

107 victims of Benue attack still hospitalized —SEMA

The Executive Secretary of the Benue State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA), James Iorpuu, has revealed that 107 victims of the June 13 attack on Yelwata, Guma Local Government Area, are still hospitalized and receiving treatment for injuries sustained during

the assault.

Iorpuu, who also serves as the Permanent Secretary of the Benue State Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management, made this known in Makurdi during a joint press briefing with his counterparts from Nasarawa and Plateau states.

He condemned the continued attacks on rural communities across the state and described the Yelwata incident as a massacre, saying the level of carnage caused by the armed assailants was overwhelming.

“So far, 107 survivors of the Yelwata attack are still receiving treatment at the Benue

State University Teaching Hospital, Makurdi, and other medical facilities,” he said.

“The attack claimed over 200 lives. We pray such an incident never occurs again in any part of Benue State.”

Iorpuu explained that the visiting officials from Nasarawa and Plateau were in the

state to express solidarity with the people of Benue and to explore ways of collaborating to halt the wave of armed violence in the North Central region.

“We are going to work together as a team to find solutions to the security challenges, especially concerning attackers

who often pass through Nasarawa to launch assaults on Benue communities,” he added.

On his part, the Director General of the Nasarawa State Emergency Management Agency, Mr Ben Akwash, said their visit was both to condole

CONTINUES ON PG 2 >>

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Imam Obhakhobo refutes Police rescue claim, says ₦6.5m ransom secured his freedom

—Pg 2

Nat'l mourning as Buhari laid to rest in Daura

Nigeria was plunged into mourning on Tuesday, July 15, 2025, as the remains of former President Muhammadu Buhari were interred in his hometown of Daura, Katsina State, two days after his passing in a London clinic.

The burial marked the end of an era for one of Nigeria's most controversial, yet iconic leaders, an austere general-turned-civilian president who led Africa's largest democracy through some of its most turbulent periods.

Buhari died at The London Clinic, United Kingdom, on Sunday, July 13, following an extended battle with an undisclosed illness.

He was 82. His body arrived

at the Umaru Musa Yar'Adua International Airport in Katsina on Tuesday afternoon, where it was received by President Bola Ahmed Tinubu in a solemn and symbolic gesture that underscored the gravity of the national loss.

The President was accompanied by a high-powered federal delegation that included Vice President Kashim Shettima; First Lady, Senator Oluremi Tinubu; Chief of Staff, Femi Gbajabiamila; National Security Adviser, Nuhu Ribadu; Deputy Chief of Staff, Senator Ibrahim Hadejia; and other senior government functionaries.

The late president's body, encased in a simple casket draped

in Nigeria's national colours, was handed over to military pallbearers amid a silent, but heavy atmosphere.

The aircraft carrying the former president touched down at exactly 3:15 p.m., and the ceremonies commenced almost immediately, reflecting the military precision that had defined much of Buhari's public life.

Full state honours were rendered by officers of the Nigerian Armed Forces—including a 21-gun salute, guard of honour, and bugle calls, befitting a man who once held the highest command in the military hierarchy.

By 5:50 p.m., the burial was completed at his ancestral compound in Daura, a modest

agrarian community near Nigeria's border with Niger.

Islamic clerics led the Janazah (funeral prayer), and the final rites were observed in accordance with Muslim tradition, with the participation of immediate family members, including his widow, Aisha Buhari, children, and grandchildren.

Tears flowed freely as the body of a man once feared and revered was committed to the earth.

A PARADE OF TRIBUTES AND DIGNITARIES

The turnout for Buhari's funeral was an unmistakable display of his stature on the national and regional stage.

Former Vice Presidents Yemi Osinbajo and Atiku Abubakar paid their last respects, as did a cross-section of former ministers, including Lai Mohammed, and members of the diplomatic corps.

State governors, notably Dikko Radda of Katsina, Babajide Sanwo-Olu of Lagos, and Babagana Zulum of Borno, were present.

Aliko Dangote, Africa's richest man and a long-time associate of the late president, also accompanied Governor Sanwo-Olu.

The First Lady was joined by the wives of key National Assembly leaders, Fatimah Abbas, wife of the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Laila Barau, wife of the Deputy Senate President.

A delegation from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), a body Buhari had worked closely with during his presidency, was on hand to deliver messages of solidarity from regional leaders.

Other attendees included top traditional rulers, religious clerics, business leaders, diplomats, and members of civil society.

TRIBUTES FROM THE NATION'S SPIRITUAL LEADERS

In the aftermath of the funeral, national religious leaders offered moving tributes that reflected both Buhari's enduring influence and the complexity of his legacy.

The Sultan of Sokoto, Alhaji Muhammad Sa'ad Abubakar, in a statement released through his media team, hailed Buhari as a disciplined and principled leader who maintained a deep respect for traditional institutions.

He described his death as “the end of an era” and lauded Buhari's commitment to national unity, his stand against corruption, and his patriotism.

“He came, saw, and con-

quered,” the Sultan declared. “May Allah grant him eternal peace in Al-Jannah Firdaus.”

Bishop Matthew Kukah of the Catholic Diocese of Sokoto also struck a reconciliatory tone.

Known for being one of Buhari's most outspoken critics, Kukah acknowledged the former president's service and urged Nigerians to judge him by his total contributions to the country, rather than by the controversies of his presidency alone.

“I think President Buhari should be remembered as a good man,” Kukah said during a telephone interview.

“He gave much of his life to Nigeria! first as a soldier, later as a leader. We must honour that service, even when we debate the outcomes.”

LEGACY OF A COMPLEX LEADER

Born on December 17, 1942, Buhari joined the Nigerian Army at a young age and rose swiftly through the ranks, playing key roles in several pivotal national events, including the civil war and the post-war petroleum restructuring.

As Military Head of State from 1984 to 1985, he gained international notoriety for his draconian anti-corruption drive and iron-fist rule, including the controversial Decree 4 that curtailed press freedom.

After being ousted in a palace coup, Buhari largely disappeared from national politics until the early 2000s, when he reinvented himself as a civilian reformer.

Following three unsuccessful presidential runs, he finally won the 2015 election under the All Progressives Congress (APC) platform, defeating incumbent Goodluck Jonathan and marking the first democratic transfer of power from one party to another.

CONTINUES ON PG 2 >>



RECEIVING THE CORPSE:

President Bola Tinubu receiving the corpse of former President Mohammed Buhari on arrival at the Umaru Musa Yar'Adua International Airport in Katsina yesterday.

Senate passes Nwoko's Bill upgrading Asaba College to uni —Pg 3

NNPCL, Akwa Ibom govt, GACN sign \$3.5b MoU on gas industrialisation —Pg 4

'Not our war' - Trump's Nato weapons deal for Ukraine sparks MAGA anger —Pg 6

WAFCON 2024: Ologbese warns Super Falcons against resurgent Zambia —Pg 9

Imam Obhakhobo refutes Police rescue claim, says ₦6.5m ransom secured his freedom

ABDUL-KADIR ABDULLAH

The Chief Imam of Uromi Central Mosque, Imam Muhammad Murtadha Obhakhobo, has denied police claims surrounding his recent



IMAM OBHAKHOBO

release from captivity, stating that he paid a ₦6.5 million ransom for his freedom and was not rescued by security operatives.

Speaking to newsmen in Uromi, Imam Obhakhobo, who was abducted on July 9, 2025, along the Ubiaja-Illushi road in Edo State, recounted his ordeal, which he said ended only after the ransom was paid on July 13.

"I am Imam Muhammad Murtadha Obhakhobo, the Chief Imam of Uromi Central Mosque in Edo Central, Edo State. I was kidnapped on the 9th of July 2025 along the Ubiaja-Illushi road," he said.

"I got myself released with the sum of 6.5 million naira

on the 13th of July 2025. I'm also shocked to see a different person's picture in one of the papers claiming it was me."

The Imam's account sharply contradicts media reports based on a press statement credited to the Public Relations Officer of the Edo State

Police Command, Moses Yamu which implied that his release was secured through police efforts.

According to Imam Obhakhobo, the Divisional Police Officer of the Uromi Division visited him after his return to gather details of the incident.

However, he expressed disappointment at what he described as attempts by the police to take credit for a release they had no part in.

"I just got information in the newspapers where the police are trying to take credit for doing nothing," he stated.

The Imam maintained that his release came solely through private intervention and financial negotiation with his abductors.

He, however, expressed gratitude to all those who offered prayers and showed concern during his time in captivity.

107 victims of Benue attack still...

«CONTINUED FROM PG 1

with the government and people of Benue and to initiate a partnership among the three states to end the violence.

He further mentioned the need for coordinated efforts to prepare for potential flood disasters in the region.

Similarly, the Executive Secretary of the Plateau State Emergency Management Agency, Mr Sunday Abdu, commis-

erated with the people of Benue and expressed solidarity.

"Benue is dear to our hearts. The aggression suffered by Benue is the same that is being experienced in Plateau and other parts of the North Central. We pray for God's protection over our families, children and women," he said.

He added that the Plateau delegation also sought to learn from Benue's response strategies to humanitarian crises.



