed a 'Clasp Locker', a device similar to the 1851 Howe patent.  
Being first to market gave Whitcomb the credit of being the 'Inventor of the Zipper'.

## Historical personality

### Christopher Okigbo (1932-1967)

Christopher Okigbo was born in 1932 in Ojoto in Eastern Nigeria, which at that time was still Britain's colony.

He received his early education at Umulobia Catholic School. In 1945, he went for his secondary education at Umuahia Government College.

Like many other major Nigerian writers, such as Wole Soyinka, Elechi Amadi, John Pepper Clark, and Cole Omotoso, he also attended the University College of Ibadan.

Okigbo first planned to study medicine, but changed his major to Greek and Latin, graduating in 1956. He edited the University Weekly and translated Greek and Latin Verse. From the university days on he was a close friend of Chinua Achebe.

Between 1957 and 1958 he served as private secretary to the federal minister of information in Lagos.

Before taking a job as the West Africa representative for Cambridge University Press in 1961, Okigbo was employed as a teacher at Fiditi Grammar School, near Ibadan, and then as assistant librarian at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka (UNN), where he participated in the founding of the African Authors Association.

Okigbo published his first poems in the student literary journal Horn which was edited by J.P. Clark.

As a poet Okigbo made his breakthrough in 1962, when his works ap-

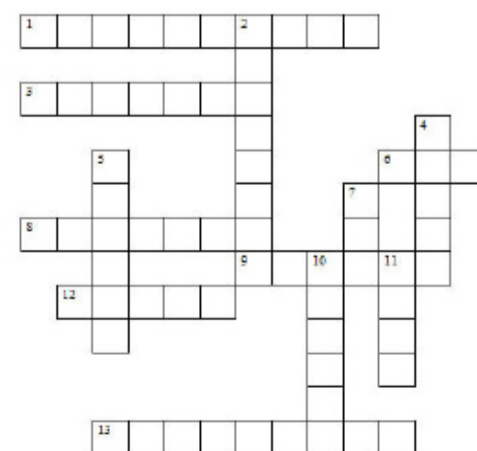


peared in the literary magazine Black Orpheus. In the same year he also published a pamphlet Heavensgate, and a long poem in the Ugandan cultural magazine Transition which was published in Kampala.

Okigbo's early poems reflected the divided cultural heritage of his country, although first influences from Virgil, Ovid, Eliot, and Pound seem to be stronger than the oral literature of the Igbo.

He occasionally portrayed himself as a singer-musician, who speaks with the ancient, pre-literate language of drums.

### Animals Crossword Puzzle



#### ACROSS

- 1 Big animal that has one horn
- 3 This animal has a very long neck
- 6 Man's best friend
- 8 Lives in the cold and waddles
- 9 Slow moving and has a shell
- 12 Striped animal that looks like a horse
- 13 Can swim under water and walk on land and has a big bite

#### DOWN

- 2 This animal has a long trunk
- 4 This animal likes to eat carrots and sugar cubes
- 5 This animal loves bananas
- 7 Some say this animal has nine lives
- 10 Has big ears and likes to hop
- 11 King of the jungle



# Kiddies Arena

## StarKid

Name: Favour Nna  
 Age: Four years  
 School: Scooby Doo Nursery & Primary School, Gowon Estate  
 Class: Prep One  
 Career goal: Medicine  
 Best colour: Pink  
 Best food: Rice and Plantain



Be our StarKid: Send your child's full-sized photograph and details to [ibilade@gmail.com](mailto:ibilade@gmail.com).

### BOY GEORGE

Kayce : 080-240-41237



### SPOT TEN DIFFERENCES



### DID YOU KNOW ?

- ⇒ Owls can turn their heads as much as 270 degrees.
- ⇒ There are around 200 different owl species.
- ⇒ Horses can sleep both lying down and standing up.

### Poem

#### Jesus Loves Me; Easter Tells Me So

By Joanna Fuchs  
 Jesus loves me, this I know;  
 The Easter story tells me so.  
 He died for me to bear my sin;  
 He opened heaven to let me in.

Yes, Jesus loves me;  
 Yes Jesus loves me;  
 Yes Jesus loves me;  
 Easter tells me so.

Jesus loved me when He died,  
 Loved me enough to be crucified.  
 But His death didn't last very long,  
 Because His power is so strong.

Yes, Jesus loves me;  
 Yes Jesus loves me;  
 Yes Jesus loves me;  
 Easter tells me so.

Jesus' came back from the dead  
 I know because the Bible said.  
 Jesus is my Lord and King;

Love and praise to Him I bring.

Yes, Jesus loves me;  
 Yes Jesus loves me;  
 Yes Jesus loves me;  
 Easter tells me so.

When I die, I'll rise up, too.  
 We'll all be in heaven, me and you.  
 We'll see Jesus face to face.  
 Up in heaven, that happy place.

Yes, Jesus loves me;  
 Yes Jesus loves me;  
 Yes Jesus loves me;  
 Easter tells me so.

The Easter story brings much joy  
 To us all, each girl and boy.  
 Jesus is my Savior now;  
 Heaven and earth to Him must bow.

Yes, Jesus loves me;  
 Yes Jesus loves me;  
 Yes Jesus loves me;  
 Easter tells me so.

Be our poet: Send your poems to [ibilade@gmail.com](mailto:ibilade@gmail.com).

### LITTLE LESSONS OF LIFE

- Do not depend too much on anyone because even your shadow leaves you when you're in darkness.
- Watch what you say and know when to keep quiet because your mouth can block or delay your blessings.

Kayce : 080-240-41237

# Arts

with Terh Agbedeh

## REVIEWS&PREVIEWS

Ovie Smart has said he is seeking N50 million from the federal government as compensation for the trauma he underwent after his workshop was demolished and artworks destroyed at the NCAC Artistes' Village, National Theatre, Lagos over four months ago. "I am not asking too much with the economic situation our country is facing presently. I am not looking at it as an avenue to make more money. But, after whatsoever is going to happen, I would demand a public apology from these people," he said in an interview with TheNiche at the Federal High Court, Ikoyi, where he instituted a suit against the federal government and its 10 agencies.

Smart's lawyer, Michael Akinyemi, told TheNiche that the lawsuit was to enforce the fundamental human rights of his client against the Federal Government of Nigeria and its agencies, obviously not a money-making venture.

"We are suing for a paltry N50 million to get justice done; others could have gone for more. If we had wanted to go for more, considering the level of hardship Smart has gone through since Saturday, January 23, we could have gone for more. The money is not the issue, but getting justice done is the focal point," he stated.

He said he was aware of how the federal government shows disregard for court summons and its many ways of frustrating judicial processes, but assured that his firm "is ready to weather the storm and see the case to a logical conclusion".

The demolition of the Artistes' Village, he explained, is a show of power and disrespect for subsisting contractual laws because his client was a legal resident paying rent, tax and other utility bills to a government agency, only for another agency of the government to carry out demolition supervised by one Kabir Yusuf

Yar'Adua without prior notice to the occupants.

The lawsuit entitled 'Mr. Ovie Smart v A.G. Federation and 10 Others' with number FHC/L/CS/378/16 has Smart trading under the name and style of Woodcocks Studio & Gallery as plaintiff with the following respondents: Attorney General of the Federation, Inspector General of Police, Police Service Commission, and the Divisional Police Officers (DPOs) of Denton, Iponri and Ijora police stations.

Others are: Officer-in-Charge of National Theatre Police Post; Federal Ministry of Tourism, Culture and National Orientation; Mr. Kabir Yusuf Yar'Adua (G.M. National Arts Theatre); National Council for Arts and Culture (NCAC); and CCECC Nigeria Limited.

The respondents were not in court at the first hearing on April 11 when the case came before Justice Ibrahim Buba of Courtroom 5. The judge adjourned the case till April 28. Unfortunately, the respondent had still not been served by that date.

Arterial Network Nigeria, a pan-African network of artistes under the aegis of its brainchild, ArtWatch Africa, a body charged with concerns for artistes' rights, has since shown massive interest and support for this case.

The sculptor, who used to be a resident artist at the NCAC Artistes' Village, said he had been at home and unable to work since January 23.

He recalled that it was a very sad incident that faithful Saturday morning. "I was called upon before 6am and I had to rush from my house in Ikorodu. The person beside my studio called me that there were bulldozers around demolishing my studio," he said.

He explained that on getting to the Artistes' Village, he discovered heavy presence of policemen, construction workers and a lot of people.

"My studio space was all rubbles and I couldn't recognise the place. My works, my tools, my machines, everything was muddled up," he said.

According to him, what made the day even

## 'I want N50m, apology from FG'



Smart

more traumatic was that he was not only shot in the leg but was also manhandled by policemen.

"I wanted to see what was happening, who was doing the demolition. On getting to the front, I discovered that it was the General Manager of the National Theatre, Kabir Yusuf Yar'Adua that led the policemen," he said.

He alleged that Yar'Adua asked the policemen to manhandle him.

"They cuffed me with my hands behind my back. Even the people trying to take pictures and record videos were manhandled. From one of the videos, you will see that the person behind the camera was trying to run because

they never really wanted any evidence on that issue," he said.

Smart, who insisted he was not hit by a stray bullet, said: "People were yelling at them and booing them, I believe that was the offence."

## Saraba Manuscript Prize announces winner

Eboka Chukwudi Peter is the winner of the Saraba Manuscript Prize (fiction category). Drawn from a longlist of 10 writers, he won with his manuscript 'Mosaic: Stitches of Stories Lived, Stories Learned and Stories Told'.

The judges also announced a shortlist of four other writers to include: Hajara Hussaini Ashara ('1994'), Amarachi Priscilla Ekeke ('Beyond the Beautiful Sea'), Ebelechukwu Ijeoma Mogo ('UJBG and Other Stories') and TJ Benson ('We Won't Fade into Darkness').

Speaking on behalf of the judges, Rotimi

Babatunde said the stylistic variety of the 10 works longlisted for the Saraba Manuscript Prize, as well as their diversity in matters of theme and setting, is refreshing.

"Noteworthy in their different ways, the works collectively communicate the impressive creative energies powering the practice of rising voices in new Nigerian fiction. The longlist confirms the abundance of literary potential yet untapped by publishing in Nigeria. We hope that all the manuscripts, including the ones that did not make the shortlist, will find a home in the hearts of readers in Nigeria and around the

world.

"The Saraba Manuscript Prize goes to Eboka Chukwudi Peter for his visceral excavations of the subterranean anguish of contemporary life using sinuous, prehensile prose that opens up new aesthetic possibilities in Nigerian fiction."

The prize includes an award of N100,000 to the winning author. All shortlisted writers will receive a publishing deal from Saraba Literary Trust, including N100,000 advance against royalties. The announcement of the shortlist and winner begins a year-long process of publishing and promoting the manuscripts in book form.

The goal of Saraba is to encourage and promote long-form writing by emerging writers, working in fiction and non-fiction. Up to 10 manuscripts will be published in print and electronic form. Seed funding for the project was received from the Miles Morland Foundation.

The other judges are Azafi Omoluabi-Ogosi and Eghosa Imasuen.

## DFM gets new partner

The Durban FilmMart (DFM), the joint programme of the Durban Film Office (DFO) and the Durban International Film Festival (DIFF), has added the Sorfond Norwegian South Film Fund to its roster of strategic partners for its seventh edition, which runs from June 17 to 20.

A statement from Sharlene Versfeld of Versfeld and Associates said that as part of the partnership, Sorfond will provide a new DFM award which will give the selected project the opportunity to pitch

at the Sorfond Pitching Forum in Oslo later this year.

"The main objective of Sorfond is to increase film production in countries where filmmakers face political or economic restraints," said the statement.

The Pitching Forum is held every year in October during the Films from the South Festival in Oslo. The event gives international producers from countries in the South the chance to present their projects to potential Norwegian co-producers, with the aim of entering into a co-production agreement and applying for further sup-

port from Sorfond. The DFM award consists of a confirmed seat at the pitching forum, a pitch course, coverage of hotel and meals, and a substantial contribution towards travel expenses.

"Since its first round of grants in 2012, Sorfond has become an increasingly important player in the tough market of co-financing film productions beyond the western hemisphere," said Lasse Skagen, artistic director of Sorfond.

"Through engaging in a new co-operation with Durban FilmMart in 2016, giving a seat to an emerging African director

at the pitching forum in October, and promoting the possibility of Sorfond funding at the market, we hope to increase the presence of African applicants in the 2017 round of Sorfond grants. We are very grateful to Durban FilmMart for giving us this opportunity to join forces with one of the most prestigious film markets on the African continent."



# Arts

## Olisa Agbakoba, Yeni Kutu, others to mentor at ACG

**T**he African Creative Gym (ACG), which will hold classes in the four Saturdays of June, will have frontline lawyer and Senior Advocate of Nigeria (SAN), Olisa Agbakoba; music festival director, Yeni Kutu; and a host of others mentor entrepreneurs.

