

Supreme Court Justice Idris warns against undermining the rule of law

BENIN CITY

Justice of the Supreme Court of Nigeria, Justice Mohammed Baba Idris has warned that any attempt to subject the judiciary to political, financial or institutional influence could undermine constitutional governance and the rule of law.

Justice Idris made the

warning while delivering the keynote lecture titled, "The Repositioning for Effective Justice Delivery and Democratic Stability in Nigeria," at the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA), Benin Branch Law Week held in Benin City yesterday.

The Supreme Court Justice described an independent judiciary as the cornerstone upon

which democratic institutions and constitutional order are built, stressing that courts must remain free from external pressures to effectively discharge their constitutional responsibilities.

According to him, a judiciary that is subjected to undue influence cannot function as an impartial arbiter between citizens and the State, thereby

weakening public confidence in democratic institutions.

"A judiciary that is demonstrably independent is essential to preserving constitutional balance, sustaining democratic governance and inspiring public trust in the justice system," he stated.

He also advocated transparent and merit-based judicial

appointments, promotions and disciplinary procedures, insisting that the processes must remain insulated from partisan interests and political interference.

The jurist maintained that strengthening judicial independence would enhance effective justice delivery and contribute significantly to democratic stability in the country.

In his remarks, the Chief Judge of Edo State, Justice Daniel Okungbowa, described the Law Week theme, "Reforming Today, Securing Tomorrow," as apt and relevant to the challenges confronting the nation's justice sector.

Justice Okungbowa observed

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The Nigerian OBSERVER

That The People May Know

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#200

Okpebholo frowns at the dilapidating nature of facilities in EBS • promises to uplift the station

BENIN CITY

Edo State Governor Senator Monday Okpebholo has frowned at the dilapidated nature of facilities at the Corporate Headquarters of Edo Broadcasting Service (EBS) promising to upgrade and uplift the station to compete favourably with its counterpart across the globe.

Gov. Okpebholo, was accompanied on the inspection tour of facilities in the Station by the Speaker Edo State House of Assembly (EDHA) Rt. Hon. Blessing Agbebaaku,

Chief of Staff to the governor, Ahaji Yakubu Musa Oshioenua, Commissioner for information and strategy Prince Kassim Afegbua, among other top government officials.

The acting Managing Director of EBS, Festus Alenkhe took the governor on a guided tour of facilities in the station which has continued to delapidate without proper maintenance.

Speaking to journalists after the inspection, Gov Okpebholo described the situation as embarrassing.

"Coming here this morning

and being told that the transmitter is not working, I am in pain but whatever it is, we can make it work. The only people that can fix Edo State are the people of Edo themselves. It's only Edo that can build Edo. I will continue to build the City and anything that concerns Edo.

"There are already plans to

rebuild this station, the designs have been made, we are working on the procurement processes and when that is done, you will see a new face lift EBS.

Gov Okpebholo said the former MD was transferred to Edo State Orientation Agency to serve as the pioneer Director but only to hear that he has resigned, adding that the

news prompted him to visit the station to see the State of the broadcast house himself.

"This station has been facing challenges for a long time. They requested a transmitter which I provided money for the management to buy. I thought that things would be moving well but I didn't know that the transmitter was not

installed, we would do our best to ensure that the transmitter is working.

"We will solve the issue of power by providing a Solar mini-grade for the station to ensure you are on air all the time when you don't have diesel or electricity to operate. This is

CONTINUES ON PG 2»

Doctors' Quarters will be ready in two months, says Gov Okpebholo

BENIN CITY

Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo, has said that the renovation of the abandoned Doctors' Quarters on Ezotti Street in Benin City will be completed and ready for occupation within the next two months.

The governor stated this after an inspection tour of the facility alongside the Speaker of the Edo State House of Assembly (EDHA), Rt. Hon. Blessing Agbebaaku, and other top government officials. The team was conducted around the pro-

ject by the Commissioner for Health, Dr. Cyril Oshiomhole.

According to the governor, he decided to personally inspect the project following reports he had received about the facility.