VISIT TO MAKURDI:

President Bola Tinubu consoles a survivor of the Yelewata attack during a visit to an hospital in Makurdi, Benue State.

PHOTO: STATE HOUSE

Nat'l mourning as Buhari laid to rest in...

«CONTINUED FROM PG 1

other in Nigerian history.

His two-term presidency (2015–2023) was defined by bold, but divisive reforms.

He championed infrastructure development and social investment programmes, like N-Power and the School Feeding Programme.

However, he was also heavily criticised for presiding over rising insecurity, sluggish economic growth, increasing poverty levels, and a perceived lack of responsiveness to national crises.

Despite these shortcomings, Buhari retained a loyal following, especially in Nigeria's North-West, where his reputation for honesty and personal discipline earned him the revered nickname "Mai Gaskiya."

BAKARE CLARIFIES BUHARI SUCCESSION SPECULATION

Amid the wave of tributes, Nigerian cleric and politician, Pastor Tunde Bakare, has dispelled widespread speculation about a supposed succession agreement between himself and the late Muhammadu Buhari.

Bakare, the founder of the Citadel Global Community Church and Buhari's former running mate in the 2011 presidential election under the now-defunct Congress for Progressive Change (CPC), was once vocal about his ambition to succeed Buhari.

In 2019, he famously declared that he would be Nigeria's 16th president, calling Buhari the 15th.

However, in a recent interview with Channels Television,

Bakare clarified that no formal or written pact ever existed between him and Buhari regarding succession.

"He is late. I will never say anything unfair about him. He did his best," Bakare said. "There was no written pact between us."

He further revealed that on the eve of the APC presidential primary in 2022, Buhari invited all aspirants to the State House and told them that just as he had allowed governors to pick their successors or recontest, he too desired the freedom to support a preferred candidate.

Bakare stated that Buhari's position was accepted by all present, including notable aspirants like then Vice President Yemi Osinbajo, Jigawa Governor Mohammed Badaru, and former Minister Ogbonnaya Onu.

Bakare's remarks provide insight into the behind-the-scenes politics of Buhari's final months in office and reaffirm his reputation for allowing internal party democracy to determine leadership succession, despite speculation that he anointed a successor.

INTERNATIONAL TRIBUTES POUR IN FOR BUHARI

As Nigeria laid former President Muhammadu Buhari to rest with full military and Islamic honours in Daura, expressions of sympathy continued to pour in from world leaders, highlighting his influence on African politics and global diplomacy.

In a condolence message addressed to President Bola Tinubu, His Majesty King Mohammed VI of Morocco described Buhari's death as a "sad occur-

rence" and praised the late leader as "an illustrious statesman who worked untiringly to serve his country's best interests and lead his people toward further progress and prosperity."

The Moroccan monarch also recalled their productive engagements, which, he said, culminated in the launch of bilateral development projects and marked "a new era of friendship and cooperation" between Nigeria and Morocco.

From Riyadh, the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman sent formal cables of condolences to President Tinubu.

King Salman extended "deepest condolences and sincere sympathy" to the Nigerian people and Buhari's family, acknowledging the former president's contributions to national service and regional stability.

Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman echoed similar sentiments, describing Buhari as "a leader of great integrity and dedication," whose decades of public service earned him national and international respect.

He also praised Buhari's commitment to strengthening Nigeria's political institutions and promoting security amid persistent challenges.

US EMBASSY, CONSULATE CLOSE IN HONOUR OF BUHARI

The United States Embassy in Abuja and Consulate General in Lagos closed on Tuesday, July 15, in observance of the public holiday declared by the Nigerian government in honour of the

late former President Muhammadu Buhari.

In a statement posted on its official X account on Monday, the US Mission confirmed that all visa appointments scheduled for that day would be rescheduled, with applicants to receive new dates in due course.

Normal consular operations are expected to resume after the holiday.

These tributes added to the growing international recognition of Buhari's complex but impactful legacy, a leader known for his austere lifestyle, principled nationalism, and strong regional alliances.

BUHARI HAD NO LONDON HOME, RELIED ON FRIENDS FOR MEDICAL BILLS, MIGHT HAVE DIED WITHOUT UK MEDICAL TREATMENT — ADESINA

Former presidential spokesman, Femi Adesina, has revealed that the late President Muhammadu Buhari never owned a private home in London and often relied on wealthy friends to cover his personal expenses during medical trips.

Speaking on Channels Television, Adesina said Buhari typically stayed at the Nigerian High Commission during his treatment abroad, even using the High Commissioner's apartment for extended periods.

He explained that Buhari had used the same UK medical team long before his presidency and chose to stick with them for continuity.

"He didn't pay those bills himself. He simply reached out

to friends like Dangote or Abdulsalamu," Adesina stated, adding that the president once said even his children's foreign school fees were paid by friends.

He described Buhari as a man who enjoyed strong goodwill and loyalty from associates throughout his life.

Also, Adesina defended Muhammadu Buhari's frequent medical trips abroad, stating that the former president might not have survived if he had relied on Nigerian hospitals.

Speaking on Channels Television, Adesina said Buhari's choice to continue treatment in the UK was driven by necessity and longstanding medical relationships, not luxury.

"He had always done his medicals in London, even before becoming president. The doctors there knew his history," Adesina said.

He argued that Buhari's decision was about staying alive to lead the country and ultimately improve its health sector. "If he had insisted on being treated in Nigeria just to prove a point, he might have died," he added.

Adesina maintained that Buhari's survival and leadership were made possible by the care he received abroad, and critics failed to understand the stakes involved.

ISLAMIC SCHOOL IN BAUCHI HOLDS SPECIAL PRAYERS FOR BUHARI

An Islamic school in Bauchi, Madarasatu Tarbiyatul Adafal Wa Tahfizil Qur'an Kareem, has organised a three-day prayer session for the late former Presi-

dent Muhammadu Buhari.

The school's director, Imam Abdullahi Hashimu, said the prayers, which began Monday and will run through Wednesday, were the school's humble contribution to honour Buhari's legacy.

"We realised we had nothing material to offer as poor individuals except prayers, especially those of children, which are highly regarded in Islam," he explained.

Citing Prophet Muhammad's teaching that children and animals protect the world from divine punishment, Hashimu urged other schools and individuals to join in the prayers.

TRIBUTES FROM KINSMEN, ASSOCIATES

As preparations concluded for his burial, Buhari's staff, neighbours, and close associates shared insights into his quiet post-presidency life in Daura.

Known for his humility and compassion, Buhari found joy in his pets—three tortoises and a visiting kiskadee bird—and maintained a bond with various animals including cows, horses, and camels.

His domestic staff described him as a caring guardian, recounting instances when he personally attended events like naming ceremonies and consoled bereaved workers. "He was more than an employer; he was a father and friend," one aide said.

Former Senate President Ahmad Lawan, who visited Daura to pay his respects, praised Buhari's legacy of integrity, saying, "He truly lived a life of service."

1,200 female small-business owners get free CAC registration in Nasarawa

The Nasarawa State Human Capital Development Agency says it has commenced the registration of businesses belonging to 1,200 less-privileged women in the state with the Corporate Affairs Commission to improve their livelihoods.

The move by the state's HCD Agency is aimed at enabling women to have easy access to financial interventions from the government and other recognised establishments in the country.

The Director General of the Agency, Habiba Suleiman, made the disclosure during a financial literacy and economic inclusion outreach held on Tuesday in the Wamba Local Government Area of the state.

While explaining that the Agency is currently working towards clustering the women into cooperatives to quickly register them with the CAC, the DG noted that the 1,200 beneficiaries were drawn from 12 communities across the six LGAs of Wamba, Lafia, Awe, Akwanga, Keffi, and Karu.

She further narrated that the gesture was part of programmes outlined by the Agency under its EmpowerHer project, which is also aimed at training the beneficiaries on financial and digital skills.

The DG said, "We are here to extend the gestures of the EmpowerHer programme to the good people of Wamba Local Government Area. Wamba is part of the Local Governments

selected for this phase one.

"The 1,200 beneficiaries will also enjoy a lot of services, including enrolment into the state's Health Insurance Scheme. These women will be enrolled for free.

"It is a contribution by the Local Government Chairmen in the six selected LGAs. They are going to bear the costs for the enrolment of the 1,200 women in the Health Insurance Scheme."

While noting that the 1,200 women are also being trained on financial literacy, the DG said the aim is to enable them to digitise their businesses in order for them to operate without any hindrances.

"We have 100 women per community from the 12 communities, making it a total of 1,200 women. We need to get them ready for opportunities that

abound. For example, there are a lot of Federal Government grants that most of our women do not qualify for, simply because they do not have bank accounts.

"So, we are trying to provide a platform to get them ready for opportunities that would enable them to show their potential.

"For those who do not have bank accounts, we are offering bank account opening services and helping them reactivate dormant accounts. We will also ensure that they get National Identity Numbers and other technical and funding support," she added.