An initiative of Hubroom Consulting, ACG also features Theo Lawson, a foremost architect and CEO Total Consult Nigeria; Frank Halim, CEO of Hubroom Consulting; Yinka Osobu, CEO of CMC Interiors Nigeria Limited, Iyabode Aboaba, COO of the Freedom Park, Lagos; and Damola Ogundele, CEO of ASIRI magazine.

Yaa Asantewa, a representative of the organisers, said ACG is structured around engagements with eminent facilitators, lecture presentations, team-based discussion of readings and field training.

"Participants will benefit

from the over 150 years combined experience of our facilitators and programme drivers. Focus will be on teaching skills to identify opportunities within the immediate community and the day-to-day real life experience of running a successful business. They will also benefit from the wide array of experience and topics dealing with politics, philosophy, culture, history, society, inventions, ideas, institutions and businesses," she said.

The workshop, she added, is structured around the following major themes: 'Understanding Yourself,' 'Understanding Your World,' 'Activating Your Dreams: Visioning and Innovation,' 'Understanding Your Business: The Real World,' 'Understanding Money' and 'The Digital World'.

The programme is designed especially for those with a desire to attain uncommon business breakthroughs and is aimed at revealing cutting edge success tips to start-ups, small

and medium-scale enterprises (SMEs), unemployed graduates, intending business owners and those who cherish the possibilities of growing existing businesses within the shortest time.

According to the organisers, those who attend will ignite passion for dreams through side-to-side arming of attendants with business tricks that would serve as alternative revenue generation.

Classes with each Saturday by 10am at Freedom Park, Lagos.

The programme is coordinated by Hubroom Consulting and powered by Freedom Park, Shekere, and ASIRI magazine. Interested participants can reach the organisers online or at the venue before June.



Agbakoba



Yeni Kutu

## 'Earth from Above' opens at Moorhouse

**T**he exhibition by Yann Arthus-Bertrand from his famous 'Earth from Above' series will open at the Moorhouse, Ikoyi, on Friday, May 13. Comprising of 21 photos, it presents

concrete initiatives in four sectors: cities, agriculture, energy transition and climate change adaptation.

Time for the opening reception is 7pm.

Arthus-Bertrand is a French photographer, jour-

nalist, reporter and environmentalist. He is especially well known for his book, Earth from Above, and his film, Home.

### Book Review

## Implosion of a divided abode

Book Title: What Will People Say  
Author: Rehana Rossouw  
Genre: Fiction  
Pages: 332  
Publisher: Jacana Media  
Year of Publication: 2015  
Reviewer: Adeniyi Taiwo Kunnu

**T**he greater chunk of our world may be sailing on the winds of the seemingly unending political problems, the terrorist attacks, depletion of both crude and cash reserves, or better said, the generality of the bitterness which pervades our human space. These are realistic aspects of our troubled lives, but when a work concerns itself so much about human lives from the very root of it, which is the family, it becomes obvious that attention is being paid beyond words, although this is word-business.

What Will People Say splatters on each flip of the sheets obvious fictional account, but true to our daily activities and interactions in 332 pages and precisely 32 chapters. Rehana Rossouw pitches the conflicts of the home deftly among one another and with the dexterity of a trained seamstress brings all issues to intertwine, as the loggerheads of 'litluns' and 'biguns' wriggle to the fore. Notably, the saying about 'little leaven leavening the whole lump' finds its place in the work of the South African.

The vicissitudes of life visit the Fouries and leave them differently, or rather impact them in ways that are permanently altered. Neville Fourie's job as a messenger at a law firm enables some income for the family, when combined with Magda's take home from the clothing factory. Both think their family is just well and without worries, until the aspiration of their teenage children spur them in different directions. Nicky, whom through this work is seen for the greater part, has aspirations to become a lawyer with the

hope to leverage her intelligence.

Suzette, the elder to Nicky and the eldest of the Fouries' three children, believes her way out of poverty is to become a model – having been nudged in that direction owing to the affirmation by her friends because of her good looks. She will stop at nothing to attain that and live her dreams. Anthony, who is only son and last of three for the Fouries, has penchant for power and money, but unknown to only a 13-year-old, the consequences of leading a life full of lies could lead to a painful end.

Rehana Rossouw engages the misnomer of parental guidance, when Mrs. Fourie allows her love for Anthony overshadow the careful attention she would have paid to her favourite child. Neville, on the other hand, feels contentment for meeting his children at home after work, but the activities that take place between after school and his return from work appear inconsequential but dire.

By implication, the author calls our attention to the lapse of not, as in a book, reading between the lines of the actions of our children. Be there and ahead of their ever-changing antics.

What people will say seems more important to the Fouries, especially Magda, the woman of the house, whose high-handedness allows Suzette cook up lies that work for her all the time she sleeps away from home, has sex at a church camp meeting, misses school for weeks to get a job before eventually dropping out, has a romp getting high on cocaine and at another time almost gets raped.

The lessons are replete for parents, guardians and every individual to learn, that the minds of adolescents differ completely from the teenage junctures of young lives.

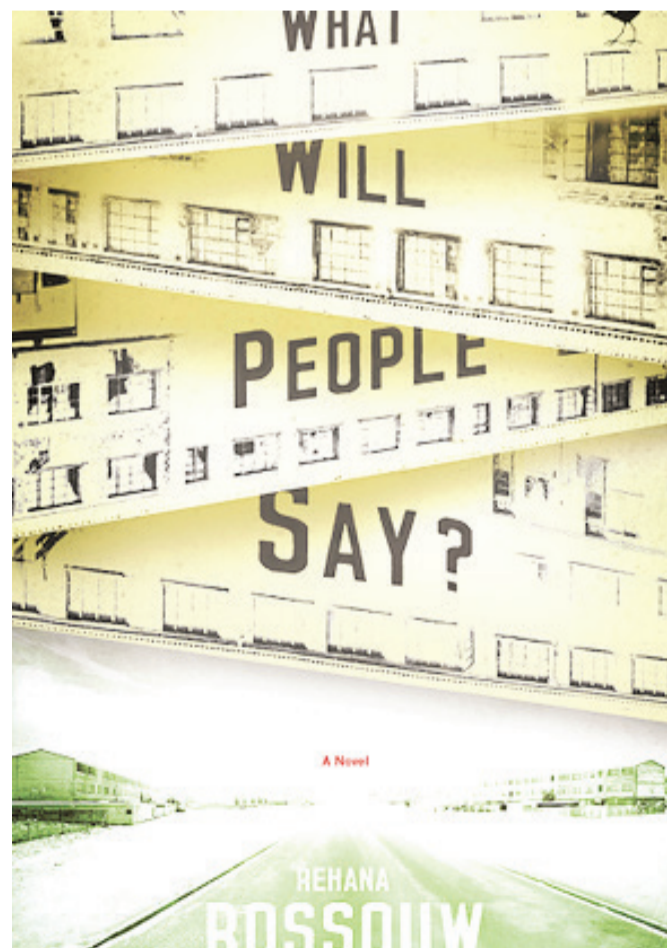
The society also gets flayed for its part in Anthony's demise. At 13, the first year in the teenage circles, not much is known no matter how much the teenager claims to know. Ougat, the one who lures him into dealing in

drugs and his eventual deflowering when he rapes his elder sister's friend, Shirley, is one of the many instances of gangs and gangsterism that the society needs pay attention to. Anthony crosses the Rubicon and gets killed in cold blood. His parents want just good grades from school and religiosity, but are handed a dead son.

Rossouw examines the underbellies of the South African society and in very practical ways, Africa and the rest of the world. She boldly speaks to the issue of the family, which appears to be getting lesser attention these days. She obviously opens the reader's heart to listen more, care more and watch one's wards more. The days on many fronts are painfully evil, and without being vigilant, the loss to the family unit could be very difficult to heal. Her ability at free expression is delicious, even as she employs immense vocabulary of South African emanation, which includes Ouens, Kwaai, befokte, ghafees, among many others.

The historical juncture in which the book is set is also symbolic as much as symptomatic of the upheavals that run through the pages. The Fouries lose a son in Anthony, but his rape produces a son from Shirley; one of their daughters, Nicky, becomes a paralegal with jeopardy to her dreams of becoming a lawyer and eventually not marrying Kevin – her lover. The Church of Eternal Redemption that Magda holds in esteem and pays her tithes dutifully to throws her family out when it needs the church most. Her marriage also comes apart after her son's death rips it to shreds, causing her husband to pitch his tent with a neighbour who already has five children from five men.

"People got a democratic right to fuck up their lives.... They got used to their oppression, they don't know any other way. Your job is to show them a better life, but you can't force them to accept it. You got to keep conscientising them, eventually they will get



the message..." (page 307).

Life is a choice and must be lived consciously by making the right choice. These musings are no doubt the author's.

• Kunnu is a Lagos-based literary scholar.

# Fashion

Temitope Ojo

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## Olorunfunbi wins Pearl Look Runway crown

**O**lorunfunbi Ayinde-Kodaolu, 23, emerged the winner of the fourth Pearl Look Runway Model Competition held at Oriental Hotel, Lagos.

Pearl Look is the initiative of Doyin Hastrup Olatokunbo, who is also a model.

After auditions in Benin City, Port Harcourt, Lagos, and Enugu, 20 contestants were selected and trained at a boot camp on catwalk, poise, and style.

Olorunfunbi, the winner, has the opportunity to explore international modeling stints in Johannesburg, Milan, and New York.

Here is a sample of those who attended the event, which was hosted by Owen Gee and Kayla Oniwo.



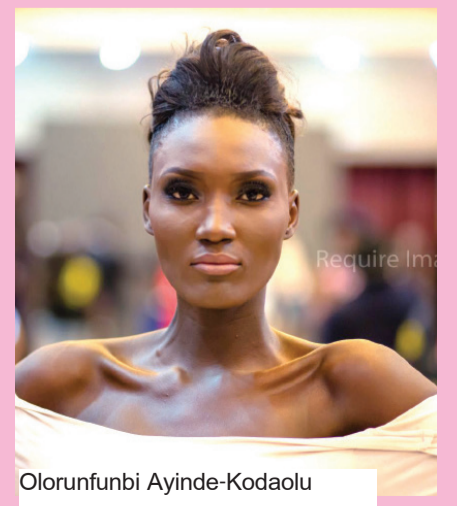
Pearl Look Runway Model competition winner



Owen Gee



Tafawa-Balewa and Mr and Mrs Agwu



Olorunfunbi Ayinde-Kodaolu



# Black affair at *Mode Men* 10th anniversary soirée

It was an all-black affair at *Mode Men* soirée to mark the magazine's 10th anniversary and launch of the *Mode Black Book*.

Laid up was an exclusive dinner at the private dining room of Milano Restaurant, Intercontinental Hotel, Victoria Island, Lagos.

The *Mode Black Book*, according to its publisher, Abubakar Tafawa-Balewa, is a coffee table book from the magazine shoots over the past 10 years being published for the first time.

Guests at the event included John Obayuwana, Julius and Ibiere Agwu, Frank Edoho, Ene Lawani, Okey Bakassi, Uru Eke, Bovi, Alex and Lara Adegbenro.

Luxury brands Hugo Boss and Bvlgari were also on hand offering exclusive gift bags to all guests.



Alex and Lara Adegbenro



Abubakar Tafawa-Balewa



Frank Edoho



John Obayuwana



Julius and Ibiere Agwu



Bovi



Okey Bakassi



Uru Eke



# FOOD & DRINK

## The allure of *ofada* rice

Ofada rice, along with its sauce, is a meal traditional to South West Nigeria. There is a town in Ogun State known as Ofada.

This delicacy is accompanied with the famous ofada stew which consists of palm oil, unripe pepper, onion and locust bean as the main ingredients. It is the local variety of rice with its own unique flavour.

The delicacy used to be the rejected and forbidden meal. It was isolated and left for only the poor; but now it is the delight of most social gatherings. These days, no party is complete without it; in fact people are "obsessed" with the meal.

According to Itoero Effiong-Bright, a professional cook and the 'Chef' Executive Officer of Ibomsoups, "the ofada rice is much healthier than the regular parboiled or polished rice".

She added that "Nigerians are now beginning to pay more attention to their health and nutrition".

"People are getting tired of the regular parboiled or polished rice; they want to try something different from what they had been having, and that is where the ofada comes in," she stressed.

"In recent times, the method of cooking ofada rice is now modern, and the packaging has been modified from the regular dried fish to assorted meat, which gives people more to chew in the meal."

With the current awareness of the risk of consuming 'junk' meals, Nigerians are focusing on local foods, and are taking pride in their tradition. People are now more enlightened that local foods are not just healthier but also delicious.

Gone are the days when pebbles in local rice varieties made eating a horror. Because picking and washing the rice were a herculean task, meal time turned to a time of cracking shingles with the molars. Ofada rice is now more refined and processed. It is now a priced meal, so much that the regular fried and jollof rice are left for the children.