"I have heard a lot about this building and decided to come here today to inspect the project myself. I also came with the Speaker of the Edo State House of Assembly so that he can see what funds are being appropriated for.

"The contractor has assured

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INSPECTION TOUR:

Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo addressing staff of Edo Broadcasting Service EBS, during his inspection tour of the Station yesterday.

IOM rescues 67,000 stranded Nigerian migrants, supports 30,000 —Pg 5

Federal workers reject N100,000 minimum wage proposal —Pg 7

45 voices silenced: Inside the Oyo teachers and pupils kidnap that shook a nation —Pg 19

Arsenal fans turn out in thousands to celebrate historic Premier League win —Pg 20

Shaibu commends Tinubu over sports devt

ABUJA

The Director General and Chief Executive Officer of the National Institute for Sports (NIS), H.E. Comrade Philip Shaibu, has expressed profound appreciation to President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, GCFR, for approving the comprehensive renovation and redevelopment of key na-

tional sports facilities across the country.

Shaibu described the approval as a bold and visionary step capable of transforming Nigeria's sports sector, improving athlete development, strengthening sports administration, and repositioning the country for global competitiveness.

Particularly, the former Edo

State Deputy Governor applauded the approval for the renovation of the NIS 200-bed athletes'/ coaches hostel at the Package B of the Moshood Abiola National Stadium, Abuja, noting that the project would significantly support the activities of the National Institute for Sports in training athletes, coaches, sports administrators, and technical personnel.

"This development is highly commendable and timely. The approval of the renovation of critical sports infrastructure, especially the renovation of the NIS 200-bed athletes'/ coaches hostel at the Moshood Abiola National Stadium, Abuja, will

greatly enhance the operations of the National Institute for Sports.

"It will improve our ability to organise training programmes for athletes, coaches, and sports personnel while creating a more suitable environment for learning, development, and high performance sports education," Shaibu stated.

He further commended President Tinubu for demonstrating genuine commitment towards youth empowerment, infrastructure renewal, and sustainable sports development through the Renewed Hope Agenda.

"I must sincerely appreciate

the DG of the National Sports Commission, Hon. Bukola Olopade, for his commitment towards ensuring that these laudable projects become a reality. His efforts clearly show a strong passion for the growth and modernisation of Nigerian sports," he added.

The NIS DG noted that the latest approvals further validate the importance of collaboration among stakeholders within the sports sector, stressing that meaningful progress can only be achieved through synergy, institutional support, and proper coordination.

"This is the kind of collaboration I have consistently advo-

cated for since assuming office. The future of Nigerian sports depends on our collective ability to work together towards common goals. When institutions collaborate effectively, the results will naturally reflect in athlete performance, infrastructure development, talent discovery, and sports economy growth," Shaibu said.

He also reiterated the need for the full establishment of the National Sports Commission Board to further strengthen policy coordination, strategic planning, and institutional synergy necessary for the advancement of sports development in Nigeria.

Okpebholo frowns at the dilapidating...

«CONTINUED FROM PG 1

the right way to go because this is what is applicable all around the world".

On the request for a bus for mobility, the governor said the station will get two buses before the end of the day.

"You ask for a bus, but by the grace of God before the end of today we will send you two buses to enable you to do your job effectively by moving around the city and report adequately.

"I want to thank you and believe you will do well because of your experience as a Staff of the Station. the governor concluded.

The acting Managing Director Mr.

Festus Alenkhe who welcomed the governor to the station assured him that the sta-

tion will project the activities of the state government and the society effectively in their daily reportage.

He commended the governor for paying salaries of the civil servants as at when due. "We will continue to project all your activities positively because that is our duty.

"We want to assure you that when the facilities needed are provided for the station, EBS will operate for 24 hours but for now we shutdown at 12 midnight but our intention is that from this moment and the assurances you have given earlier, the station will operate an additional 12 hours to make it 24 hours.

"We don't have mobility that will take reporters and journalists on rovening to check your project around the State. We appeal for mobility to do our job.

Supreme Court Justice Idris warns...

«CONTINUED FROM PG 1

that the future of Nigeria's judicial system depends largely on the decisions being taken today and the reforms stakeholders are willing to embrace.