While expressing her gratitude to the Africa Human Capital Development Plus for always supporting the Agency in its activities, the Director General urged stakeholders in Nasarawa State to key into the HCD agency's agenda so as to accelerate de-

velopment in the state, as well as to ensure that all citizens achieve their full potential.

On his part, the Galadima of Wamba, Shuaibu Yusuf, who represented traditional leaders in the LGA, commended the Director General for the various opportunities given to the beneficiaries.

He, therefore, urged the beneficiaries to take advantage of the

gesture to improve their livelihoods and guarantee their future.

One of the beneficiaries, Aisha Idris, who spoke on behalf of the others, while expressing her gratitude to the Nasarawa State Human Capital Development Agency for the gesture, promised to properly utilise all the opportunities made available to them to improve their livelihoods.

Delta Police nab kidnap syndicate, recover ₦5m ransom

The Delta State Police Command has arrested several suspected kidnapers and recovered ₦5 million in ransom money in a major operation targeting a notorious criminal network operating across the state.

The command said the suspects were trailed and apprehended by officers of its Special Anti-Kidnapping and Cyber Crime Squad, led by CSP Godwin Osador, following intelligence gathering and surveillance.

In a statement issued in Asaba by the Police Public Relations Officer, SP Bright Edate, the command said the arrest took place at the gang's hideout in Ogwashi-Uku, Aniocha South Local Government Area.

One of the suspects, identified as Sanusi Abdulahi, was found with ₦5 million in cash, allegedly part of a ransom paid by a recent kidnap victim. Preliminary investigations linked the group to a series of high-profile abductions across several communities including Ibusa, Ogwashi-Uku, Obulu-Okiti, Issele-Uku, and Issele-Asagba.

The most recent case involved the abduction of a young woman on 9 July in Ogwashi-Uku.

Acting on intelligence, police operatives arrested four more suspects at locations in Second Deputy and Oko, both in Asaba.

In a separate raid along the Patani, Ughelli Expressway, near the Unenurhie axis, the police stormed the hideout of another suspect, Solomon Danisco, also known as "Picolo."

During the operation, five additional suspects were arrested. They were named as Nelson Jacob, Oruma Saturday, Olise Jude, Precious Urhobowin, and Whisky Rufus, popularly called "Asawana," from Ewu community.

The police said the gang opened fire on operatives during the raid, leading to a fierce gun battle.

Six suspects later died from gunshot wounds sustained in the exchange, while two others are receiving treatment in hospital.

Items recovered from the suspects include four locally made firearms, 19 rounds of live cartridges, and ₦5 million in cash.



Buhari's daughter (left) weeps as she arrives Daura for burial.

CREDIT: X | CHANNELS TV

Oborewori backs Tinubu's blue economy push, urges policy action

Delta State Governor, Hon. Sheriff Oborewori, has said the establishment of the Federal Ministry of Marine and Blue Economy by President Bola Ahmed Tinubu represents a strategic step toward boosting Nigeria's economic growth.

The governor made the remarks in Asaba in an address read on his behalf by Deputy Governor, Sir Monday Onyeme, during a courtesy visit by participants of the Senior Executive Course 47, 2025, of the National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies, Kuru.

He urged the NIPSS study team to produce far-reaching policy recommendations that would help the country harness the economic opportunities within the blue economy sector.

The visit came on the heels of remarks by the leader of the del-

egation, retired Deputy Inspector General of Police, Leye Oyebade, who explained that the course participants were serving as a strategic national think tank on policy and development.

Oborewori said the study theme, "Blue Economy and Sustainable Development in Nigeria: Issues, Challenges, and Opportunities," was timely and relevant, as the sector remains largely underdeveloped despite its potential.

He recalled the World Bank's 2017 definition of the blue economy as the sustainable use of ocean resources for economic growth, job creation, and improved livelihoods, while protecting the marine environment.

He noted that although several countries have tapped into the sector for national revenue, Nigeria has yet to fully explore its potential.

He expressed confidence that renewed attention to the theme was a step in the right direction.

Highlighting Delta State's comparative advantage, the governor said the state boasts approximately 160 kilometres of coastline and a complex network of creeks, rivers and estuaries, all forming part of the Niger Delta.

He said the region is home to rich marine biodiversity, including species such as the Lesser African Threadfin, crabs, and blue mussels.

He further disclosed that the Delta State 2023 Transition Committee recommended the creation of a technical committee to engage stakeholders, including the Federal Government and private investors, to revive the state's four seaports: Koko, Warri, Burutu, and Sapele.

The plan, he said, is to drive maritime activity, create jobs,

and establish the state as a leading player in the country's blue economy framework.

He urged the NIPSS team to give attention to areas like marine transportation, coastal tourism, offshore energy, marine biotechnology, and oceanographic research.

He said he was confident that the team's recommendations would generate new strategies for sustainable development of Nigeria's marine economy and pledged Delta State's support in collaborating with key stakeholders to provide insights and guidance.

Oborewori stressed that with deliberate policies, strategic investments, and sound regulation, Delta State's vast potential in aquaculture, seabed mining, maritime transport, and ocean energy could help drive national prosperity.

Senate passes Nwoko's Bill upgrading Asaba College to uni

The Nigerian Senate has passed a bill sponsored by Senator Ned Munir Nwoko (APC, Delta North) seeking to upgrade the Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba, to the Federal University of Technology, Asaba.

The bill was among several others passed by the Senate aimed at expanding Nigeria's network of federal universities of technology to address regional educational imbalances and boost access to science-based higher education.

Also passed were bills for new federal universities of technology in Offa (Kwara State), Omoku (Rivers State), Odukpai (Cross River State), and Birnin Kebbi (Kebbi State). Others include bills for science and technology universities in Epe and Yaba (Lagos State) and Deba (Gombe State).

The bills followed the presentation of a report by the Senate Committee on Tertiary Institutions and TETFund, chaired by Senator Murtari Dandutse (APC, Katsina South), who said the committee held wide-ranging consultations and scrutiny before recommending the pas-

sage of the legislation.

During the public hearing on the Asaba bill on 28 May 2025, Senator Nwoko argued that the South-South geopolitical zone, despite its enormous contributions to Nigeria's oil and gas economy, does not have a federal university of technology.

He said the proposed upgrade of the Asaba college would transform the existing institution, which already has a strong technical foundation, into a full-fledged university capable of responding to national development needs in the 21st century.

Senator Nwoko described the move as a necessary intervention to foster innovation, youth empowerment, and regional equity in access to quality tertiary education.

He said it would also help address Nigeria's growing demand for skilled manpower in science, technology, and engineering fields.

The passage of the bill has been hailed by education stakeholders as a landmark development that will strengthen the country's technological base and advance higher learning in underserved regions.

NEWS

Okpebholo exhibits true leadership capacity — Ohonbamu

Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo, has shown clear signs of effective leadership capable of improving the quality of life for the people of Edo State.

This affirmation was made by the Commissioner for Information and Communication, Hon. Paul Ohonbamu, in a statement in Benin City.

Ohonbamu emphasised that

Governor Okpebholo is not one to be swayed by sycophants or distracted by political noise, but is instead focused on taking decisive actions aimed at delivering tangible results for the people.

Quoting German philosopher Peter Drucker, Ohonbamu noted, "Effective leadership is not about making speeches or being liked. Lead-

ership is defined by results and goal-oriented programmes — which Governor Okpebholo has already set in motion across the state."

He assured the public that the present administration is determined to exceed the achievements of all previous governments in every area of development.

According to the Commissioner, the Governor recognises

education as the cornerstone of societal progress.

This, he said, explains the administration's ongoing massive rehabilitation of dilapidated school infrastructure and the recent decision to return some missionary schools to their original owners for better management.

He also highlighted the Governor's approval of student bursaries, describing it as an

unprecedented gesture in the political history of Edo State.

"Governor Okpebholo's approach to governance reflects capacity, courage, and compassion. His policies have brought renewed confidence that the government can, and should, uplift the lives of the people," Ohonbamu said.

The Commissioner further urged citizens to be law-abiding and embrace the teachings

of Apostle Paul as recorded in 1 Timothy 2:1-3, calling for prayers, supplications, and thanksgiving for those in authority, including the Governor.

"People must understand that all authority is established by God. Leaders deserve our prayers and support. Governor Okpebholo's success will translate to a better life for all Edo people," he added.

Gunmen abduct Nasarawa Perm Sec from residence

LAFIA

Gunmen have abducted the Permanent Secretary of the Nasarawa State Ministry of Information, Tourism and Culture, Barrister Yusuf Musa, from his residence in the Shinge area of Lafia, the state capital.

The Nasarawa State Police Command confirmed the abduction on Tuesday, stating that it is treating the case as a suspected kidnapping.

Police spokesperson Ramhan Nansel said a patrol team from B Division discovered signs of a possible abduction at about 3:05am on Tuesday.

According to the statement, the officers found a Peugeot pick-up van parked with its doors wide open, while the gate to the victim's house was left ajar. Upon entering the premises, they discovered the

permanent secretary was missing, along with his GMC vehicle bearing registration number KUIJ 88 PA.

The Commissioner of Police, Shetima Jauro Mohammed, immediately activated a tactical operation across key divisions including Akwanga, Andaha, Garaku and Kadarko, with surveillance also deployed along strategic routes.