Though so many people eat ofada rice because of its taste, some eat it or are confined to it based on health issues. The meal has been linked to protection against atherosclerosis, ischemic stroke, diabetes, insulin resistance, and obesity.

In addition to the chain of nutrients in ofada's dietary fibre, the whole grain store includes a wide variety of additional nutrients and phytochemicals that reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease. Compounds in whole grains that have cholesterol-lowering properties include polyunsaturated fatty acids, oligosaccharides, plants sterols and stanols, and saponins.

Ofada rice is also an important dietary source of water-soluble, fat-soluble, and insoluble anti-oxidants. The long lists of cereal antioxidants include vitamins E,

tocotrienols, selenium, phenolic acids, and phytic acid.

These multi-functional antioxidants come in immediate-release to slow-release forms and thus are available throughout the gastrointestinal tract over a long period after being consumed.

So, apart from the condiments used in cooking ofada, the rice itself is also healthy. However nutritious and nourishing the ofada stew, also known as Ayamase may be, some people do not like its unavoidably peppery taste, because it often hurts the mouth and stomach. Abstinence is compulsory for ulcer patients. Some people are also allergic to the locust beans used in its preparation, and that makes them stay away from the delicacy altogether.

eating  
out



## La Mango



La Mango is a mini boutique with a restaurant, snooker bar and events centre – for bridal shower/bash eve, birthday party, wedding receptions, etc.

Having hosted remarkable events like the Arthur Guinness Night, MTN Project Fame eviction party, and many more, the unique selling point (USP) of La Mango is its variety of dishes ranging from starters, fish menus, burgers, salads, continental dishes, Nigerian dishes, as well as extras that serve as deserts and appetisers like green salad, ice-cream.

There are also the Italian spaghetti with vegetables and spicy meat balls, grilled catfish and sauteed potatoes, grilled croaker fish with fried rice, shredded beef, Chinese fried rice, banga soup (ofe akwu), egusi soup, efo riro (vegetable) soup, semolina meal, wheat meal, pounded yam and eba.

Having being in existence for two years, La Mango strives to retain its high standard which is why customers keep coming back.

La Mango is located on Adekunle Fajuyi Way, Ikeja, Lagos.



# BUSINESS

## INFLATION RATE

Inflation month	March 2016
Inflation rate	12.8%

## MONEY SUPPLY (Trillion)

Broadmoney (M2)	18,718,193.11
Narrow Money (M1)	7,148,592.67

## OIL PRICE INDEX

WTI	↑	Brent Crude	↑
\$43.93		\$45.36	
<small>PER BARREL</small>		<small>PER BARREL</small>	

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## STOCK MARKET

Forex, budget impasse hit equities market harder

PAGE 55 >>



## Tourism/Aviation

Japan skin divers eye tourists as depopulation hurts growth

PAGE 58 >>



## COMMODITIES SUMMARY

Gold ↑  
\$1,234.18  
TROY OZ

Silver ↑  
\$16.96  
PER OZ

Platinum ↑  
\$1,011.10  
PER OZ

Copper ↑  
\$2.28  
PER LB

Lead ↑  
\$0.81

Palladium ↑  
\$608.25  
PER OZT

## Exchange Rates

N-\$	↑	N-£	↑	N-€
RATE		RATE		RATE
197		283.4436		221.9205

# Fidelity Bank of many scandals



Okonkwo



Alison-Madueke



EFCC Chairman, Ibrahim Magu

By Kelechi Mgboji  
Assistant Business Editor

**S**candal is a rolling story in Fidelity Bank. A petition a former employee wrote to the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) alleging fraud by the bank in 2011, which the EFCC hushed up, has even just come to light.

But the latest allegation that Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, Nnamdi Okonkwo, helped former Petroleum Minister, Diezani Alison-Madueke, to launder \$115 million

cash may have sealed and delivered the tier 2 bank as a "bank of scandals".

### Scandal one

On May 12, 2012, the EFCC arraigned the bank's Branch Manager in Gwagwalada, Abuja, Augustine Odinawo, along with others at an Abuja High Court.

The allegations against them included fraud, conspiracy to commit fraud, forgery of public sector accounts, and obtaining by false pretense N25.4 million.

The suspects included:

- Napoleon Obaje Adofu (branch manager of Oceanic

**"When Okonkwo found it difficult to convert the money into naira before the election as directed by [Alison-Madueke], he notified her of the development. "She in turn told him to use the bank's fund and then convert the dollar into naira after the election. This was promptly done and the fund was distributed as directed."**

Bank now Ecobank).

- Patrick Onyekachi (employee of Equitorial Trust Bank now Sterling Bank).
- Reuben Omotayo (employee of Federal Capital

Development Administration, FCDA).

- Abdulmalik Isa Teina (employee of Abuja Geographic Information Systems, AGIS).

They allegedly defrauded one Juliet Uzor.

It was alleged that a N25.46 million bank draft payable to AGIS was handed to the suspects.

Rather than pay it into the draft owner's account, they allegedly conspired among themselves to open a fake corporate account of AGIS and lodged the draft in it.

After the draft cleared, the accused allegedly transferred the money electronically to two fake company (Yombor Ventures and Aicoor Tao Nigeria) accounts from which they made a massive withdrawal which they shared.

### Scandal two

There was another scandal in the Abuja axis.

Exclusive Stores, a company based in Abuja, had an account with Fidelity Bank in Wuse, Abuja.

A former manager assigned to Exclusive Stores to collect sales revenue on behalf of the bank for deposit in the client's account allegedly pocketed over N100 million.

Exclusive Stores discovered the missing amount through account reconciliation.

The firm took the suspect

Continues on PAGE 52

## Cover

## Fidelity Bank of many scandals

Continued from PAGE 51

to the Abuja High Court and requested that the account be closed but the Fidelity Bank management team from Lagos intervened and agreed to refund the stolen money and settle the case amicably.

**Scandal three**

Fidelity Bank got into another mess over Sure-P Programme. This time, fund allocated to the programme allegedly developed wings and disappeared from the vault of the bank.

The fund was meant for infrastructure and human capital development of states under the rested SURE-P programme of former President Goodluck Jonathan, but the undisclosed sum allegedly ended up in private accounts belonging to the sons and cronies of a former governor.

Some of the bank's top staff allegedly aided the transfer of billions of naira into accounts operated by the sons and associates of the former governor who appointed Fidelity Bank to handle the SURE-P account.

Several wire transfers were allegedly made from an Abuja branch of Fidelity Bank that ran into billions that were traced to the governor's sons and their friends.

State Security Service (SSS) personnel stormed the bank in Abuja and apprehended eight senior staff who were detained at SSS headquarters for several days despite pressure from top politicians.

It took the intervention of former Fidelity Bank Managing Director, Reginald Ihejiahi, before a bank official made confessional statements about how he supervised the distribution of the money.

**Scandal four**

The latest allegation of the involvement of the bank's Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, Nnamdi Okonkwo, in helping former Petroleum Minister, Diezani Alison-Madueke, to launder \$115 million cash may have cemented the reputation of the bank.

Okonkwo was taken into EFCC custody for allegedly presiding over the receipt of such huge cash and helping to distribute it to beneficiaries two days to the general elections in 2015.

He allegedly violated the law by not reporting the receipt and warehousing of the cash to the Nigerian Financial Intelligence Unit (NFIU).

Others arrested alongside Okonkwo included the bank's Head of Operations,

Martins Izuogbe.

Alison-Madueke allegedly deposited the \$115 million in the bank as preparation began for the presidential election.

She allegedly invited Okonkwo to Abuja, briefed him on the deal, and he allegedly accepted to receive the money into the bank's coffers despite the fact that Alison-Madueke did not have an account with Fidelity Bank.

**Discovery by EFCC**

The EFCC claimed to have made the discovery when its operatives probing how officials of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in Rivers, Delta, and Akwa Ibom States allegedly received N675.1 million a day or two before the ballot.

The EFCC alleged that

- The money was traced to Fidelity Bank.

- Okonkwo confessed that Alison-Madueke invited him to a meeting as preparation for the election began.

- She told him that some companies would deposit some funds in the bank.

- She told him she would give him further instructions on how the funds would be disbursed.

The EFCC also alleged that after the meeting, the following four companies made cash deposits into Fidelity Bank:

- Auctus Integrated (\$17,884,000)
- Northern Belt Gas Company (\$60 million)
- Midwestern Oil and Gas (\$9.5 million)
- Leno Laitan Adesanya (\$1.85 million)

Okonkwo himself allegedly received \$26 million in cash.

Alison-Madueke's son, Ugonna, allegedly became the go-between after the cash deposits were made.

Ugonna allegedly supplied the names of the beneficiaries of the funds, who allegedly included INEC officials, interest groups, and election monitors expected to compromise the electoral process.

Okonkwo allegedly confirmed to the EFCC that it was Ugonna who sent him the list of the beneficiaries.

A source in the EFCC said: "When Okonkwo found it difficult to convert the money into naira before the election as directed by [Alison-Madueke], he notified her of the development.

"She in turn told him to use the bank's fund and then convert the dollar into naira after the election. This was promptly done and the fund was distributed as directed."

The total sum in naira then was about N23.3 billion. Not less than N681 million was



Former Fidelity Bank Managing Director, Reginald Ihejiahi

**"The shareholders fund of old Fidelity was overstated by N6.316 billion. This is highly deceptive. Both the CBN and NDIC and other regulatory bodies, including the general public, were deceived by the act."**

allegedly given to INEC officials out of the amount.

Among the alleged beneficiaries in the EFCC report were:

- Resident Electoral Commissioner for Cross River State, Gesil Khan (N185,842,000).
- Electoral Officer in Isoko-South Council of Delta State, Fidelia Omoile (N112,480,000).
- Administrative Secretary in Delta State, Uluochi Brown (N111,500,000).
- Former Deputy Director in Cross River State, Edem Effanga (N241,127,000).
- Head of Voter Education in Akwa Ibom State, Immaculata Asuquo (N214,127,000).

**Petition by former employee**

In 2011, a former official of Fidelity Bank, Francis Ogboko, blew the whistle on the rot in the bank before its merger with others that make up the new Fidelity

Bank.

He claimed in a petition to the EFCC dated June 13, 2011 that the bank did not disclose its true net position before it merged with two other banks that formed the new Fidelity Bank.

He alleged that top officials deceived the CBN and Nigerian Deposit Insurance Corporation (NDIC) by not disclosing a N6.316 billion loan to two companies – Oil Recovery and Environmental Services (ORES) and ERES N.V.

According to the petition, ORES operated account number 1210527113 with a debit balance of N3.289 billion, ERES operated account number 1210588228 with a debit balance of N3.026 billion as of October 31, 2005.

Ogboko claimed that his appointment was terminated after he discovered the huge fraud perpetrated by top officials of Fidelity Bank, including Ihejiahi; Willie Obiano (now governor of Anambra State); Ikemefuna Mbagwu; Sam Obijaku; and Boye Ogunbolade.

He alleged that two loan accounts totalling N6.316 billion in the books of old Fidelity Bank as of October 31, 2005 were omitted in the Overdraft Report prior to the merger of the three banks that formed the new Fidelity Bank.

Ogboko alleged the bank covered up its deceit of regulators and the public by overstating shareholders' funds using the two rogue accounts.

"This implies that the shareholders fund of old Fidelity was overstated by N6.316 billion. This is highly deceptive.

"Both the CBN and NDIC and other regulatory bodies, including the general public, were deceived by the act," he wrote in the petition to the EFCC, a copy of which was obtained by TheNiche.



INEC Chairman, Mahmud Yakubu

Ogboko, a chartered accountant, alleged that he noticed the discrepancy and notified his former immediate boss, Boye Ogunbolade, that the action was not in line with financial guidelines.

He wondered: Who were the real owners of Oil Recovery and Environmental Services and ERES N.V being shielded by senior bank officials and subordinates?

He alleged that the two loan accounts were omitted in the Overdraft Report of the bank prior to its merger, and expressed disappointment with how his petition to the EFCC for investigation was compromised.

When TheNiche contacted Fidelity Bank spokesman, Henry Ndiulo, he refused to comment.

On hearing that the enquiry was about controversial transactions involving the bank's officials, he hung the phone.

**Forewarning**

TheNiche reported on November 8, 2015 that the top shots of Fidelity Bank might end up in EFCC cell over another scandal also involving another branch manager in Abuja.

EFCC officials investigating N8 billion fraud allegedly committed by Abdulrasheed Maina, former Pension Reform Task Team chairman, uncovered the role allegedly played by the bank to facilitate the massive fraud.

The bank had employed Aliyu Bui, a younger brother to Maina, who allegedly agreed to move N8 billion police pension money from First Bank to Fidelity Bank.

Bui's colleagues told the EFCC that he was planted to run shoddy deals for Maina.

PREMIUM TIMES, an online newspaper, also quoted sources who alleged that Bui was the fixer for Maina's

alleged money laundry scheme.