"The future of our justice system depends on the decisions we take today and even on those actions we refuse to take. Reform is not a sign of weakness; it is a demonstration of strength and foresight," he said.

Also speaking, Chairman of the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA), Benin Branch, popularly known as the Lion Bar, Mr. Idemudia Osifo, called on the State Government and other levels of government to treat judicial independence

as a constitutional imperative rather than a political slogan.

He stressed that respect for the rule of law remains the foundation of democratic governance and the credibility of the nation's justice system.

According to him, the integrity and effectiveness of the judiciary depend significantly on the willingness of the executive arm of government to obey the law and honour judicial pronouncements.

The event attracted judges, senior lawyers, legal practitioners, academics and other stakeholders in the justice sector, who deliberated on measures to enhance the administration of justice and deepen democratic governance in Nigeria.

Doctors' Quarters will be ready in two...

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us that the building will be ready in about one month and two weeks. Once completed, the doctors will be able to move in. I will return to inspect the project again, and I hope the contractor meets the deadline so that our doctors can begin to occupy the facility," the governor said.

Speaking during the visit, the Commissioner for Health, Dr. Cyril Oshiomhole, commended Governor Okpebholo for reviving a project that had been abandoned for more than 40 years.

He noted that successive administrations neglected the facility, while the present administration took decisive action to rehabilitate it within its first year in office.

"This is the Doctors' Quarters, and I have known this building for about 40 years. Before work started, the structure was in a dilapidated state. This is the first time any government has undertaken major work on this building in the last four decades.

"The facility has existed for over 40 years, but in less than one year in office, Governor Monday Okpebholo has commenced and substantially completed its renovation. The project is now over 85 per cent completed.

"I thank the governor for making healthcare a priority under the SHINE Agenda of his administration, and I pray that God grants him the wisdom and strength to continue delivering development to the people of Edo State," he said.



PRESENTATION OF CERTIFICATE OF RETURN:

L-R: National Chairman, Allied People's Movement (APM), Alhaji Yusuf Dantalle; Gov Seyi Makinde of Oyo State, and the APM Organizing Secretary, Bashiru Bala, during the presentation of Certificate of Return and the party's flag to its presidential candidate, Engr. Seyi Makinde, after their Presidential Primary election, collation/unveiling of party flag in Ibadan on Saturday.

Illicit lithium mining: 15 Chinese Nationals, 9 Nigerians Face Trial In FHC

ABUJA

The Federal High Court in Abuja at the weekend commenced the trial of 24 Chinese nationals and Nigerians accused of illegal mining of Nigeria's critical mineral resource, lithium, in Nasarawa State.

The court heard that the suspects were illegally mining lithium in Kokona Local Gov-

ernment Area of Nasarawa, on May 16, 2026, contrary to section 1(8)(b) of the Miscellaneous Offences Act.

The suspects docked before Justice Ofili-Ajumogobia, were reportedly apprehended within a mineral title area legally assigned to TIMADIX Geomin Consult Ltd under Exploration Licence No 036528-EL.

The charge, marked FHC/ABJ/CP.281/2026, indicates

the defendants face a provision that prescribes stiff penalties, including life imprisonment upon conviction.

At the start of the proceedings, defence counsel, Prof. M. T. Adekilekun (SAN), who applied for bail of the suspects, assured the court that the defendants would be available for trial.

Justice Ofili-Ajumogobia consequently granted the bail request and ordered the accused persons to be released to their counsel without mon-

etary conditions as they were directed to deposit their international passports and national identity documents with the court registrar.

In his reaction following the hearing, lead prosecution counsel to Mining Marshals, Mr. Ojo Toluwatope Alex, stated the bail was granted at the discretion of the court, while expressing concern over the possibility of the defendants absconding, given the cross-border dimension of the case.

Orior community elders endorse gas pipeline routing at public hearing

BENIN CITY

A public hearing to deliberate on the desirability or otherwise of routing the Ying Zhi Energy Gas Pipeline through Orior Community in Uhumwode local Government Area of Edo State has received the full backing and endorsement of the Odionwere and members of the Community.