The police command reiterated its commitment to securing the victim's release and bringing the perpetrators to justice.

"The Nasarawa State Police Command urges members of the public to remain calm and vigilant. Anyone with useful information should contact the nearest police station or call the emergency numbers: 08036157659, 08037461715, and 07032532391," the statement said.

Sanwo-Olu vows to prosecute attackers of LASTMA officials

LAGOS

Lagos State Governor, Mr Babajide Sanwo-Olu, has warned that individuals who attack officers of the Lagos State Traffic Management Authority (LASTMA) will face full legal consequences.

Speaking through his deputy, Dr Obafemi Hamzat, at the second Lagos Traffic Conference held on Tuesday to commemorate LASTMA's 25th anniversary, the governor paid tribute to the agency's personnel, describing them as critical to keeping Lagos roads orderly.

"Your uniform represents the thin yellow line that stands between order and chaos," Sanwo-Olu said. "Your dedication has been instrumental in transforming traffic management and ensuring the safety of millions of Lagosians."

He assured that the government was working to reposition LASTMA as a technologically advanced agency with investments in intelligent transport systems, automated number plate recognition, AI-powered tools, and drone surveillance.

The conference, themed "Enhancing Traffic Efficiency and Safety on Lagos Roads: Challenges, Opportunities and Innovations", drew stakeholders and experts from the trans-

port and technology sectors.

In his keynote speech, Mr Sridhar Uttara, President of US-based consulting firm Infotran, called on Lagos to establish a Unified Mobility Control Centre and expand its technology infrastructure along major routes.

He also recommended training LASTMA officers in artificial intelligence and data analytics, and investing in smart mobility labs, pilot zones, and research initiatives.

Special Adviser to the Governor on Transportation, Mr Sola Giwa, highlighted LASTMA's growing role in urban safety beyond traffic control, such as accident response and disaster coordination.

Giwa also identified structural and behavioural challenges affecting road safety, including driver indiscipline, inadequate road capacity, and disregard for uniformed officers by commercial drivers and members of the public.

"While these challenges are daunting, they are not insurmountable," he said. "We are already implementing reforms under Governor Sanwo-Olu's leadership."

Dr Kayode Opeifa, Managing Director of the Nigerian Railway Corporation, praised LASTMA as a unique policy innovation in Nigeria, blending enforcement with public interest.



Delta State Commissioner of Police, CP Olufemi Abaniwonda

NNPCL, Akwa Ibom govt, GACN sign \$3.5b MoU on gas industrialisation

The Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPCL), Akwa Ibom State government, and the Gas Aggregator Company Nigeria Ltd/GTE (GACN) have signed a \$3.5 billion Memorandum of Understanding on gas industrialisation in Akwa Ibom.

This signing was done at the opening session of the South-South Gas Utilisation Forum 2025 held in Uyo.

The event was attended by the Minister of State for Petroleum Resources (Gas), Ekerikpe Ekpo, alongside repre-

sentatives from the Governors of Akwa Ibom, Cross River, and Rivers States.

The NNPC Ltd's delegation was led by the Executive Vice President, Upstream, NNPC Limited, Udy Ntia, who also serves as the GACN Board Chairman, and the Executive Vice President, Gas, Power, and New Energy, Olalekan Ogunleye.

The Managing Director of GACN, Chijioke Uzoho, and his team convened the forum to rally key stakeholders in the region toward catalyzing holistic development through gas industrialization.

A statement by the NNPC Ltd on Tuesday said the deal signalled the South-South geopolitical zone's commitment to driving gas industrialization for shared prosperity.

The GACN recently held its AGM Dinner & Cultural Night on the sidelines of the South-South Gas Utilisation Forum in Uyo, where Ekpo delivered the opening address, emphasising gas as a driver of sustainable growth.

The Commissioner, Ministry of Economic Development, Akwa Ibom State, Emem Bob, represented the State Govern-

ment, Pastor Umo Eno. He reinforced regional commitment to gas-driven development.

The Executive Vice President, Upstream, NNPC Ltd., Udy Ntia, who also serves as the GACN Board Chairman, highlighted NNPC Ltd's leadership in fostering partnerships to advance gas utilisation for Nigeria's economic diversification and energy security.

Also in attendance were the NNPC Ltd's Executive Vice President, Gas, Power, and New Energy, Olalekan Ogunleye, and the Managing Director of GACN, Chijioke Uzoho.

S'West doctors threaten strike over unfavourable allowances

OSOGBO

The South-West Caucus of the Nigerian Medical Association (NMA) has warned that its members may embark on an indefinite strike if the Federal Government fails to withdraw what it described as unfavourable allowances introduced through a recent circular.

At a press conference in Osogbo on Tuesday, the caucus, comprising NMA branches in Osun, Oyo, Ekiti, Ogun and Ondo states, said the new allowance structure, introduced by the National Salaries, Incomes and Wages Commission (NSI-

WC), fails to reflect current economic realities and breaches prior agreements.

Chairman of the caucus and Osun NMA Chairman, Dr Adeshina Fasanu, said the NMA's national leadership had issued a 21-day ultimatum to the Federal Government, demanding a reversal of the circular.

He said the South-West doctors align fully with the national NMA and are calling for an immediate correction of the "inconsequential adjustments," in line with the 2001, 2009 and 2014 Collective Bargaining Agreements.

Among their demands are the full payment of the 2025 Med-

ical Residency Training Fund and its review to match prevailing economic conditions.

Speaking at the event, Dr Olumuyiwa Alonge, Chairman of Ondo NMA, criticised the lack of consultation with medical professionals before the new allowance structure was announced.

"This is the time doctors need to be motivated," Alonge said, noting the alarming ratio of one doctor to 10,000 patients in Nigeria.

Ekiti State NMA Chairman, Dr Ifedayo Oreyemi, said an estimated 2,000 doctors emigrated annually in search of better working conditions. He warned

that unless the government acted swiftly, more doctors would leave the country.

Dr Luqman Ogunjimi, who chairs the Ogun State NMA, described the NSIWC circular as demoralising to doctors already overworked and underpaid.

In Oyo, NMA Chairman Dr Happy Adedapo described the allowance as insignificant against the backdrop of soaring inflation and worsening living conditions.

Among the caucus's 18-point demands are the implementation of the 2021 hazard allowance agreement and the revised retirement age for medical and dental practitioners.

Foreign

NEWS

800 children to be tested for disease linked to alleged childcare abuser

Australian authorities have recommended infectious disease testing for some 800 children across four childcare centres that had employed a man accused of a string of offences including child rape.

Earlier, around 1,200 children across 20 childcare centres were also asked to undergo testing as a precaution.

Joshua Dale Brown, 26, was arrested in May and faces 70 charges. Police allege that he

abused eight children, aged between five months and two years old, from April 2022 to January 2023.

The update by police on Tuesday comes after four more childcare centres were added to a list of places Mr Brown had worked at between January 2017 and May 2025.

One centre was removed from the previous list after police found that Mr Brown did not work there.

Authorities did not reveal if

Mr Brown had tested positive for sexually transmitted infections, but said that the manner in which the alleged offences had been carried out meant some children might be asked to undergo screening for infectious diseases.

Authorities said the potential risk of exposure to infectious diseases is "considered low", and "testing results to date reaffirms this assessment".

"We acknowledge how distressing this is for all families

involved and everything possible is being done to provide the vital support now required," a notice on the Victorian government website said.

The case has prompted shock and anger among parents - not just at Mr Brown's alleged offences but also at what they say is a lapse in the government's screening of childcare workers.

Mr Brown had a valid Working with Children Check - a mandatory screening process for people doing child-re-

lated work - and was employed as a childcare worker when he was arrested, authorities said.

Over the weekend, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation reported that Mr Brown had managed to keep his working certificate despite being reported to state authorities two years ago for his behaviour at the childcare centre where he allegedly abused the eight children. The reports were unrelated to sexual misconduct.

G8 Education, the childcare operator which had employed Mr Brown, have said that they would accelerate the rollout of security cameras across more than 400 centres.

It also said it would commission an independent review of the allegations against Mr Brown after the police investigation and criminal proceedings have finished.

Mr Brown is due to appear at Melbourne Magistrates Court in September.

UK set up secret Afghan relocation scheme after data breach

The previous government set up a secret Afghan relocation scheme after the personal data of thousands of people was inadvertently leaked, it can be revealed.

The details of nearly 19,000 people who had applied to move to the UK after the Taliban takeover of the country was released by mistake by a British defence official in February 2022.

The Ministry of Defence (MoD) learned of the breach in August 2023 and created a new resettlement scheme nine months later. It has seen 4,500 Afghans arrive in the UK, with a further 600 people and their immediate families still to arrive.

However the existence of the leak and scheme was kept secret after the government obtained a superinjunction.

Details of the major data breach, the response and the number of Afghans granted the right to live in the UK as a result were only made public on Tuesday after a High Court judge ruled the gagging order should be lifted.

The leak contained the names, contact details and some family information of people potentially at risk of harm from the Taliban.