"While it seems he (Bui) was planted in the bank to facilitate his elder brother's alleged money laundering schemes, his employment would not have been possible but for Maina's coup in helping to allegedly move the N8 billion police pension account from First Bank to Fidelity Bank," PREMIUM TIMES quoted an unnamed EFCC source.

Those involved in the alleged pension racket, mainly employees of Fidelity Bank, were rounded up by the EFCC for allegedly helping Maina to launder the funds.

They are Danjuma Zubairu (group head, private banking) and Abubakar Gwambe (account head, Abuja branch).

Oluwatoyin Meseke (assistant banking executive in the marketing unit who also doubles as Maina's account officer) was also arrested.

Another report in PREMIUM TIMES on November 4, 2015 detailed how Fidelity Bank officials at the Abuja branch allegedly moved several millions of naira to Maina's companies without complying with the law.

It stated how Maina's bank handlers, relying on telephone instructions and scanned email messages, allegedly moved hundreds of millions of naira from the accounts of the three companies to bureau de change operators.

The operators then allegedly converted the monies to dollars for onward delivery to Maina.

The EFCC accused Maina, including three companies linked to him – Cluster Logistics, Kangolo Dynamic Cleaning, Drew Investment and Construction Company – of corruption and money laundering, with officials of Fidelity Bank as accomplices.



# Financial Niche

## Zenith, FBN, 5 others make N13b in fees



Zenith Bank Managing Director, Peter Amangbo



FBN Holdings Managing Director, U. K. Eke



FCMB Group Managing Director, Peter Obaseki



Union Bank Managing Director, Emeka Emuwa

Stories by Kelechi Mgboji  
Assistant Business Editor

**S**even banks sampled by TheNiche made N13 billion from Current Account Maintenance (CAM) fee in the first quarter of 2016 (Q1 2016).

The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) indirectly reintroduced Commission on Turnover (CoT) when it came up with CAM after CoT was supposed to have been phased out in 2016.

Unaudited accounts of the banks for Q1 ended March 30, 2016 showed that while some improved earnings from CAM, others recorded declines.

Zenith Bank had the highest CAM fees at N5.4 billion, followed by FBN Holdings' that rose 119 per cent, from N1.4 billion in Q1 2015 to N3.07 billion Q1 2016.

FCMB Group recorded N740.9 million, an increase of about 21 per cent from N611 million in Q1 2015. Union Bank gained N283 million.

However, some banks suffered decline in CAM

earnings as current account deposits dropped due to the economy headwinds.

CAM earnings by United Bank for Africa (UBA) declined 55 per cent, from N2.56 billion to N1.15 billion, Access Bank's dropped 40 per cent to N487 million as against N817 million in Q1 2015.

Guaranty Trust Bank (GTBank) recorded a decline of 32 per cent to N1.97 billion as against N2.9 billion in Q1 2015.

The CBN had in 2013 commenced a phased reduction of CoT which

terminated with zero CoT charge this year in line with a directive issued by former CBN Governor, Lamido Sanusi.

But a circular signed by CBN Director of Financial Policy and Regulation, Kevin Amugo, replaced CoT with CAM subject to a maximum N1 per N1,000 (Mille).

The circular reiterated that "the Revised Guide to Bank Charges (RGBC) which came into effect on April 1, 2013 provides for a phased elimination of CoT charges in the Nigerian banking industry.

"Under the Guidelines,

a zero CoT regime was to come into effect from January 2016."

The CBN noted that while the gradual phase out was being observed, some banks continued to charge Account Maintenance Fees in addition to reduced CoT, which amounted to double charges.

"The CBN is not oblivious of the impact of declining crude oil prices; operation of Treasury Single Account; and other market turbulences on the viability and stability of the banking system.

"In furtherance of the

mandate to promote and safeguard a sound financial system in Nigeria, banks are by this circular reminded that the 2016 Zero CoT regime as jointly agreed during the 311th Bankers Committee meeting of February 12, 2013 has come into effect.

"In the interest of stability of the banking system, a Negotiable Current Account Maintenance Fee not exceeding N1 per mille may be charged in respect of all customer induced debit transactions.

"Please ensure strict compliance."

## Fraud erases N301.7m shareholders' funds in three banks

**Z**enith Bank, Access Bank, and First City Monument Bank (FCMB) lost a total N301.7 million to fraud and forgery in the 2015 financial year.

The biggest casualty with N200.57 million loss was Zenith Bank, where five employees stole N155.7 million

In the bank, a total N31 million involved stolen/forged instruments while internet banking fraud related cases amounted to

N5.3 million in 80 recorded cases.

Disclosures extracted from the bank's 2015 annual financial report showed that it also lost N7.98 million in 90 'others', referring to fraud-related cases.

Though Access Bank had a higher frequency of fraud with 323 cases reported, it incurred a total N87.98 million loss.

Of the 323 fraud and forgery cases, 280 or 86 per cent were related to automated teller machine (ATM)/electronic fraud.

The bank noted in its

financial report that seven cases of robbery occurred in 2015, leading to a loss of N96.6 million.

FCMB, which recorded the least fraud and forgery cases among the three banks, lost N13 million in 2015, down from N24 million in 2014.

The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) has directed banks to establish fraud desks to check fraud in the industry.

The CBN has also established the Nigeria Electronic Fraud Forum (NEFF) to proffer solutions to fraud arising from

the increased adoption of electronic payments.

CBN Director of Banking and Payments Systems Department, Dipo Fatokun, explained that following submissions by the NEFF and consultation with banks and electronic payments service providers, it is imperative that an effective mechanism for receiving and responding promptly to fraud alerts be set up in banks to manage and reduce electronic payment fraud rates.

"To this end, all DMBs, MMOs, switches and all payment service provid-

ers are hereby directed to maintain a dedicated fraud desk in their respective organisations.

"The fraud desk shall be appropriately staffed with personnel that have requisite training on emerging fraud trends on various electronic payments channels," Fatokun said in a circular.

The fraud desk is to

- Provide support to customers on electronic fraud, with a minimum 10 dedicated phone lines manned and available at all times.

- Log on all customer

fraud alerts and complaints, and redirect them to the appropriate authorities in line with internally pre-defined path, while preparing and submitting reports regularly to the Nigeria Inter-bank Settlement System (NIBSS) on fraud information.

- Sensitise customers on e-fraud and fraud desk services as well as manage/resolve all intra-bank issues by leveraging on enterprise fraud management system.

# Business Extra

## High exchange rate cripples business, Okorie laments

Obioma Okorie, group managing director of Jeffo Construction Company, Obioma Enterprises, and Dangote Cement distributor, tells Special Correspondent, ONWUKWE EZERU, his views on the high exchange rate, what the government should do to boost business, and other national issues.

### National business environment

**T**he present administration came in with its policies to change the system. Change is dynamic and a lot of things are involved for change to take place.

Government policy and the ban on the importation of certain goods affect our business. For instance, we import tiles but we can no longer access forex (foreign exchange), and for many months now there is no importation of tiles.

Dollar exchange rate is high, making it difficult for business to thrive. Government policy says if you can source fund anywhere for importation, it is okay. Banks cannot give you assistance for forex and this is a major challenge.

In Nigeria, the price of iron rod is on the increase, day in day out, because of high tariff in electricity which affects the production of rods.

Ajaokuta Steel and Delta State Steel companies are not working, and Oshogbo Steel Rolling Mill is not also working.

For now, India and China are controlling the steel industry in Nigeria and they can increase prices anytime they want.

In Nigeria, there is no consumer protection agency that regulates the price of goods.

### Getting over the challenge

The only way out is for the government to resuscitate the ailing steel mill industries.

Ajaokuta alone has the capacity to produce not only iron rods but railway rails. If possible, give it to a good company to manage, but with the government, it will not survive.

Dollar exchange rate is high, making it difficult for business to thrive. Government policy says if you can source fund anywhere for importation, it is okay. Banks cannot give you assistance for forex and this is a major challenge.

For example, in the cement sector, Nigerians have no problem because Aliko Dangote has assured that he can sustain the cement business. Nigeria now exports cement and that is the type of business we need.

If you have somebody like Dangote to man Ajaokuta Steel, he would revamp it and the company would stand the test of time and these Indians and Chinese would now depend on Nigeria.

These foreigners do not have Nigeria's interest at heart. Their concern is to make money and go back to their countries.

For now, the economy is bad and some states cannot pay workers' salary. Thanks to President Muhammadu Buhari for the bailout fund. Now that he has promised states full allocation, there will be money in circulation.

### Housing for all

It is possible to provide homes for all Nigerians, but for now it is doubtful. Nigeria wants to do so many things at the same time. But there is no fund in the system and so many states cannot pay staff salary.

If the government can concentrate and make housing policy achievable, that will be alright. The only challenge here is that it is difficult to access the housing fund, including those who contribute to the fund.

The government should make it mandatory for the contributors to have access to the fund, make a law so that they use the fund for its purpose, and those who want to go into mortgage should also be accommodated.

For example, civil servants who contribute to this fund cannot access it. If the government can look into this area, it will go a long way to help solve the housing needs of Nigerians.

The government should also know who is qualified for this loan. People could collect this fund and pay it into their private accounts without using it for the real business intended.

### Business environment in Abia

Abia is enjoying a relatively conducive business climate. The government of Okezie Ikpeazu has put in place some motivational plans. One of such is adequate security of lives and property.

I have the belief that if the national budget is implemented, business will boom and the economy will improve. But for now, there is not much money in circulation.

The major problem lies in the power sector and infrastructure decay.

The Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Com-



Okorie

Aliko Dangote has assured that he can sustain the cement business. Nigeria now exports cement and that is the type of business we need.

If you have somebody like Dangote to man Ajaokuta Steel, he would revamp it and the company would stand the test of time and these Indians and Chinese would now depend on Nigeria.

mission (NERC) should ensure that electricity distribution companies provide adequate power for business to thrive.

The Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) should also ensure that fuel is available to end the hardship suffered by Nigerians.

### Assessment of Ikpeazu's administration

Ikpeazu has done very well in office. *Abians* know he would succeed, and that was why they voted massively for him.

Tracing his record as the deputy general manager of Abia State Environmental Protection Agency (ASEPA), he made a mark. As governor, under one year, he has embarked on 65 roads and actualised 27, among other achievements.

Go to Aba and see the development and changes that have taken place. To us in the market, the state government has been very

supportive.

### Contribution to Abia and host communities

A lot has been contributed and very soon Ikpeazu would commission over 50 housing units I built near the industrial market.

Apart from this, my company has given employment to *Abians*, especially host communities. At least 70 per cent of my workforce are *Abians*. This is part of our social responsibilities.

### Assessment of Buhari's administration

There is no remarkable change. The government should block leakages and fight corruption proper. Workers should be paid and infrastructure upgraded.



# Stock Market

## Forex, budget impasse hit equities market harder

- Trades shrink 31.57% as investors flee

Stories by Kelechi Mgbogi  
Assistant Business Editor

Investors lost over N83 billion in April as foreign exchange (forex) crisis, delay in the passage of the budget, and battered investor confidence combined to bring the capital market to its knees.

Value of shares listed on the Nigerian Stock Exchange (NSE) depreciated by N1.24 trillion between January and April following large scale sell off by investors fleeing the market.

Forte Oil Chairman, Femi Otedola, lost more than \$400 million of his personal fortune over the past nine weeks as the stock price of Forte Oil shed 43.5 per cent in value.

Otedola, who is the company's controlling shareholder, has seen his paper net worth drop from \$1.6 billion when *Forbes* published its annual ranking of the world's billionaires in March, to \$1.2 billion today, according to the magazine's real-time billionaire scorecard.

In late February, the share price of Forte Oil hit an all-time high of N342 per share after the utilities and petroleum marketing company, which is based in Lagos, released its impressive 2015 full year result and declared an attractive dividend of N3.45 per share.

However, at the close of trading Tuesday, April 3, its share price had dropped to N193.46 after recording consistent daily losses over the past few weeks.

Market capitalisation, which measures total market value of the shares outstanding of a pub-

**Otedola, who is Forte Oil's controlling shareholder, has seen his paper net worth drop from \$1.6 billion when *Forbes* published its annual ranking of the world's billionaires in March, to \$1.2 billion today, according to the magazine's real-time billionaire scorecard.**

licly quoted company, dropped from N9.86 trillion in January 2016 to N8.62 trillion in April.

With the drop in market capitalisation, the All-Share Index (ASI) measuring performance of the market also dropped 12.5 per cent to close at 25,062.41 basis points end of April, from the 28,642.25 basis points at which the equities market opened this year.

NSE monthly data showed that market capitalisation in April also decreased by N83 billion or 0.95 per cent to close at N8.621 trillion against N8.704 trillion in March – due to price depreciation.

NSE All-Share Index shed 243.81 points or 0.96 per cent to close at 25,062.41 basis points compared with 25,306.22 in March.

Total volume of shares traded on the NSE in April dropped 31.57 per cent.