The public hearing organised by Edo State Geographic Information Service (EDOGIS) on Friday, to clear issues of compensation and Corporate Social Responsibility, brought together relevant stakeholders and was presided over by the EDOGIS Managing Director, Dr. Innocent Bello.

The event had in attendance, representatives from the Nigerian Mainstream and Downstream Petroleum Limited, officials of Ying Zhi Energy Limited, and Community leaders from Orior, including some traditional chiefs, who converged to ensure full compliance with the enabling regulations, in the spirit of inclusiveness regarding the Chinese Company's pipeline project.

The gas pipeline stretches approximately 2.85 kilometers, running from the Orio 7 unit through the Orior Community along the Lagos - Benin Expressway, terminating at the Yinghua Energy Park in Benin City, Edo State.

In his remarks, Dr. Bello

described the project as "a sustainable development initiative designed to boost domestic gas utilisation and establish an industrial corridor powered by gas energy."

"This project will be of great economic benefit to Edo State and indeed to Nigeria at large, as the pipeline aligns with the Federal government's Nigerian Domestic Gas Utilisation Plan and Decade of Gas initiative", he said.

He emphasised the interest of Governor Monday Okpebholo in people-driven development initiatives and his push for ease of doing business in Edo State.

On their part, representatives of the gas company at the hearing, disclosed that extensive commu-

nity engagement had been conducted prior to the public hearing, adding that farmers and landowners along the pipeline's right-of-way had been compensated, while community members had been engaged in non-technical roles, including infrastructure, security management.

"Plans for skills training and local employment in technical roles are also underway," the representatives said.

The public hearing was convened specifically to provide a veritable platform for all stakeholders to ventilate and offer their varying perspectives, endorsements, or objections, if any, regarding the pipeline routing process.

NEWS

Troops sustain onslaught on terrorists, recover 15 motorcycles, arms in Niger

ABUJA

Troops under Operation FANSAN YAMMA have sustained pressure on terrorist elements, neutralising

one fighter and recovering 15 motorcycles and arms during a clearance operation in Niger State.

This is contained in an operational report made avail-

able to newsmen on Monday in Abuja.

The report said the troops of Counter Insurgency Battalion XVI, in conjunction with personnel from Forward Operat-

ing Base Babanna, came under ambush while on a fighting patrol to Gulbi community in Borgu Local Government Area.

The troops, it said however, repelled the attack and killed one terrorist during the encounter.

According to the report, items recovered from the scene

include 15 motorcycles and 253 rounds of 7.62mm NATO ammunition.

"The troops also encountered multiple improvised explosive devices planted along withdrawal routes, which were

safely neutralised," he said.

Military authorities said the operation was part of ongoing efforts to deny terrorists freedom of action across the North-West and adjoining areas.

Police probe Sunday's alleged killing of 2 operatives —Anambra CP

AWKA

The Commissioner of Police in Anambra, Ikioye Orutugu, has confirmed the shooting to death of two police operatives, said to be returning from an official assignment in Orumba North LGA of the state.

Orutugu told newsmen in his office in Awka, on Monday, that the command had commenced investigation into the incident, which occurred on Sunday night.

Narrating the incident, he

said: "A team of police officers was returning from an assignment, when they were ambushed by gunmen who opened fire on them.

"In the process, we lost two of them.

"The command has been working on the matter since Sunday night and has intensified efforts to track down those responsible for the attack."

The state police boss promised to visit the scene of the incident to assess the situation and strategise with other security agencies on measures to pre-

vent similar attacks in the state.

He advised motorists and the public to be cautious and avoid approaching unauthorised checkpoints that are not manned by identifiable police personnel and official police vehicles.

"Whenever you approached a checkpoint without police vehicles or clear police identification, you should exercise caution.

"Either turn back and alert the nearest police formation or immediately contact the police for assistance," he said.

An unidentified commercial

tricycle operator, who claimed to have witnessed the incident in a voice note, said he was riding along the road when he suddenly heard gunshots ahead of him.

In the viral online post, he said, "I quickly abandoned my keke (tricycle) and ran inside the bush for safety.