The government also revealed on Tuesday:

The secret scheme - officially called the Afghan Relocation Route - has cost £400m so far, and is expected to cost a further £400m to £450m

The scheme is being closed down, but relocation offers already made will be offered

The breach was committed by an unnamed official at the MoD

People whose details were leaked were only informed on Tuesday

Speaking in the House of Commons, Defence Secretary John Healey offered a "sincere apology" to those whose details had been included in the leak.

He said it was as a result of a spreadsheet being emailed "outside of authorised government systems", which he described as a "serious departmental error" - though the Metropolitan Police has already decided a police investigation was not necessary.

Healey said the leak was "one of many data losses" related to the Afghanistan evacuation during that period.

The MoD has declined to say how many people may have been arrested or killed as a result of the data breach, but Healey told MPs an independent review had found it was "highly unlikely" an individual would have been targeted solely because of it.

He said that review had also judged the secret scheme to be an "extremely significant intervention" given the "potentially limited" risk posed by the leak.

Healey said those who have been relocated to the UK have already been counted in immigration figures.

The data involved the names of people who had applied for the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (Arap) scheme. As US troops completed their withdrawal in August 2021, the UK government set up Arap to rapidly process applications by people who feared reprisals from the Taliban and move them to the UK.

Arap has already been heavily criticised in the years since it was launched, with a 2022 inquiry by the Foreign Affairs Committee finding it was a "disaster" and a "betrayal".



CASE AGAINST AUSTRALIAN:

Uncle Pabai Pabai, right, and Uncle Paul Kabai, both elders from the Torres Strait Islands, travelled to Cairns to hear the decision in their case against the Australian government.

Indigenous elders lose landmark climate battle against Australian government

The Australian government has won a landmark climate case against residents of islands under siege from the impacts of climate change.

In 2021, community elders Pabai Pabai and Paul Kabai launched legal action against the then-Liberal government for breaching its duty of care to protect the Torres Strait Islands from the impacts of climate change.

But a Federal Court judge dismissed the case and said climate policy was a matter for parliament, not the courts.

The ruling also found that the government did not owe a duty of care to protect the is-

lands from the impacts of climate change.

"My heart is broken for my family and my community," Uncle Pabai, a community leader from Boigu island, said in statement to local media.

The Torres Strait Islands - located between far-north Queensland and Papua New Guinea - are made up of about 270 islands, of which only a few dozen are inhabited. They are part of Australia, and the islands' residents are Australian citizens.

About 4,000 people live on the islands, according to the latest official figures, with 90% identifying as Indigenous.

In their submission, Uncle

Pabai and Uncle Paul said sea levels in the north of Australia had been rising "significantly higher than the global average".

Between 1993 and 2019, sea levels in the Torres Strait rose by about 6 cm per decade, the court was told.

The court also heard that the islands are home to a "distinctive customary culture known as Ailan Kastom", where the residents have a "unique spiritual and physical connection" to the islands and waters.

The case added that by failing to take greater action against climate change in its emissions targets, the islands' unique culture would be lost, and residents would become climate refugees.

However, Justice Michael Wigney said that while he recognised the "devastating impact" caused to the islands by climate change, current negligence laws in Australia do not allow for compensation where the loss of culture, customs and traditions were the result of a government's policies.

He acknowledged that while "climate change related flooding and inundation events had damaged their sacred sites and the burial grounds of their an-

cestors", matters of "core government policy", such as emissions targets, was "ordinarily to be decided through political processes, not by judges".

He did, however, recognise that action was needed: "There could be little, if any, doubt that the Torres Strait Islands and their traditional inhabitants will face a bleak future if urgent action is not taken to address climate change and its impacts."

In his submission to the court, Uncle Pabai described the deep spiritual connection he and other locals have with the land and waters, especially the cemeteries as "talking to my ancestors is a big part of my culture".

"If Boigu was gone, or I had to leave it, because it was underwater, I will be nothing," he wrote in his court submission.

Uncle Paul, the other elder behind the court action, was equally stunned by the findings.

"I thought that the decision would be in our favour, and I'm in shock," he said.

"This pain isn't just for me, it's for all people Indigenous and non-Indigenous who have been affected by climate change. What do any of us say to our families now?"

Almost 300 killed in wave of violence in Sudan's North Kordofan

A new wave of violence has erupted in Sudan's North Kordofan state, with activists reporting that almost 300 people have been killed in attacks that began over the weekend.

The Emergency Lawyers, a Sudanese human rights group, say the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) launched coordinated assaults on villages surrounding the city of Bara,

which is currently under RSF control. In the village of Shag Alnom alone, more than 200 people were reportedly killed, either shot or burned to death in arson attacks.

Looting raids in neighboring villages claimed another 38 civilian lives, according to the group, while dozens more remain missing. On Sunday, the RSF allegedly attacked the village of Hilat Hamid, killing

46 people, including pregnant women and children.

North Kordofan has become one of the central battlegrounds in Sudan's civil war, which broke out in April 2023 between the RSF and the country's national army. The conflict has devastated communities across the nation and created one of the worst humanitarian crises in the world today.

Since the start of the war,

tens of thousands of people have been killed, and more than 13 million have been displaced from their homes, according to humanitarian agencies.

As the violence intensifies, human rights organizations and aid groups are calling on the international community to act swiftly. They warn that without urgent intervention, civilians will remain at the mercy of escalating attacks and deepening instability.

NEWS

Foreign



OPPOSED BACKDOOR DEALS:

Marjorie Taylor Greene said she opposed "backdoor deals through Nato" to arm Ukraine

'Not our war' - Trump's NATO weapons deal for Ukraine sparks MAGA anger

Some conservative members of Donald Trump's "Make America Great Again" movement have reacted angrily to the president's plans to sell weapons to Nato, arguing it is a betrayal of his promise to end US involvement in foreign wars.

On Monday, Trump said he would send weapons to Ukraine via Nato, while also threatening Russia with more tariffs if a deal to end the war is not reached in 50 days.

Republican Congresswomen Marjorie Taylor Greene, a key Trump ally, and former Trump strategist Steve Bannon are among those who have criticised the decision, with Bannon telling his podcast listeners that Ukraine is a "European war".

The White House has emphasised that Europe will pay for the US-made weapons.

In an interview with the New York Times, Greene - an isolationist member of Congress from Georgia who has been one of the most loyal Trump supporters on Capitol Hill - said the move was at odds with what she had promised voters on the campaign trail.

"It's not just Ukraine; it's all foreign wars in general and a lot of foreign aid," she said. "This is what we campaigned on. This is what I promised also to my district. This is what everybody voted for. And I believe we have to maintain the course."

Trump sought to emphasise that the weapons would be paid for rather than given as direct aid, saying on Monday: "We're not buying it, but we will manufacture it, and they're going to be paying for it."

But in a rare public disagreement with the president, Greene expressed scepticism that US taxpayers would ultimately avoid bearing any cost and, in a post on social media, criticised "backdoor deals through Nato".

"Without a shadow of a doubt, our tax dollars are being used," she told the New York Times, arguing that indirect costs such as US training missions and contributions to Nato qualify as US involvement.

"I said it on every rally stage: no more money to Ukraine. We want peace. We just want peace for those people," she said. "And guess what? People haven't changed."

"We still hate it" One former Trump campaign official, speaking on the condition of anonymity to Politico, said Europe's purchase of the weapons "mitigates" the anger from Trump's isolationist supporters.

"But we still hate it," the official said. "This is not our war, and escalation isn't in America's interest."

Steve Bannon, a former adviser to Trump, said on his War Room podcast that "Ukraine is getting so dangerous".

"It's a European war. Let

Europe deal with it," he said. "They have the resources. They have the manpower."

"We're about to arm people we have literally no control over," Bannon said of Ukraine. "This is old-fashioned, grinding war in the bloodlands of Europe - and we're being dragged into it."

In a statement quoted by Politico, White House Deputy Press Secretary Anna Kelly said that Trump's MAGA base "aren't panickers like the media".

"They trust in Trump, and they know that this president is restoring peace through strength."

The BBC has contacted the White House for comment.

A White House official who spoke to Politico on the condition of anonymity disagreed that the president's base opposed his moves. They pointed to one recent poll that suggested nearly two-thirds of Trump voters support continuing to send arms to Ukraine.

Israel bombs Syrian forces entering Druze city after sectarian clashes

Israel says it has bombed Syrian government forces around Suweida, as they entered the predominantly Druze city following two days of deadly clashes between Druze militias and Bedouin tribes.

About 100 people have reportedly been killed since the fighting erupted on Sunday.

Syria's defence minister announced a ceasefire in Suweida on Tuesday morning, saying an agreement had been reached with local dignitaries for security forces to deploy there. However, one Druze spiritual leader urged local fighters to resist.

Later, Israel's prime minister said he had ordered strikes on forces and weapons in the Suweida area because the

government "intended to use [them] against the Druze".

Benjamin Netanyahu said he was committed to preventing harm to the Druze in Syria because of their deep ties to those living in Israel and the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights.