Investors traded a total 11.47 billion shares valued at N33.48 billion exchanged in 62,747 deals.

The figure was lower than the 16.63 billion shares worth N48.16 billion exchanged in 73,155 deals in March.

The financial services sector

consisting of banks remained the most active, accounting for 10 billion shares valued at N18.12 billion and exchanged in 12,010 deals.

It was trailed by premium board, which accounted for 824.49 million shares worth N6.96 billion exchanged in 12,010 deals.

The conglomerates sector came third with a total 212.77 million shares valued at N297.59 million transacted in 2,322 deals.

APT Securities and Funds Managing Director, Garba Kurfi, attributed the lull to forex challenges which led to withdrawal of foreign investors from the bourse.

Kurfi said the government should open another window for foreign investors and genuine businessmen following its stance on naira devaluation.

He added the current forex policy, power sector challenges, and the stalled budget contributed to the lull.

Kurfi, a senior dealing member of the NSE, said there is also investors' apathy, which causes



Otedola

poor trading.

InvestData Chief Operating Officer, Ambrose Omordion, lamented that the 2016 budget impasse has slowed down economic activities, because the budget is critical to investment decision.

Enterprise Stockbrokers Managing Director, Rotimi Fakayejo, told TheNiche that both local and foreign investors are still very cautious about participating in the capital market.

According to him, the weakness of the naira at the forex market makes the situation worse.

He added: "The capital market in the first four months of 2016

has been battered by a worse economic situation. Also, the weakness of the naira has led to foreign portfolio investors exit.

"The volume and value traded within the first four months have dropped since investor confidence is yet to return.

"Despite impressive earnings and robust dividend by some listed companies, their share price continued to drop due to liquidity challenges in the capital market."

Fakayejo said the 2016 budget may not have a direct impact on the capital market until early October.

## Interbank rates may rise as Nigeria raises N105b bonds

Interest rates at which banks lend to one another may rise above 5 per cent this week on expectation that the federal government will raise N105 billion (\$527.90 million) in local currency denominated bonds on Wednesday, May 11.

The Debt Management Office (DMO) said on Wednesday, May 4 that plans had been concluded to sell N50 billion of a bond maturing in 2036, N40 billion of paper matur-

ing in 2026, and N15 billion of debt maturing in 2020, using the Dutch Auction System (DAS).

All the bonds on offer are reopening of previous issues.

"We see further rise in the cost of borrowing among banks [this week] because of expected cash flows to debt instruments and possibly foreign exchange purchases, while there would be no major cash inflow into the system," a dealer told TheNiche.

Nigeria issues sovereign

bonds monthly to support the local bond market, create a benchmark for corporate issuance, fund its budget deficit, and help manage liquidity in the banking system.

A N170 billion bonds auction in April was largely oversubscribed by N30.72 billion as the government offered investors higher yields.

In its monthly auction in April 17, the government raised N170.18 billion in local currency bonds maturing in 2036, 2026, and 2020, paying higher returns

than at the previous auction on March 16.

This prompted investors to over subscribe at N206.72 billion as against N170.18 billion the government sought to raise.

In most cases, interbank rates soar after commercial lenders make payments for bonds and treasury bills purchases, which usually drain liquidity in the system.

The government has said that it would borrow about N900 billion locally to finance part of the N2.2 trillion deficit in the 2016 budget.



DMO Director General, Abraham Nwankwo

# Stock Market

## No respite for investors after N1.24tr loss in four months



NSE Director General, Oscar Oyeama



Fakayejo



Okezie

**“When a finger of an investor is burnt, he or she will be careful to release his or her other fingers to be burnt. That is what is really affecting the market. The decline we are experiencing in our market is somehow normal as some investors are selling their shares to meet up with other expectations.”**

Stories by Kelechi Mgboji  
Assistant Business Editor

**H**uge losses at the Nigerian equities market have continued with investors losing N1.24 trillion in the four months to April. The Nigerian Stock Exchange (NSE) market capitalisation (total market value of the shares outstanding of a publicly traded company) dropped from N9.86 trillion to N8.62 trillion closing transaction in April.

With the drop in market capitalisation, the All-Share Index (ASI) also dropped 12.5 per cent to close at 25,062.41 basis points from 28,642.25 basis points the equities at which the market opened this year.

Other market indices like NSE Main-Board Index dropped 16.1 per cent from 1,337.85 basis points to 1,121.94 basis points.

NSE 30 Index closed at 1,098.2 basis points, down 14.7 per cent from 1,287.67 basis points at which the market opened this year.

NSE Banking Index closed at 235.3 basis

points, shedding 12.4 per cent by April; NSE Insurance Index closed at 132.69 basis points, with a loss of 7 per cent year-to-date.

NSE Consumer Goods Index ended at 611.05 basis points, falling 18.1 per cent from 746.19 basis points it opened with this year.

NSE Oil/Gas Index decline 11 per cent to close at 317.26 basis points from 356.56 basis point while NSE Industrial Index stood at 1,843.99 basis points, dropping by 14.9 per cent to 2,166.7 basis points.

NSE market indices across the board closed negative, a reflection of the struggling economy, increased inflation, and the delay in implementing the federal budget.

These factors impinge on listed companies' share prices, attributed to decline revenue, hike in operating expenses that led to poor profits in the first quarter of 2016 (Q1 2016) unaudited accounts.

Stakeholders also blame the dwindling capital market on profit-taking by foreign portfolio investors, unstable monetary policies of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), and global dwindling oil prices that affect listed oil and gas companies.

But they expressed optimism that the passage of 2016 budget would spur liquidity in the economy, as well as actions that would enhance the economy and boost the stock market in particular.

Enterprise Stockbrokers Managing Director, Rotimi Fakayejo, said investors, local and foreign, are still very cautious about participating in the capital market.

He noted that the weakness of the naira at exchange rate market has worsened the national economy situation.

“The capital market in the first four months of 2016 has been battered with worst economy situation. Also, the weakness of the naira has led to foreign portfolio investors exit.

“The volume and value traded within the first four months have dropped since investors confidence is yet to be restored.

“Despite impressive earnings and robust dividend by some listed companies, their share price continued to drop due to liquidity challenges in the capital market,” Fakayejo added.

He said the 2016 budget may not have a direct impact on the capital market until early October.

Progressive Shareholders Association of Nigeria (PSAN) Chairman, Boniface Okezie, said: “The decline in our market is not only affected by factors within the economy but also global issues.

“The fall in global oil price has been a major factor affecting the Nigerian economy. So our market has been resilient, though there are issues the regulators in our market need to address.

“When a finger of an investor is burnt, he or she will be careful to release his or her other fingers to be burnt. That is what is really affecting the market.

“The decline we are experiencing in our market is somehow normal as some investors are selling their shares to meet up with other expectations.

“But there is hope that the market will rebound once investors see a clearer picture of the federal government's policy direction.

“The Buhari administration has started fighting corruption and tackling insecurity. So these are some of the things that will attract investors to our economy.”

## IMF sees 4% growth in Africa in 2017

- Moody's downgrades Nigeria, others in credit ratings

**E**conomic growth in Africa may bounce back to about 4 per cent next year despite a sharp decline to 3 per cent this year. But to actualise the potential, leaders must embark on substantial policy reset in many cases, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) said in its latest economic bulletin.

IMF sees the economic growth of the region recovering to 4 per cent next year, helped by a slight recovery in commodity prices.

This is despite a 3 per cent growth forecast which the Fund ascribed to the region for this current year, its weakest in nearly two decades.

In its African Economic Outlook, the IMF said the region would likely grow 3 per cent this year – the lowest rate since 1999 – after expanding by 3.4 per cent in 2015.

It blamed the decline on slump in commodity prices, the Ebola virus outbreak, and drought in parts of the continent.

The grave impact of commodities price

slump continues to whittle down the economic outlook of a region largely dependent on earnings from global commodities market.

Last week, Moody's credit ratings of Nigeria and Angola – Africa's two biggest oil producers – were downgraded by Moody's Investors Service, citing the negative impact depressed oil prices have had on balance sheets, liquidity, and creditworthiness.

Nigeria and Gabon were cut to B1 from Ba3 as “the prospect of lower-for-longer oil prices” raises liquidity risks and external vulnerability.

Angola was lowered to B1 and the Republic of Congo to B2 from B1 on similar concerns about high dependence on oil constraining financing options.

Moody's quoted Reuters as reporting that Nigeria was issued a stable outlook on confidence in the country's credit fundamentals when compared to its peers.

“The stable outlook is driven by Moody's view that the downside risks posed by the weakening of the country's fiscal strength,

and the external and economic pressures anticipated this year and next, are balanced by Nigeria's strengths, which exceed those of sovereigns rated below B1.”

But the IMF said it is still optimistic about Africa's prospects in the longer term.

“However, to realise this potential, a substantial policy reset is critical in many cases,” the Fund insisted.

Affected countries need to contain fiscal deficits as the reduction in revenue from commodities is expected to persist.

Major oil exporters, Angola and Nigeria, are hardest hit by the slump in commodity prices, as are Ghana, South Africa, and Zambia.

Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone are only gradually recovering from the Ebola epidemic, while several southern and eastern African countries – including Ethiopia, Malawi, and Zimbabwe – are suffering from a severe drought.



Finance Minister, Kemi Adeosun



# Motoring

## Bugatti's vision Gran Turismo is a glimpse of the future

Well, this is interesting. Now that Bugatti has delivered all 450 examples of the Veyron 16.4, attention has turned to what the French carmaker and its corporate parent, the Volkswagen Group, could possibly do to top this rolling assault on physics (and, sometimes, good taste).

This, we're afraid, isn't it. What you're in fact looking at is the Bugatti Vision Gran Turismo. It's a (stunning) virtual creation you'll be able to download and drive on the iconic PlayStation racing simulator.

You know the formula by now: everyone from Aston Martin to BMW and VW plus many more have had a crack at concocting the wackiest concept car possible, safe in the knowledge that it'll only be driven via a vibrating controller on someone's telly.

Bugatti Vision Gran Turismo This Bugatti is different, though. They're going to build it. Really.

Okay, sort of. Bugatti showed off a full-size, one-off Vision GT model at the Frankfurt Motor Show, but it was not going to be doling out test drives.

This is still a flight of styling fantasy. Looks cool though, no?

The official bumpf claims the Bugatti styling team were inspired by the brand's rich tapestry of historical designs, like the two-time Le Mans-winning Type 57 'Tank'.

That inspiration seems to have got so far as the two-tone paint job, because from where we're sitting, this is a Veyron on steroids. GT3 racing car flavour ones.

Eagle-eyed readers will have scrolled agog through the gallery above and spotted a very recognisable track map front'n'centre in the Vision GT's 22nd Century interior.

Yup, that's the Circuit de la Sarthe. Le Mans.

Forgive us for getting a tad excited, but what with the racey carbon seat and F1-style steering wheel already in place, is it too much to hope to see a Bugatti GT3 racer dicing with the new Ford GT at the Le Mans 24 Hours in June 2016?

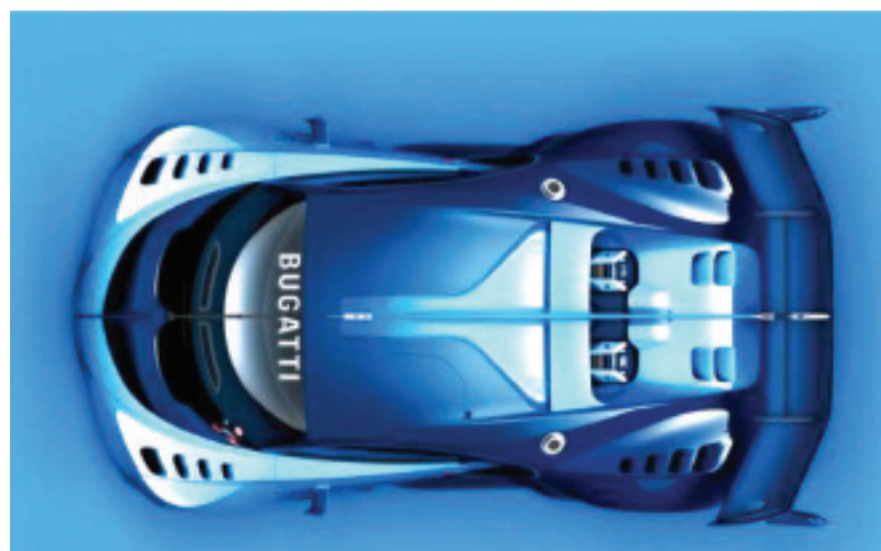
Sadly, it almost certainly is.

The Bugatti Vision GT is just a styling exercise – a canvas for Bugatti's designers to go a little crazy, and perhaps throw us a few clues to how the difficult second album that is the Veyron MkII might look.

The stats are sure to be mighty, the top speed aircraft-spec.

But is Bugatti's next road car actually going to be, well, a looker? On this evidence, we might be in for more than just a new physics lesson. What do you reckon?