"After a while, I came out, carried my keke and continued my journey before I got to the spot where the incident happened.

"I later saw two policemen lying on the road and their van parked by the road.

NSCDC dismisses report on N2bn traced to its personnel's account

ABUJA

The Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) has dismissed a report on allegations that its personnel were involved in a two billion Naira financial trace.

NSCDC Mining Marshals, Commander, Johnson Onoja, denied the report during an interview with the News Agency of Nigeria, on Monday in Abuja.

Onoja said that the statement of account alleged to have been used for a transaction of over N2bn, has within the last one year, showed a total credit of N760,129 and a debit of N760,457.

He expressed displeasure over the report, stating that it was false, malicious and of negative intentions by the publishers of the said report.

He said that investigations and bank account balance of the person said to have been in possession of over N2bn, showed that the current balance of the suspect amounted to almost zero naira.

According to him, the bank account number of the said personnel, showed a credit and debit of less than N800,000 in the last one year.

"Everything you saw in the publication is completely false and they also claimed that I refused to release the phone which has been marked as an exhibit in a homicide case.

"I was surprised to see the publication that the family of the deceased filed the petition after I had held meetings with them severally and discussed extensively," Onoja said.

The commander said that the case is currently being handled by the appropriate authorities.

**PUBLIC HEARING:**

A cross section of relevant stakeholders in a public hearing on desirability or otherwise of routing Ying Zhi Egergy gas pipeline through Orrior community in Uhumwode Loyal Government Area, organised by Edo State Geographical Information Service (EdoGIS), on Friday.

Foundation urges National Assembly to tackle rising femicide cases

LAGOS

The DOHS Cares Foundation has called on the National Assembly to urgently initiate legislative measures to address the rising incidence of femicide in Nigeria.

The foundation's Executive Officer, Mrs Ololade Ajayi, made the call in a statement issued on Monday as part of a nationwide advocacy campaign aimed at raising awareness about femicide and strengthening accountability mechanisms.

Ajayi described the killing of women and girls because of their gender as a national crisis requiring immediate and coordinated action.

According to her, women and girls across the country continue to be killed in cir-

cumstances linked to intimate partner violence, family violence, sexual violence, harmful gender norms and misogyny.

"Many of these killings are often reported as domestic disputes, relationship issues or crimes of passion, thereby masking the systemic nature of the violence," she said.

Ajayi disclosed that data from the foundation's Femicide Observatory identified Lagos, Delta, the Federal Capital Territory, Ogun, Kano, Ondo, Oyo, Rivers, Edo and Abia as states with the highest recorded incidences of femicide.

She urged the National Assembly to examine available data and convene public hearings on femicide within the next 30 days, on or before July 1, 2026.

The executive officer also

called on lawmakers from the affected states to champion the hearings and engage victims' families, survivors, law enforcement agencies, civil society organisations and other stakeholders in developing effective legislative and policy responses.

According to her, data from the observatory showed that more than 133 women and girls were killed in gender-related violence in 2024.

She added that as of December 2025, the observatory had documented over 330 cases of femicide nationwide, translating to approximately one woman being killed every 49 hours.

Ajayi further revealed that more than 40 cases of gender-related killings of women and girls had already been recorded in 2026.

"These figures represent mothers, daughters, sisters, students, professionals and

breadwinners whose lives were violently cut short.

"In spite of the growing toll, these killings are still frequently described as domestic disputes, relationship misunderstandings or crimes of passion. "We believe Nigeria must begin to recognise these killings as femicide.

"Naming the problem correctly is the first step toward addressing it effectively," she said.

Ajayi said the foundation's advocacy campaign would focus on increasing public awareness about the prevalence and patterns of femicide, highlighting gaps in government response and promoting greater accountability.

She also appealed to media organisations to adopt the term "femicide" when reporting gender-related killings of women and girls.

FG unveils roadmap to boost local milk production

ABUJA

The Federal Government has unveiled the National Dairy Policy Implementation Framework aimed at strengthening local milk production, dairy processing, cold chain systems, milk aggregation and pasture development across the country.