This is the first time that Syrian government forces have been deployed to Suweida since Islamist-led rebel forces overthrew President Bashar al-Assad in December.

Minority communities are suspicious of the country's new leaders despite their pledges to protect them, and until now the province of Suweida had remained largely under the control of Druze militias which resisted calls to join the government's forces.

As theories swirl about Air India crash, key details remain unknown

While the preliminary report into what caused the loss of Air India Flight 171 last month has provided some answers, it has also prompted a wave of speculation about its cause.

The Boeing 787 Dreamliner crashed into a building less than a minute after take-off from the city of Ahmedabad in western India en route to London, killing 241 people on board, along with 19 on the ground. One passenger survived.

Information contained in India's Air Accident Investigation Bureau report, the first official account of what happened, has raised questions about the role of the pilots.

However, experts within the aviation industry claim investigators have been highly selective in what they have chosen to say.

What the report says

Under international protocols, the state leading an air accident investigation is meant to issue a preliminary report within 30 days. The 15-page document published by India's Air Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) on Saturday fulfils this requirement.

Although the AAIB has been leading the investigation, US interests are also represented, because Boeing, the maker of the aircraft, and GE Aerospace, the engine manufacturer are American.

The report does not set out any conclusions as to the cause of

the accident. Nevertheless, it has sparked considerable controversy.

In its account of the accident flight, the AAIB states that two fuel cut-off switches were moved from the "run" to the "cut-off" position seconds after take-off.

This deprived the engines of fuel and caused them to lose thrust. Although data from the flight recorder shows the engines were subsequently restarted, it was too late to prevent the crash.

These switches are normally only used to turn the engines on before a flight and off afterwards. They have a locking mechanism, which means they need to be pulled out before being flipped, a system designed to prevent accidental deployment.

The report also states that one pilot asks the other "why did you cut off?", while his colleague responded that he "did not do so".

However, it does not provide any direct transcript of the conversation, which would have been picked up by the cockpit voice recorder. Nor does it identify which pilot asked the question.

It is worth remembering that preliminary reports are not intended to offer a full picture of what happened or draw firm conclusions. They are meant to be a factual summary of the information obtained in the early stages of what could be a lengthy investigation.

Aid workers 'executed' in Ethiopia's Tigray war, charity says

An investigation by medical charity Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) into the "execution" of three of its workers during a humanitarian mission in Ethiopia's war-hit northern Tigray region has found evidence that the country's army was responsible for the killings four years ago.

MSF's report includes claims that Ethiopian troops were present at the scene of the killing of the three - a Spanish national and two Ethiopians.

"They were executed," MSF Spain's general director Raquel Ayora told the BBC. "They were facing their attackers [and] were shot at very close range... several times."

The BBC has asked the Ethiopian government for a response to the allegation.

MSF said it was releasing

the findings of its report into the incident as the government had failed to provide a "credible account" of the deaths despite 20 face-to-face meetings over the last four years.

Thirty-five-year-old Spaniard María Hernández Matas, along with 32-year-old Yohannes Halefom Reda and 31-year-old Tedros Gebremariam, were killed on 24 June 2021 while travelling in central Tigray to assess medical needs.

"They were very professional and passionate," Ms Ayora told the BBC.

She added that the three were fully identifiable in MSF vests and their vehicle had the charity's flag and logos on either side when they were shot.

"So, they knew that they were killing humanitarian aid

workers," she said.

Ms Matas had been working in Tigray since before the war and "was very much loved" by people in the region, Ms Ayora said.

Her death has been particularly devastating for her mother

as she was her only child, the MSF official added.

Mr Tedros was killed soon after his wife had given birth to a baby girl. His widow named the baby Maria, after her father's killed Spanish colleague, Mr Ayora said.

Ukrainians unimpressed by Trump's 50-day ultimatum to Putin

Ukrainians are tired, run down by the emotional toll of the invasion and the physical toll of sleepless nights due to air raid sirens, explosions and the screeching sounds of attack drones. "It was a long night," is a common remark you will hear in Kyiv.

So, US President Donald Trump's decision to give Russia 50 days to agree to a ceasefire or face "very severe tar-

iffs... at about 100%" has not gone down well.

One of Ukraine's most prominent politicians, Kyiv Mayor Vitaly Klitschko, asked "why such a delay?" while speaking on German television. Russian attacks had become "more intense", he said, and more people could be killed in that 50-day period.

President Volodymyr Zelensky spoke to Trump after the president said "top-of-the-

line weapons" would be sent from the US via Nato partners in Europe, and thanked him for his "willingness to support Ukraine". If implemented, the "secondary tariffs" would hit countries that buy Russia's oil exports.

But Ukrainian MP Kira Rudik says Trump's announcement was "bittersweet", as it gave Putin another 50 days to continue his deadly bombardment and maintain his offen-

sive on the front line.

"It is very hard and very personal for us because we don't know if some of us will survive for these 50 days," she told the BBC.

More than 230 civilians were killed in Ukraine last month and many more wounded, according to UN human rights monitors - the biggest number for three years, as Russia unleashed record numbers of drone and missile attacks.

Feature

A reflection on the repatriation of Benin artefacts

AFIANMAGBON ITOHAN

It is no news that numerous artefacts of Benin origin are housed in museums around the world. Although the exact number is difficult to determine, estimates suggest that thousands of Benin artefacts are currently held in foreign collections.

DISPERSAL OF BENIN ARTEFACTS

The presence of Benin artefacts in museums outside Nigeria can be traced to two major sources. The first, and most widely known, is the looting of artefacts by British forces. Historical accounts recount the 1897 invasion of the Benin Kingdom by British soldiers during the reign of Oba Ovonramwen.

The immediate cause of the invasion was the unsolicited and unauthorised visit of a British delegation led by James Phillip, who insisted on seeing the Oba of Benin. This intrusion was met with resistance by several Benin chiefs, including Ologbosere, Obakhavbaye, Uso, Obarisiagbon, and Obayuwana. In the ensuing conflict, Phillip and other members of the British party were killed. The British retaliated with a full-scale military expedition, attacking the kingdom and looting numerous artefacts from the Oba's palace and shrines. Some of these artefacts were retained in British museums, while others were sold to private collectors and institutions.

Beyond this historic plunder, a second wave of dispersal occurred through illicit trafficking. Driven by the lure of quick wealth, the theft and illegal trade in Benin artefacts became rampant in the 1980s and 1990s, as individuals sought opportunities to make money and migrate abroad. Consequently, many more Benin artefacts found their way overseas.

REPATRIATION OF BENIN ARTEFACTS

Calls for the return of Benin artefacts have persisted over the years, particularly in Benin and across Nigeria. Individuals, civil society groups, and successive governments have, from time to time, demanded the repatriation of these cultural treasures. While progress has been slow, some artefacts have gradually been returned. A notable example is the "Bird of Prophecy," known in Benin as Oro, which was returned to

the Oba's palace during the reign of Oba Erediauwu. It had previously been in a private European collection.

Other artefacts have been repatriated from Germany, and more recently, over one hundred pieces were returned from the Netherlands to Benin — the largest single repatriation in recent memory. The looted artefacts span various mediums, including bronze, brass, ivory, wood, terracotta, and iron.

Among the returned items are significant cultural objects such as the Uhumwu Elao (commemorative head of an Oba), Uhumwu Idia (queen mother head), Okpa (a cockerel), and ceremonial swords known as Ada and Eben. These represent only a portion of the rich heritage of the Benin Kingdom.

POSSIBLE EXHIBITION OF BENIN ARTEFACTS

The repatriated artefacts, particularly those returned from the Netherlands, should be exhibited for public viewing, as well as for the benefit of tourists and researchers. Exhibiting these items serves several important purposes.

Firstly, it helps educate visitors about the historical and cultural heritage of the Benin people, including their architecture, art, and scientific achievements. Secondly, it creates opportunities for academic research by students and independent scholars interested in Benin culture. Thirdly, it aids in the conservation and preservation of the artefacts.

In addition, public exhibitions can foster community engagement, encouraging dialogue about the meanings and traditional uses of the objects. They can also inspire younger generations to participate in artistic production, make the artefacts accessible to all, and deepen the public's connection to Benin history and identity.

CONCLUSION

The recent return of Benin artefacts from the Netherlands deserves celebration and renewed advocacy for other museums to follow suit. Nonetheless, the proper documentation, conservation, and exhibition of these artefacts are vital. Doing so will not only safeguard them but may also encourage further repatriations in the near future.



Categorising museum exhibitions

CHRISTIANA OGBEMUDIA

A museum is often seen as a custodian of a people's culture, a representative of national identity and achievements. It is a place where material culture is preserved and made accessible to present and future generations.

DEFINITIONS OF EXHIBITION

An exhibition can be defined as a collection of objects, such as works of art, displayed for public viewing. It is also understood as the act of showing, displaying, and presenting items in a way that conveys meaning and purpose. Abdillahi (2000) defines an exhibition as "a form of interpretation"—a comprehensive presentation that includes not only objects but also their contexts, meanings, histories, and significance.