• Culled from [www.bbc.com/autos](http://www.bbc.com/autos)



Bugatti Vision Gran Turismo

## Carmagedeon



By Jonas Agwu  
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## FRSC and rear seat belt enforcement (1)

Sometime in 2014, I issued a press statement announcing that the Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC) would begin in January 2015 the enforcement of seat belt for rear seat occupants of vehicles.

Over 13 years ago when the initial announcement was made for the enforcement of seat belt for the driver and front seat passengers, I also had the rare privilege as head of media the FRSC to make the same announcement.

A few days after the 2014 announcement, I received calls, text messages, tweets and other sundry contacts ranging from outright condemnation, passive inquiry, passionate outcry and a few commendations.

Just like it was in 2003, the reaction in 2014 was the same; mixed feelings with most of these based on ignorance.

Here are some of the reactions:

Yahaya Usman – "I will rather sell my car than to go for seat belt construction. Make una fear God oh and know the kind of policy you are giving us!"

"If you want to save lives, u know where to go. But if you want to inflict pain on us it's not a new thing. We are used to many pains!"

Tall (Tallyjena007) – "FRSC did not finish with number pleat (sic) issue, now is back sit (sic) belt, they should think before making this policies."

Akin Raphael Akinsipe says the intention is to make money, since having lived in the United Kingdom for over 10 years, he knows that wearing a seat belt by a back seat passenger is only compulsory for a child less than seven years old.

Bassey Unaowo says the FRSC is out to exploit Nigerians again.

The indicting comments are numerous to mention here. But some responses support the initiative.

Iffio Akpanim writes that God used it to save his life in 2010 when he ran into a deep ditch, was thrown up and rolled sideways. He came out unscratched.

Eye@cike864 sounds irritated – "For God's sake seat belts are affordable ... and are available in all motor spare parts! HABA NAA! I commend FRSC."

Over a year after that announcement, we have avoided chewing more than we can swallow by restricting ourselves to one enforcement at a time, such as the speed limiter.

However, safety awareness campaign on the use of seat belt by all occupants of

a vehicle remains a priority.

This explains why since the beginning of 2016, I have focused on events surrounding seat belt such as the tragedies that befell the man who lost his 10-year old daughter in a crash, with a follow up piece on the lamentation of a mother whose pain over the loss of her daughter and grandchild still haunts her.

I have chosen to write this article in continuation of my promise at the beginning of 2016 to deal with these issues to help us realise that because road safety is no accident, it is vital we exercise caution by doing what is right for the sake of our loved ones.

We must avoid unnecessary platitudes but learn to avoid the kind of regret of the man who in my piece titled "How I killed my unbelted daughter" regretted that the death of his 10-year old daughter could have been averted if he had insisted she buckled up.

Seat belts save lives. It can't be put it simpler than that. Seat belts have been adjudged to be the most effective traffic safety device for the prevention of death and injury in the event of a crash.

Wearing a seat belt can reduce the risk of crash injuries by 50 per cent, according to the Global National Safety Council.

For those who insist that the use of seat belt does not merit the kind of attention being given to it by the FRSC, for those who believe that it is another money spinning venture for the FRSC, for those who believe that we are making much noise about nothing, it is hoped that by the time the FRSC concludes its public enlightenment activities preparatory to enforcement opinions and perception would have changed.

On January 1, 2003, the FRSC launched enforcement on the use of front occupant seat belt nationwide. It was extremely successful with about 90 per cent compliance all over the country.

Thirteen years down the line, the need arises to take another look at the use of seat belt.

Evolving times come with evolving technologies, which in turn come with complications and risks, which in own turn require commensurate strategies to combat.

As technology improves in vehicles and on roads, traffic management strategies must also be employed to minimise crash causative factors inherent in these.

• Continues in next edition.

# Tourism/Aviation

## Japan skin divers eye tourists as depopulation hurts growth



Sea-diver Machiyo Yamashita gathers Wakame seaweed onto the shore in Shima. Photographer: Noriko Hayashi/Bloomberg



Tourists in Japan

**A**t the Sea People restaurant in Shima, a hamlet on Japan's eastern coast, sea-diver Machiyo Yamashita wants a piece of a tourism industry dominated by the cities that sapped her town's vitality by luring away its youth.

"I want to cook and serve customers abalones I caught myself an hour ago," said Yamashita, 64, over a lunch of shellfish, sea lettuce and bowl of seaweed soup, all featuring items she found in the sea that morning.

"The real stuff is cheap and delicious, and has to be fresh."

Attracting tourists to Shima, renowned for women divers who harvested pearls before K Mikimoto & Co. set up a farm nearby, would help the town counter the economic decline caused by the depopulation blighting Japan's provinces.

With Prime Minister Shinzo Abe identifying tourism as a source of growth for the world's third-largest economy, local bankers and officials are taking unprec-

edented steps to stimulate the industry.

"Tourism is an area the bank has not really had its hands on before," said Nobutaka Hashimoto, an executive at Kiyoo Bank, a regional lender in Wakayama Prefecture on the opposite side of the Shima Peninsula, east of Osaka on the Pacific coast.

"It's been difficult to resist the forces of the local economy shrinking and population declining, and we need to get going."

### Investment fund

Australia, which has seen a more extreme example of the slide in manufacturing jobs that's affected Japan, gets about triple the revenue from tourism as a share of its economy compared with Japan, where the sector accounted for 1.8 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) in 2011, down from 2.2 per cent in 2006.

Australia drew 5.5 per cent of its GDP from tourism in 2011, according to the Japan Tourism Agency.

Japan is targeting a surge to 30 million foreign visitors by 2030, with momentum

projected from the summer Olympic Games to be hosted in Tokyo in 2020. The yen's 26 per cent decline against the dollar from a peak in 2011 may help.

Kiyoo Bank has established a fund to promote tourism jointly with the government-backed Regional Economy Vitalisation Corporation of Japan.

The fund aims to collect as much as 1 billion yen (\$10 million), with an investment period of eight years, and is now searching for investment targets.

The lender hopes to use Revic's expertise and networks to find ways to lure more people to Wakayama, which features mountains, waterfalls and more than 100 temples.

The Abe administration in March 2013 charged Revic, originally a vehicle for helping indebted small enterprises, with providing funds and management expertise for projects revitalising local areas.

### Economic impact

"Tourism is one area that is changing significantly,"

said Tetsuro Ii, chief executive at Commons Asset Management, which in 2013 started a fund with a focus on companies related to tourism.

The new fund aimed at investing in 50 companies that show promise in growth industries.

There's plenty of scope for growth. While Japan National Tourism Organisation data show the country had a record 10.4 million visitors from abroad 2013, that's still one-third fewer than island-state Singapore welcomed.

The top three destinations in Japan are Tokyo, Osaka and Sapporo, the biggest city on northern Hokkaido island.

"Tourism is extremely important as aging and globalisation have resulted in companies shifting operations overseas," said Hide-nori Suezawa, an analyst at SMBC Nikko Securities Inc. in Tokyo.

"One growth strategy is to make the regions a travel destination. Without that, there will be more rural communities that won't survive."

### Record Tokyo population

Almost half of the nation's municipal districts have vanished in the past 15 years as they merged to cut costs.

Shima's population has declined 18 per cent since 2004, when it was formed by the merger of five communities, according to data compiled by city hall.

Japan's population declined by a record 244,000 in 2013, according to Health Ministry estimates, a seventh straight year of declines.

Japan's population as of March 1, 2014 was 127.1 million.

Tokyo's population rose 0.3 per cent in the year to October 2012, reaching a record 13.23 million.

### Drying bonito

Yukiaki Tenpaku, president of fish-products maker, Maruten Ltd., wants to introduce traditional methods of drying bonito dating back 350 years.

As part of this process, tiered baskets in which the fish are dried for up to two years are kept in a room

where the climate is adjusted regularly to maintain the optimum amount of bacteria needed to absorb moisture.

"I want people to not just see our products as commercial products but feel the culture behind it, and discover something that's not available in Tokyo," Tenpaku says.

"It's our responsibility to show how intangible things were passed on."

More than the fate of rural economies may be riding on the success of luring tourists. A way of life is also at stake.

Neither of Yamashita's daughters followed her by becoming ama, the term for female divers. They moved to cities after getting married.

"If the ama feel there is money to be made by diving into the sea, they will continue the profession," says Yamashita, whose years of diving have made her so flexible she can touch the floor with her flat palms and knees straight.

"If you can't make money from your catch, there is not much incentive."

• Culled from www.bloomberg.com

## Leibman steps down as Kerzner CEO

**A**lan Leibman will step down as chief executive officer (CEO) of Kerzner International Holdings, the company has announced.

He has been CEO since 2012. Kerzner, through its subsidiaries, is an international developer and operator of destination resorts, luxury hotels and residences and entertainment and gaming experiences.

Mohammed Al Shaibani, execu-

tive director and CEO of Investment Corporation of Dubai, and chairman of Kerzner, expressed thanks on behalf of himself and his colleagues to Leibman for his "commitment and hard work."

He also expressed appreciation for Leibman's "dynamic leadership and untiring management" while at the helm at Kerzner, and wished him "all the very best as he moves on to pursue his personal endeavors."

Kerzner announced that it has

finalised the appointment of a new CEO and the details will be announced soon.

Shaibani will work closely with the executive team until the new CEO is announced.

Leibman said: "I am incredibly proud of all that has been accomplished at Kerzner International over the last 23 years. I am honoured to have worked with an amazing team that would always rise to meet every challenge, an incredibly supportive board of di-

rectors, and world-class partners.

"After 23 years," he added, "I believe now is the ideal time to turn my attention to other challenges and fulfilling my personal passions."

He expressed confidence that the company will continue to flourish through creativity and innovation, delivering the best hospitality and entertainment experience and the highest levels of service in the industry.



Leibman



# SPORTS

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What is next for  
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Siasia goes  
tough on  
players



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## Retract call for foreign coach, Bewarang tells Azeez



Bewarang



Azeez

By Ayo Bada  
Senior Correspondent

**T**he Nigeria Football Coaches Association (NFCA) has described as unfair and vilifying, the comment credited to Nigeria Football Referees Association (NFRA) President, Tade Azeez, about Nigerian coaches. NFCA President, Bitrus Bewarang, expressed disappointment at Azeez's description of coaches as businessmen who favour only their players.

He is also surprised that Azeez called for the engagement of a foreign coach for the Super Eagles at a time Nigerians are advocating patronage of local goods and services.

Bewarang asked Azeez to retract his

comment and tender an apology to Nigerian coaches or he may have sown the seed of discord that will aggravate the already charged football atmosphere.

"The call for engagement of a foreign coach is coming at a time when top coaches in Nigeria are undergoing the Confederation of African Football (CAF) 'A' Licence Coaching course," Bewarang said.

He acknowledged the roles Clemence Westerhof and Bonfrere Jo played as foreign coaches engaged for the Super Eagles in the past.

"The secret of their success, especially Westerhof, is that they had the luxury of time to prepare for the achievement they made.

"It is clear that foreign coaches are usually overpriced and given the required tools and environment to operate while in the contrary indigenous coaches are

treated with ignominy."

He insisted that indigenous coaches, despite their poor working conditions, exhibit high sense of patriotism and rank among the most successful coaches globally.

"The Nigerian coaches are the handlers of the Golden Eaglets who currently hold the five-time record of winning the FIFA Under-17 World Cup."

Bewarang reminded critics that the Dream Team (Under-23) is preparing for the Rio Olympics under the tutelage of an indigenous coach, as well as the Flying Eagles who are rated among the best in the world.

"The senior women team, Super Falcons, are the best in Africa and among the best in the world. The same goes for the Falconets and the Flamingoes.

"The National Under-15 national team

and the national beach football teams are all handled by indigenous coaches.

"Let me ask some questions, who trained our past and present players like Stephen Keshi, Samson Siasia, Sunday Oliseh, Garba Lawal, Austin JJ Okocha, Tijani Babangida, Kanu Nwankwo, Joseph Yobo, Mikel Obi, Ahmed Musa, Vincent Enyama and many more too numerous to mention?"

Bewarang added that Nigerian coaches will continue to give their best in any capacity and strive to improve with every opportunity given.

He counseled Nigerian referees to be focused and work on improving their members who have been ridiculously excluded from the World Cup over the years.

He advised Azeez to think on how to improve the officiating of his members in the domestic league.

# Basketball

## Milo Secondary Schools Basketball Championship



Edo State team with the boys' trophy won at the Western Conference in Lagos.

## Edo, Lagos win Western Conference

Stories by Ayo Bada  
Senior Correspondent, Lagos

**H**enson Demonstration School, Benin City and

Wesley Girls Senior Secondary School, Lagos have emerged regional champions in the boys and girls categories of the 18th Nestle Milo Secondary Schools Basketball Championship. Henson Demonstration School got the better of hard-fighting Osadenis Mixed Secondary School in a well contested match at the Indoor Sport Hall of the National Stadium, Surulere, Lagos. The match ended 46-37.

Wesley Girls Senior Secondary School gave the Lagos crowd something to

cheer for as they defeated last year's regional champion, Yejide Girls Grammar School Ibadan 34-22. The two finalists will represent Western Conference in the National Finals in Asaba.

It is the first time the national finals will be played outside Lagos. Deji Adeshoga, Nestle Nigeria branch manager, said Milo is a brand that is well known in Nigeria as the number one supporter of grassroots sports. "For 20 years, Milo has been at the forefront of basketball development in Nigeria through the Milo Secondary School Basketball Championship, producing many top players in the sport," he said.

Nestle Category Business Manager, Femi Akintola, reiterated the company's resolve to continue to

contribute its quota to the development of basketball in the country.

He said the company believes that sport is a suitable platform for youths to learn values such as honesty, teamwork, fair play, respect, adherence to rules, discipline, perseverance, resilience, and a strong sense of purpose. "These are the motivating factor behind Nestlé's commitment to this championship," he stressed. The Central Conference dunked off in Ilorin on Thursday, May 5 and will end on Thursday, May 12. Confluence Conference matches will hold in Lokoja from Friday, May 13 to Friday, May 20. Nnamdi Azikiwe Stadium, Enugu will host Equatorial Conference games from Saturday, May 21 to Friday 27.

## How to turn hope into reality, by Ugoka

**T**he future is not a result of choices among alternative paths offered by the present, but a place that is created – created first in the mind and will, created next in activity.

"The future is not some place we are going to, but one we are creating. The paths are not to be found, but made, and the activity of making them, changes both the maker and destination."

With those words of wisdom from John Schaar, a sociologist, one can easily see the motive behind the formation of the THIR (Turning Hope into Reality) Foundation under the leadership of national basketball star, Uju Ugoka.

The D'Tigeres player, voted the Most Valuable Player (MVP) in the Italian League for the 2014/15 season, gave an insight into the foundation.

She said: "Our goal is focused on the training and improving the skills of young athletes. Turning their hope into reality through sports."

"We help players get scholarships by promoting them to colleges with our vast connections. We train and teach players on how to be successful on and off the courts."

"We instil the qualities that are required to excel not only on the basketball courts, but in the game of life."

"The foundation leverages the power of sport to educate, inspire hope, and mobilise youth in our community to overcome their greatest health challenges, live healthier, more productive lives, and be agents for change in their communities."

"Young people have a vast potential to create meaningful change and play a

significant role in overcoming their greatest health challenges.

"Sport is an ideal way to reach, educate, and inspire young people in a language they understand and enjoy."

"Accountability, work ethic, character, leadership, and also been a team player are great skills and qualities they will learn and be accountable for in their societies."

"We need to incorporate sports in most of our states from primary to secondary school. A healthy living lifestyle is important in the world today."

"Therefore, let's encourage our young boys and girls to participate in sports because sports is an integral part of our culture around the world. It brings togetherness, happiness and love."

### Ugoka's Hall of Fame

- Silver medalist in the Under-18 African Championship.
- Member of the Under-16 national team.
- Member of the senior National team.
- Professional basketball player with Basket Parma in Italy.
- MVP of the Italian League 2014/15 season.
- Graduated with a 3.5 GPA from Virginia Tech University.
- Appeared in and started 29 games for the Hokies.
- Set the Virginia Tech record with 16 double-doubles in a single season.
- Set the Virginia Tech senior season records in field goals made (213) and rebounds (277).
- Finished fourth on the Hokies' overall single-season record lists in points with 533 and fourth in rebounds averaged, 9.6.



Ugoka



# Football

## What is next for champions Leicester?

**T**he fairytale is complete. The movie has its perfect Hollywood ending. Now, what about that sequel?

Will it be Leicester: Back with a Vengeance or The Premier League Strikes Back?

The bookies – still reeling from the eye-watering financial gut-punch of a Leicester title win – are hedging their bets.

The Foxes are 33-1 to be champions again, 5-1 to finish in the top four, 15-8 to finish in the bottom half, and 25-1 to be relegated. When it comes to Leicester's fortunes next season, it seems no scenario can be ruled out.

And then there's the Champions League. Costly continental distraction, or new frontier to be conquered?

Here, BBC Sport examines what next season might hold for Leicester.

### The squad

Some of the most important work of Leicester's season could be done before a ball is kicked.

Much will depend on whether Claudio Ranieri can keep hold of his star trio – midfielders N'Golo Kante and Riyad Mahrez, and striker Jamie Vardy.

Between them, Mahrez and Vardy have scored or assisted 48 of Leicester's 64 league goals this season and losing either would be a huge blow.

"The priority is keeping what they have got," says former Blackburn and Norwich striker Chris Sutton.

"When you take Vardy and Mahrez – who hold their goal threat and their creative threat – out of their team, they are still hard to beat but they will not have the same spark."

However, with a Champions League campaign coming up, it is not just potential departures Leicester need to worry about.

Ranieri desperately needs some new faces to bolster a squad that will otherwise be stretched to breaking point by the demands of fighting on another front.

"I think they need to add strength in depth," says Sutton, who played in the competition for Blackburn in 1995.

"They are certainly going to need a better quality of player squad-wise so people can come in and do the same job as the first-choice side. In particular, they need another striker with Vardy's pace."

So who might Leicester target? Will Ranieri stick with the prototype of hard-working, low-cost signings – such as Vardy, Kante and Danny Drinkwater – who have

brought success, or take a potentially once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to lure some galacticos to the East Midlands with the promise of Champions League football?

"It is important to bring the players with the same mentality, our mentality," Ranieri has said.

"It is too early to say we need five, six, seven or eight players. We don't need the superstars.

"I want to improve the squad without big stars but the right players. It is important to choose very well for the lads because now, for me as well, the lads are my sons."

### Style of play

On the pitch, Leicester's blueprint for success has been clear: shun possession, sit deep, and hit teams at pace on the counter-attack.

But can they repeat that approach next season now other teams are wise to it?

The big beasts might be content to let Leicester sit back, but will the defending champions really be able to play on the break against the likes of Watford and West Brom?

"I don't think they should change," Sutton says. "They can't rip it up because it is what their achievement has been based on.

"They have played to their strengths and it has worked. Vardy takes yards off centre-halves so why would you not use that threat? Robert Huth and Wes Morgan are not the quickest but they are superbly organised, defend the box well and read the game, so they will not want to get exposed."

Can their approach work in the Champions League?

In recent years, most of Europe's successful sides have tended to monopolise possession, but Sutton believes Leicester could emulate the success of Jurgen Klopp's counter-attacking Borussia Dortmund side, for example.

"I think their style of play will work in the Champions League too," he says. "Why not? Their success of late is based on defending strongly and doggedly and being organised and having that threat on the break."

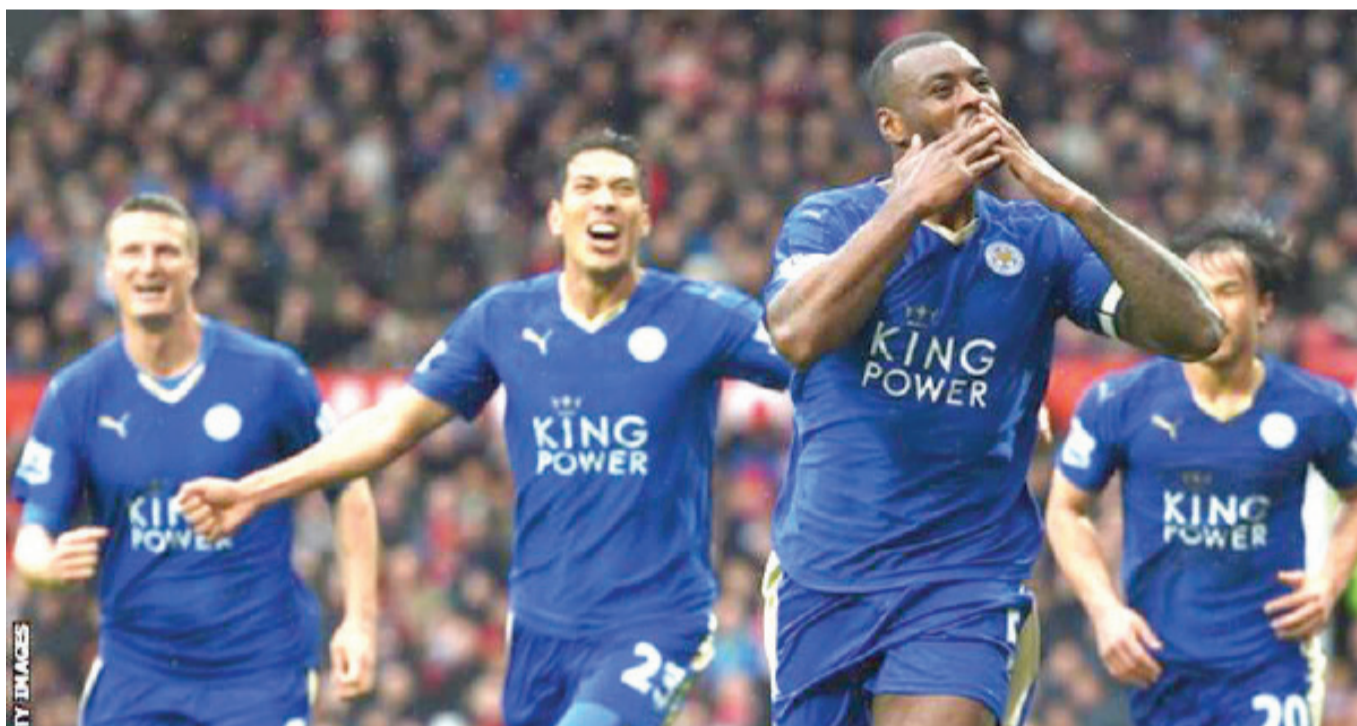
### The manager

Ranieri's calm authority and ability to take pressure off his players was a crucial ingredient in Leicester's success, but never before in his 28-year managerial career has he defended a top-flight league title.

The Italian, who is 65 in October, signed a three-year deal when he took over last year and has so far dismissed talk of an extension.



Ranieri



Morgan (second right) celebrates with teammates after scoring the equaliser in Leicester's game against Manchester United

He is experienced in the wiles of European football, having previously managed five different clubs in the Champions League. In 40 games, he has won 18 and lost 11, with Chelsea's run to the semi-finals in 2004 his best result.

He last managed in the competition with Inter Milan in 2012.

It was during his tenure at Stamford Bridge that Ranieri acquired the nickname 'The Tinkerman' for his habitual experimentation, but he has cast that reputation aside this season, making just 27 changes to his starting XI – the fewest in the league.

However, Sutton says the demands of European foot-

ball may force him to revisit old habits.

"Ranieri will have to tinker to some extent," he says. "He might need to prioritise, similar to how they did this season when they made lots of changes for the FA Cup."

### Verdict

So, how will Leicester fare next season?

"It is going to be extremely difficult for them to have the same level of success because of the volume of games they will face and because so much of their success has been down to the continuity in Ranieri's team selection," Sutton says.

"But I can't see them going

into freefall if they have that same threat and that same way of playing. They defend strongly and, if they keep Vardy, and keep their other key players, they will have that pace to get in behind.

"I still think they will be near the top of the league if they keep players fit and don't sell."

Southampton Manager, Ronald Koeman, believes Leicester can acquit themselves well in the Champions League too.

"With the spirit and power they have in the team, Leicester are not going to be shown up in Europe," Koeman – who twice won the European Cup as a player – told the Mirror.

"In fact, they will do well in the Champions League, even though the bigger clubs of England will have a better chance than them."

Ranieri has warned next season will pose a wholly different challenge.

"The foundations are solid, but the Champions League is very hard," he said.

"It burns a lot of mental energy. It is not easy to play FA Cup and Charity Shield [as well]."

Still, even he can't resist dreaming. "My career is fantastic," he said. "But I want to achieve a little more if it is possible."

• Culled from www.bbc.com/sport

# Football

## UEFA Champions League Final

### History beckons for Real Madrid



San Siro



Real Madrid and Atletico fans at the 2014 UCL final

**R**eal Madrid and its city rival, Atletico, will engage in their seventh European encounter in the 2016 UEFA Champions League (UCL) final on Saturday, May 28 at the San Siro.

Atletico edged out Bayern Munchen on away goals advantage having won the first leg 1-0 but lost the return leg 2-1 to bring the goals to 2-2 aggregate.

Real Madrid held Manchester City to a goalless draw at the Etihad Stadium in the first leg but ran away with a lone goal victory in the return leg last Wednesday at the Bernabeu.

European games between Real Madrid and Atletico are usually close. However, as UEFA.com discovers, Real always prevails in the end.

The sides have met 200 times in league and Copa del Rey games, and while Real has the better record (W102 D48 L50), it has not beaten Atletico in six La Liga meetings since the 2014 UCL final (D2 L4).