An exhibition may also be a display of an individual's artwork for enlightenment and appreciation. A meaningful exhibition conveys the unique character of the items displayed. While museums serve many functions, exhibitions are a principal means of communicating ideas and educating the public.

CATEGORIES OF MUSEUM EXHIBITION

PERMANENT EXHIBITION
Permanent exhibitions are designed to house objects on a long-term basis. Such galleries should be supported by adequate funding and maintenance to ensure the display remains in good condition over time.

TEMPORARY EXHIBITION

Temporary exhibitions offer flexibility and innovation without significant risk. They often address topical or controversial themes and utilise a variety of available materials and structures.

SPECIAL EXHIBITION

Special exhibitions are curated for specific purposes and audiences. Their success de-

pends on the presence of outstanding objects, dedicated effort, and strategic promotion through quality media coverage, including radio and television.

TRAVELLING OR TOURING EXHIBITION

These exhibitions are designed to be mounted in multiple venues over time. They reach large audiences across different locations and enhance the host museum's visibility and reputation.

PORTABLE EXHIBITION

Portable exhibitions are small and self-contained, designed for easy transport and setup. They often include just a few panels and may be carried in a suitcase or container. Such exhibitions aim to generate interest in the museum and its collections. For security reasons, high-value items are typically excluded.

MOBILE EXHIBITION

Mobile exhibitions involve self-contained displays mounted on caravans, buses, or trains. They bring the museum directly into communities and can participate in events like trade fairs. Mobile exhibitions are ideal for showcasing museum activities to a broader public.

LOAN EXHIBITION


Loan exhibitions consist of items temporarily borrowed by external organisations or individuals. Due to the associated risks, only duplicates or replicas are typically used. Careful selection is essential to safeguard the originals.

CONCLUSION

Exhibition remains one of the most impactful ways museums communicate with the public. While there are other methods of engagement, exhibitions possess a unique ability to connect audiences with culture and heritage. Their influence on museum architecture and resource planning cannot be overstated and must be sustained.



SOME OF THE RETURNED BENIN ARTIFACTS

 <p>The Nigerian Observer ...That the people may know</p>	<h2 style="margin: 0;">ADVERTISEMENT RATES (PRINT)</h2>
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SIZES	COLOUR		BLACK AND WHITE		BLACK AND WHITE		MULTI NATIONALS			
			PUBLIC NOTICE		PRODUCT		COLOUR		BLACK & WHITE	
			RATE	TOTAL (7.5% VAT incl)	RATE	TOTAL (7.5% VAT incl)	RATE	TOTAL (7.5% VAT incl)	RATE	TOTAL (7.5% VAT incl)
FULL PAGE	517,344	556,145	369,500	397,213	325,150	349,536	665,156	715,043	443,440	476,698
13 X 4	369,500	397,213	295,600	317,770	206,938	222,458	443,500	476,763	369,550	397,266
10 X 4	340,000	365,500	273,500	294,013	177,400	190,705	370,000	397,750	295,600	317,770
HALF PAGE	295,600	317,770	236,500	254,238	147,800	158,885	340,000	365,500	273,450	293,959
10 X 3	221,700	238,328	147,800	158,885	118,300	127,173	266,000	285,950	251,300	270,148
13 X2	206,900	222,418	133,000	142,925	103,500	111,263	221,800	238,435	147,810	158,896
QUARTER PAGE	192,150	206,561	118,250	127,119	88,690	95,342	236,500	254,238	133,000	142,975
CENTER SPREAD	1,356,968	1,466,992						B/W	1,148,181	1,241,276
HALF CENTER	991,590	1,071,989						B/W	887,272	959,212


FRONT PAGE POSITIONS					OTHER SIZES				
SIZES	PRODUCTS		PUBLIC NOTICE		SIZES	PUBLIC NOTICE		PRODUCTS	
	RATE	TOTAL (7.5% VAT incl)	RATE	TOTAL (7.5% VAT incl)		RATE	TOTAL (7.5% VAT incl)	RATE	TOTAL (7.5% VAT incl)
FP 6X2	89,800	96,535	105,450	113,359	6 X 2	60,640	65,188	49,140	52,826
FP 5X2	81,100	87,183	97,300	104,598	5 X 2	51,950	55,846	42,120	45,279
FP 4X2	73,000	78,475	80,700	86,753	4 X 2	45,260	48,655	34,400	36,980
FP 3X2	64,870	69,735	73,000	78,475	3 X 2	30,900	33,218	26,600	28,595
FP 2X2	59,000	63,425	64,900	69,768	2 X 2	18,680	20,081	15,600	16,770
					2 X 1	12,400	13,330	7,415	7,971
					CAC	38,000	40,850		

SPECIAL POSITIONS				
SIZES	RATE	TOTAL (7.5% VAT incl)	RATE	TOTAL (7.5% VAT incl)
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Sports

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WAFCON 2024: Ologbese warns Super Falcons against resurgent Zambia

The President of Ologbese Global Sports Management, Otunba Dele Ologbese, has warned Ni-

geria's Super Falcons to be cautious of their Women's Africa Cup of Nations (WAFCON) quarter-final opponents, Zam-

bia, when they clash in Morocco on Friday.

Ologbese, in a chat with newsmen, emphasised the importance of the tie, urging Super Falcons coach Justin Madugu to approach the game with his best players and well-thought-out strategies outclassing the ambitious Zambian team.

"I'm very sure Madugu, who knows his onions, understands the significance of this encounter.

"He will surely field his winning side and deploy the best strategies in outplaying the highly ambitious Zambians, who are fully determined to

win the elusive trophy," he said.

The former Vice Chairman of the Ondo State Football Association noted that Zambian football has undergone rapid transformation in recent years under the leadership of the Football Association (FA), formerly headed by Andrew Kamanga and now succeeded by Keith Nweemba, who was elected president in 2025.

"Earlier, during his inauguration speech, Nweemba had vowed to take Zambian football to greater heights, most importantly, women's football, building on the dynamic legacies of his predecessor"



SUPER FALCONS



CHAN 2024: LOC confirms stadiums ready for kickoff

With less than three weeks to the kickoff of the 2024 African Nations Championship (CHAN), the Local Organizing Committee (LOC) has confirmed that all designated stadiums are ready for the tournament.

This year's edition will be jointly hosted by three East African countries, Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda, tasked with the responsibility of delivering a seamless continental championship.

Following months of preparations and rigorous inspec-

tions, the LOC announced on Monday afternoon that all five selected venues are fully equipped to host matches.

The approved stadiums for CHAN 2024 include Benjamin Mkapa Stadium and Amaan Stadium in Tanzania, Moi International Sports Centre and Nyayo National Stadium in Kenya, as well as Mandela National Stadium in Uganda.

The tournament is scheduled to run from August 2 to August 30, 2025

Every state will become a sports hub —Olopade

EDWARD OSEGHE

The Director General of the National Sports Commission, Hon. Bukola Olopade, has reiterated the Commission's determination to transform every state in Nigeria into a hub for sports development.

Speaking on the sidelines of the African Athletics Championship (CAA) in Abeokuta, Ogun State, Olopade said the creation of a strong sports ecosystem across the country would empower youths, stimulate economic growth, and enhance national development.

"I have spent nearly 30 years in sports, and I've seen how it transforms lives, especially our youth.

"When every state has the right structure, you solve half of the problems. Youths become engaged, productive, and peaceful, creating an environment conducive to investment and development," he said.

He commended Akwa Ibom, Delta, and Ogun States for their investments in sports infrastructure and programmes, noting that Ogun State has recently hosted the Super Falcons, Flying Eagles, the National Sports Festival, and now the African Athletics Championship.

Olopade identified Enugu State as an emerging sports destination, citing its government's strategic plans to use sports as a tool for economic and SME development.

"Enugu is positioning itself to host the National Sports Festival, which is a smart move. Sports draws people in, fuels enterprise, creates jobs, and drives local economies. With their plans, Enugu could become a major sporting hub in a few years," he said.



HON. BUKOLA OLOPADE (LEFT)

Handball Federation honours Edo Sports Commission boss

EDWARD OSEGHE

The Handball Federation of Nigeria has honoured the Executive Chairman of the Edo State Sports Commission, Hon. Amadin Desmond Enabulele, with a commemorative

souvenir for his outstanding support towards the development of handball in the country.

The presentation was made on Monday at the Samuel Ogbemudia Stadium by the federation's board members on behalf of the Ardova Handball Premier

League organising committee.

Describing his contributions as invaluable, the federation commended Hon. Enabulele for his commitment to the growth of the sport nationwide.

In his response, Hon. Enabulele thanked the federation for the recognition and reaffirmed his dedication to promoting handball and other sports within Edo State and beyond.

He emphasised the importance of strategic partnerships and sustained investment in grassroots sports development, in line with Governor Monday Okpebholo's vision for sports advancement in the state.



HON. ENABULELE AND HANDBALL FEDERATION MEMBERS

Nigeria Olympic committee pledges support for African Armwrestling Championship

As excitement builds with only 9 days remaining until Abuja 2025 kicks off on July 23, the Nigeria Olympic Committee (NOC) has announced vital financial support to ensure the 14th African Armwrestling Championship and 7th Para-Armwrestling Championship succeed in style, reports.