#### 1958/59 European Champion Clubs' Cup semifinals

Madrid won the home first leg 2-1, Hector Rial's goal (15) and a Ferenc Puskas penalty (33) overturning Chuzo's 13th-minute opener.

Atletico prevailed in the return, though, thanks to Enrique Collar's 43rd-minute effort.

That meant a replay six days later, played in Zaragoza, where Alfredo Di Ste-

fano's early goal was swiftly cancelled out by Collar. Puskas struck the decisive blow three minutes before half time to take Real into a fourth successive final.

#### 2013/14 UCL final

Three goals in extra time laddled a bucket-load of gloss on the victory that completed 'La Decima' – Real Madrid's 10th European Cup – but it would have been Atletico's trophy had Sergio Ramos not cancelled out Diego Godin's strike in the 93rd minute.

Diego Simeone said: "In life, and in football, you've got everything one day, then you've got nothing the next."

Real captain Iker Casillas added: "For the effort we've put in, I think we deserve to be kings of Europe."

#### 2014/15 UCL quarterfinals

Carlo Ancelotti's Madrid finally picked the lock late after 178 goalless minutes between the sides, Javier Hernandez scoring following Cristiano Ronaldo's burst into the box, with Simeone's Atletico a man down following the dismissal of Arda Turan. "It was difficult, as it always is against Atletico," Ancelotti concluded.

"When I was a boy I was taught you have to compete in a game and when I gave everything and lost, I could go home happy," Simeone said.

#### Milan's Stadio Giuseppe Meazza to host final

Milan's Stadio Giuseppe Meazza – otherwise known



Keys

as San Siro – will host the 2016 UCL final.

It will be the fourth time the European Cup will be decided at the stadium after 1965, 1970, and 2001.

San Siro, opened on September 19, 1926, is home to both AC Milan and Internazionale Milan.

#### Stadium facts

- Built for Milan in 1925 and originally named after the district in which it is located, San Siro. Inter beat Milan 6-3 in the opening game on September 19, 1926.

- Milan owned the stadium until it was sold to the city in 1935, before an enlargement that increased capacity to more than

50,000 in 1939.

- Inter moved into the venue in 1947 and a revamp in the mid-1950s took the capacity to above 100,000.

- In 1965, Inter won the first European Cup final to be held at the stadium, followed by Feyenoord in 1970, and Bayern Munchen in 2001.

- Milan was used as a venue during the 1980 UEFA European Championship, the same year that it was officially renamed after former Inter and Milan player Giuseppe Meazza.

- The stadium was overhauled as an all-seater with its impressive concrete towers for the 1990 FIFA World Cup.

#### Alicia Keys to perform at San Siro

Award-winning singer-songwriter, Alicia Keys, will perform at the UCL final opening ceremony – "an event celebrated in every corner of the world".

In conjunction with Pepsi, UEFA has confirmed that Keys – who has sold over 50 million albums – will feature as part of a revamped ceremony prior to the game on May 28.

The match will be broadcast in more than 220 countries and reach an estimated global live audience of 180 million viewers, making it the most-watched annual sporting event in the world.

"I'm extremely excited to share my new music at the

UCL final, an event that is celebrated in every corner of the world," Keys said.

"This is going to be a powerful moment in history and one that represents the spirit of all the similarities we share no matter where we live and who we are. I'm honoured to be a special part of such a beloved experience."

Guy-Laurent Epstein, UEFA marketing director, added: "With such a highly-respected and truly global artist performing ahead of the final, it heightens even further the appeal of the match and consequently will reach a broader audience demographic."

PepsiCo teamed up with UCL in 2015.



# Football

## Siasia goes tough on players

A

s preparation for the men's football tournament of the Rio Olympic Games gets up, Nigeria's Under-23 Head Coach, Samson Siasia, has declared that from Monday, May 9, he will no longer release any player in camp to play for their clubs during Nigeria Professional Football League (NPFL) mid week matches.

Speaking after training at the practice pitch of the National Stadium, Abuja, Siasia noted that he barely has enough players in camp to start real preparation for the Olympics, which is three months away.

His words: "I must confess that it has not been easy for me and my technical crew; a lot of the players we need to work with won't report to camp as and when due because their club chairmen will always call me to beg that

these players stay back to play mid week games.

"I understand their plight that they need these players to do well in the league, but then we must draw a line between national interest and club interest.

"I have always built the foundation of my team on home based players, so it is the players I have at my disposal that I will work and plan with.

"So, I am appealing to all involved to please bear with us, because from next week, I will not release any player for mid week games.

"If the clubs cannot release these players, then I am sorry, no matter how good these players are, they cannot be part of my plans."

Siasia's call for understanding comes on the heels of preparing the team

for the South Korea Invitational Tournament in June, and he needs to pick players who will do the nation proud and get them in the mood for the Olympics.

"From the information at my disposal, we are supposed to be travelling to Seoul on May 29.

"It means we have barely two weeks to prepare adequately for that competition that will have in attendance other teams that would be going to the Olympics."

He disclosed that he will soon release the names of foreign based professionals expected to be part of the preparation, saying he has delayed announcing their names because he has not been able to get assurances from their clubs on their release.



Siasia

## Giwa close to NPFL expulsion



Giwa FC players

Giwa FC failed to honour its Nigeria Professional Football League (NPFL) tie against Wikki Tourists in Ilorin and risks demotion to

the lower league if it misses another.

Articles 13.27 and 13.28 of the League Management Company (LMC) say missing three matches cumulatively without an

acceptable reason results in expulsion from the top flight, and the annulling of the team's results to date.

Are we seeing the end of the Jos side in the NPFL?

## Pinnick congratulates Ubah

Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) President, Amaju Pinnick, has congratulated Ifeanyi Ubah on his election as the chairman of the Anambra State Football Association (ASFA).

The business mogul polled 24 votes in the elections conducted last Tuesday. Jude Obikwelu emerged vice chairman.

The following persons were also elected into the board of the FA:

- Amuzie Cyprian Chibuikwe, Udennanka Anthony Bebeto (Anambra Central).
  - Amene Joe Ifeanyi, Emeke Raphael Udoka, Uduh Kingsley (Anambra North)
  - Ifepe Edward Adah, Albert Chinye Theodore (Anambra South).
- Anambra State Election



Ubah

Monitoring Committee Chairman, E. C. Chukwuemeka, confirmed the results which he described as free and fair.

Chairman of Chairmen of Nigeria Football, Ibrahim Musa Gusau, also witnessed

the elections that took place in Awka, alongside Enugu State Football Association Chairman, Chidi Okenwa.

## Ebiye hails Ikorodu United players

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korodu United forward, Moses Ebiye, has admitted he was relieved at his side's 3-1 victory over Heartland FC at the Agege Stadium last Saturday.

The 'Oga Boys' picked up the second win of the season and earned the first win in the last 12 matches.

Anthony Oussou put the away side in front after 10 minutes, benefitting from Emeka Atuloma's assist to score with his head.

Two minutes before half-time, Moses Ebiye found Merenini Junior, who curled the ball into the corner from the edge of the box, before Ebiye tapped in after the hour to put the hosts

ahead for the first time in the game.

Ifegwu Ojukwu got himself on the score sheet from the penalty spot, after a foul by Zuomana Doumbia on Ebiye. The decision also meant that the Heartland defender was dismissed.

Ebiye said: "We were solid and did not leave any gaps between defence and attack, so that benefited us.

"We started a little nervously but the equaliser settled us and I thought we had a brilliant game.

"It's a win we must now build on to show our fans that we are on the right track."



Ebiye (in red jersery) against Shittu Lawal of Giwa FC.



## Enugu killings: Matters arising

**T**here seems to be some quiet in the South East after the national uproar that greeted the massacring of over 50 indigenes of Ukpabi Nimbo community in Uzo-Uwani Local Government Area of Enugu State by Fulani herdsmen.

A lot of steps in the right direction also seem to have been taken since then.

Enugu State Governor, Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi, who was summoned to Abuja by President Muhammadu Buhari, has since returned to address the highly traumatised people, indicting the security agencies for ignoring security report that an attack on the community was imminent.

He has constituted a judicial commission of inquiry "to investigate the immediate and remote causes of all the violent occurrences in the state associated with Fulani herdsmen and recommend appropriate measures that will be put in place to prevent future occurrence."

Traditional rulers and town union leaders from over 400 communities also met with Ugwuanyi and resolved to re-activate vigilante groups in all communities.

To underscore the importance of this initiative, Ugwuanyi pledged to provide an initial seed money of N100 million to support the security efforts.

The meeting urged him to prevail on the state House of Assembly to amend the law establishing vigilante groups to strengthen them and possibly enable them bear arms, while the communities were mandated to pay security levies as counterpart funding.

But there are also some missteps.

For instance, in his address, Ugwuanyi, whose picture with Buhari in Aso Rock had offended many people who reasoned that the occasion

did not call for such broad smiles, was effusive in praising the president.

"I am very grateful to ... Buhari for his prompt and decisive reaction to the incident in Nimbo.

"[He] came out with a clear and unmistakable condemnation of this dastardly act and gave clear and definite directives to the security agencies to fish out these criminals and bring them to justice."

Buhari is undeserving of this applause. His actions and inactions were clearly not presidential. He showed no empathy when it mattered most. He was uncaring, in fact, scornful of the victims in particular and the people of Enugu State in general.

If he cared, he would have visited Enugu State immediately the news broke, rather than summoning Ugwuanyi to Abuja.

If Buhari cared, he would have made a national broadcast, condemning the wanton killings in very strong terms and outlining sanctions rather than issuing tepid statements through his media aides.

What Ugwuanyi calls prompt and decisive reaction was a halfhearted statement issued by the president's media aide, Garba Shehu, three days after the attack.

In any other country that places greater premium on human life, killings, even on a smaller scale, would see the president coming out personally to address the country. Not in Nigeria.

Buhari had better and more



important state matters to attend to than to bother himself with such inconsequential issue - killing of 50 people - who possibly had no name recognition beyond their villages.

The irony is that had this attack occurred in any other country, especially in the West, Buhari would have been one of the first world leaders to offer his condolences.

Enugu State Police Commissioner, Nwodibo Ikechukwu, who ignored the security report of an imminent attack, has since been redeployed. Some reports claim that he was sacked.

The House of Representatives summoned the director general of the Department of State Security (DSS) over the matter and the Senate held a public hearing.

A 16-man delegation of the Catholic Bishops Confer-

ence of Nigeria, led by Most Rev. Ignatius Kaigama, the archbishop of Jos, had audience with Buhari.

Governors elected on the platform of the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) went to Enugu to condole with the people of the state.

Buhari reportedly assured the Catholic bishops of the determination of his government to secure all Nigerians, disclosing that he had told the Inspector General of Police, Solomon Arase, and other security agencies to deal decisively with the herdsmen.

For the first time also, he condoled with the Catholic bishop of Enugu, the people of Ukpabi Nimbo and all other communities that had suffered fatalities and other losses from the recent attacks.

Every well-meaning Nigerian has condemned the attacks. It was as if the Nimbo massacres became the rallying point for Nigerians to vent their frustrations over the lethargy of the government to acts of impunity.

Taken on its face value, it would seem that given the condemnations and government's seeming awakening from its slumber, we are beginning to get a handle on things that matter. But something tells me that this is all motion and no movement.

Buhari is just making the right noise so as to erase the perception that he does not care as long as the killings are carried out by his kinsmen - Fulani herdsmen.

Why do I say so? Almost two weeks after the Enugu massacres, not even one herdsmen has been arrested.

Several weeks after the Agatu killings, not even one person has been arrested.

Instead, the herdsmen are still occupying the lands from which they drove away the indigenes. They are still herding their cattle, destroying farmlands and the people are too scared to confront them. The herders are still clutching their AK47 rifles and they have not been disarmed.

It would seem that all the noise by the government and state officials were attempts to ward off reprisal attacks, to calm the victims down and protect the murderers.

It seems we are all waiting to hear where the next attack will take place and then re-enact the condemnation ritual. It is this perception that forced the United Nations (UN) to voice out its worry over the "complete impunity enjoyed so far by perpetrators of previous attacks."

How is it that in a country where mass murder has become almost a daily ritual, nobody has ever been successfully prosecuted and punished for such crimes against humanity?

For those who are already celebrating that these carnages will soon become history, my advice is that, as Chinua Achebe (God bless his soul) would say, it is morning yet on creation day.

Why? Because as Nobel Laureate, Wole Soyinka, said in his very strong intervention in the matter, "impunity evolves and becomes integrated in conduct when crime occurs and no legal, logical and moral response is offered."

As long as the Buhari government is yet to "articulate a firm policy of non-tolerance for the serial massacres that have become the nation's identification stamp," Soyinka cautions optimists to be wary.

I can't agree less because eternal vigilance, they say, is the prize to pay for liberty.

## The Republic

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