In a strong show of solidarity, NOC President Engr. Habu Gu-

mel personally confirmed the financial boost over the weekend, emphasizing the Olympic body's commitment to supporting the efforts of the Nigeria Armwrestling Federation, the Local Organizing Committee (LOC), and the National Sports Commission (NSC) in delivering a world-class event.

This announcement follows the NOC's executive meeting in April,

where it reaffirmed its broader role in promoting continental sports, including its backing for championships like Abuja 2025.

Hon. Adebayo Anthony Adeyinka, LOC Chairman and Senior Special Assistant to the President on Grassroots Sports Development, praised the support, stating: "With the NOC's backing, we're not just hosting—we're staging excellence.

This support accelerates our plans for infrastructure, broadcasting, and athlete welfare."

The NOC's investment will enhance critical media functions such as live streaming, press facilities, graphics, and athlete interviews, ensuring exceptional coverage and storytelling for over 400 athletes and officials from 24 African nations, Adebayo added.

DR Congo, Tunisia, Tanzania, Botswana bow out of 2024 WAFCON

As the 2024 CAF Women's Africa Cup of Nations (WAFCON) enters the quarterfinal stage, four teams—DR Congo, Tunisia, Tanzania, and Botswana—exit the competition, but not without leaving a lasting impression through memorable performances and unwavering determination.

Despite a spirited 2-1 comeback win against Tunisia, Botswana's journey ended heartbreakingly on July 14 in Casablanca.

With hopes of a quarterfinal spot still alive, the Mares watched their fate slip away after Ghana's commanding 4-1 victory over Tanzania secured the final qualification ticket.

Botswana had fallen behind 1-0 at halftime but rallied with resilience and unity to turn the game around. Though their elim-

ination stung, the team departed with heads held high, having showcased immense character.

In front of 21,000 Moroccan fans at the Prince Moulay Abdellah Stadium in Rabat, Flavine Mawete delivered one of the tournament's most iconic moments.

Facing a sea of red and green support for the host nation, the DR Congo winger held her nerve and unleashed a stunning left-footed strike to equalize against Morocco, momentarily silencing the crowd.

The 25-year-old's goal stood out not just as a technical feat, but as a symbol of defiance and belief, earning her a place in the hearts of fans and in the annals of the tournament.



DR CONGO PLAYERS

SPORTS

Athletics: Excitement builds in Abeokuta as 35 nations arrive for African U18/U20 Athletics Championship

Final preparations are in full swing as Abeokuta will host the 3rd edition of the Confederation of African Athletics U18/U20 African Athletics Championship.

This event is scheduled to run from July 16 to 20, 2025, at the MKO Abiola Arena

With just one day to go before the opening events, the Algerian and Moroccan contingents arrived on Monday night. This brought the total number of participating countries to 35. This confirms a strong continental turnout for the youth athletics showcase.

Track and field powerhouses such as Kenya, South Africa,

Ethiopia, Uganda, Ghana, and Egypt are already on ground. This sets the stage for a thrilling contest of emerging talents across various disciplines.

Nigeria, playing host, has rolled out comprehensive logistical plans. These plans ensure a smooth experience for athletes, officials, and fans. Security, transportation, accommodation, and protocol arrangements are fully activated. Officials are working round the clock to deliver a world-class event.

The city of Abeokuta is already alive with colour and culture. Traditional dancers and cultural troupes have been entertaining visitors with vibrant



AFN UNVEILS KITS AHEAD 3RD AFRICAN U-18,U-20 ATHLETICS CHAMPIONSHIP

displays of Nigeria's rich heritage. Members of the visiting delegations, including North African athletes, have enthusiastically joined in the festivities, adding to the celebratory mood. Meanwhile, the administra-

tive side of the championship is also underway. The CAA held its congress at the Confluence Hotel, Abeokuta, where member federations and athletics officials gathered to deliberate on the future of African athletics.

CAA U-18/20 CHAMPIONSHIPS: Olympian Yusuf Alli charges athletes to maintain positive mental strength

Nigeria's Long jump record holder and Olympian Yusuf Alli (8.27m) has charged Team Nigeria athletes to maintain a strong and positive mental strength as the Confederation of Africa Athletics (CAA), U-18/U-20 Championships begins in Abeokuta.

Alli who disclosed this during the AFN unveiling ceremony of Team Nigeria athletes and kits, noted that the athletes have to perform in CAA U-18 and U-20 Championships to make their mark for the future.

"You are in this competition to make your mark and move forward with good results and not essentially to win," the head of elite athletes in the National Sports Commission said.

Alli went on to explain that: "Winning will come, but first push yourself at this level to the next level, that's how we all grew."

The former Chairman of Edo State Sports Commission insisted that, the CAA U-18/U-20 Championships came at such a time when National Sports Commission festival the United States Collegiate Athletics season just ended and this would assist Team Nigeria athletes to excel.

Meanwhile, Team Nigeria athletes and kits was unveiled in

Abeokuta, Today, as a total of 92 athletes would be representing Nigeria in the CAA U-18 and U-20 Championships.

The AFN President Chief Tonobok Okowa in his brief address charged athletes to

seize the opportunity the competition had provided to excel.

He reiterated that the Federation, National Sports Commission (NSC) and government have provided golden opportunity for them to succeed.

"I charge you to go out there and make Nigeria proud"

AFN board members at the unveiling include the Second Vice-President, Dr. Aku, Technical Director Gabriel Okon and NSC representative Yusuf

Edo State Sports Commission boss visits coach Kadiri Ikhana at Irrua Specialist Hospital



EDO STATE SPORTS COMMISSION DELEGATION LED BY HON FRANK ILABOYA VISITS KADIRI IKHANA

KEHINDE OSAGIEDE

Disturbed by the distress calls and reports on the poor health condition of Ex-International and former Bendel Insurance player Coach Kadiri Ikhana, the Edo State

Sports Commission Chairman, Hon Desmond Amadin Enabulele has responded with a solidarity visit to the ailing Coach at the Irrua Specialist Hospital, Irrua.

The Edo State Sports Commission boss who was repre-

sented by the Executive Director, Edo North in the Sports Commission Hon Frank Ilaboya led a team of officials of the commission to IRRUA SPECIALIST HOSPITAL where the ailing Coach Kadiri Ikhana has been receiving treatment

On receiving the Ilaboya led team the Irrua Specialist Hospital, Irrua, the award winning coach said he was already in high spirit with the message he got from the Edo State Sports Commission chairman.

Coach Ikhana thanked the Edo State Sports Commission boss for the visit and said: "this gesture will aid my quick recovery process. I am grateful for what you have done. I feel better and think I'm good enough to leave here tomorrow."

Nigeria Premier Football League: NPFL set to conduct 2025/2026 league season draws

KEHINDE OSAGIEDE

Nigeria Premier Football League, NPFL has concluded arrangements for the conduct of the draws for the 2025/2026 league season, chief operating officer of the league, Davidson Owumi has disclosed.

Owumi in a letter titled "notice of annual general meeting" addressed to the chairmen and general managers of the various

clubs in the premier league had welcomed all the NPFL clubs to the opening of the activities for the new season.

He notified the clubs that the NPFL's AGM would be held towards the end of July 2025.

According to Owumi, the date, time and venue will be communicated to the clubs in due course, saying that the draws and fixtures for the new NPFL season would be conducted on the same day.



I am ready for new chapter with AS Roma —Babajide

Newly unveiled AS Roma and Super Falcons star, Rinsola Babajide has expressed readiness to begin her new chapter with the Italian side.

Babajide, who was recently unveiled by the Italian side, said she can't wait to reach greater heights with her new

club. "I'm so excited to see what we can achieve together. Back in red and ready for this incredible new chapter"

"Grateful to God for guiding me through every step of this journey. My heart is full, especially having my mum beside me along the way."



BABAJIDE



OSIMHEN

€70m not enough: Napoli block Osimhen move to Galatasaray

Napoli have reportedly turned down a €70 million bid from Turkish giants Galatasaray for Nigerian striker Victor Osimhen, transfer expert Fabrizio Romano has revealed.

According to Romano, Galatasaray submitted a formal offer on Friday, including bank documents to guarantee the

payment. Despite the effort, Napoli president Aurelio De Laurentiis swiftly rejected the proposal, holding firm on his €75 million valuation of the player.

"Understand Napoli have now rejected four new formal proposals sent by Galatasaray today for Victor Osimhen," Romano posted via his official X account. "Galatasaray

offered €70m today with bank documents attached for payment guarantees... Napoli president De Laurentiis wants €75m guaranteed and he has rejected."

The rejection marks the fourth attempt by Galatasaray to land the highly-rated forward, who played a pivotal role in Napoli's Serie A title-winning campaign

during the 2022/23 season.

Osimhen remains one of the most coveted strikers in Europe, attracting interest from several top clubs due to his physical presence, lethal finishing, and consistent performances. Despite injury setbacks in the 2023/24 season, the 25-year-old continues to command significant attention in the transfer market.