The Minister of Livestock Development, Alhaji Idi Maiha, disclosed this on Monday in Abuja during the commemoration of the 2026 World Milk Day.

He said the framework would also support ranch infrastructure, animal health services and private sector participation across the dairy value chain.

World Milk Day is commemorated annually on June 1.

The theme for this year is: "Celebrating Women Dairy Farmers: Promoting Fresh Milk Consumption for a Healthy Nation".

Maiha said a major milestone in the dairy transformation journey was recorded in November 2025 when the ministry convened stakeholders to harmonise practical strategies for strengthening local milk production and dairy development.

According to him, the engagement culminated in the validation of the National Dairy Policy Implementation Framework, a critical step towards translating policy objectives into measurable and actionable outcomes.

"Nigeria has begun imple-

menting one of the most coordinated livestock and dairy transformation efforts in recent history.

"The establishment of the Ministry of Livestock Development on July 9, 2024, marked the launch of a national roadmap for the livestock sector.

"This bold move has fostered broad-based consensus and inspired the creation of dedicated livestock ministries and agencies in 18 states," he said.

The minister listed some of the ministry's achievements to include securing a 2.5 billion-dollar investment commitment from Brazilian meat processing company JBS.

According to him, the investment is expected to support the establishment of six processing facilities over five years, comprising three poultry plants, two beef plants and one pork processing facility, using advanced zero-waste processing technologies.

Maiha also said the government had successfully implemented a nationwide anthrax vaccination campaign, with 6.2 million livestock vaccinated.

"We have profiled more than 600,000 livestock farmers using electronic tools to support collective production and targeted interventions.

"We have also deployed trained livestock extension service providers and private veterinary practitioners to farmer clusters across the country," he said.

NEWS

Defaulters of environmental laws in Edo to face prosecution

—EDWMB

BENIN CITY

The Managing Director of the Edo State Waste Management Board (EDWMB), Amb. Dr. Enehita

Inegbenehi, has warned that residents who violate environmental sanitation laws in the state will be prosecuted in accordance with existing regulations.

E.D.H.A adjourns plenary

RAYMOND OSOGBE

BENIN -CITY

Edo State House of Assembly (E.D.H.A) adjourned her sitting, subsequently again yesterday in Benin -City, to 15 June, 2026.

There was no physical sitting before the adjournment. The sitting adjournment information was officially made known, to news men by an administrative staff of E.D.H.A.

Asked why the adjournment, he said that, he wouldn't know. It will be recalled, E.D.H.A initial proceeded on two weeks adjournment, which terminated on Sunday.

Plenary was officially scheduled for yesterday.

According to anonymous source within the Chief An-

thonny Enahoro Legislative Complex, "It's absolutely not far from fatigue and stress, of the just concluded primaries."

It will be recalled E.D.H.A members subjected themselves, to parties primaries recently.

The exercise was adjudged to be hectic, fierce and laden with uncertainties.

The exercise was characterised by surprises and unprecedented manifestations. While some of the Legislators were fortunate to have their return tickets, some were unable.

CORRECTION OF NAME/ DATE OF BIRTH
I, formerly known as **IDUSERI AIWAKHOI KARO**, now wish to be known as **IDUSERI AIWEKHOE CARO**, and also my correct date of birth is **1/3/1946** and not **2/7/1959** as wrongly written on my **BVN** and **NIN**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and the general public please take note.

RECONCILIATION OF NAME

The general public is hereby notified that **OBALO IMOKHAI STEPHEN** and **ESHIORAMHE STEPHEN**, are one and the same person. Henceforth, I wish to be known and called **OBALO IMOKHAI STEPHEN**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and the general public please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME

MISS MAC-ASORE EJIROGHENE, now wish to be known as **MRS. EJIROGHENE HILDA AGHAHAWA**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and the general public please take note.

RECONCILIATION OF NAME/DATE OF BIRTH

The general public is hereby notified that **LAMIDI AFUSATU FAITH** and **LAMIDI AFUSATU BOLA**, are one and the same person. Henceforth, I wish to be known as **LAMIDI AFUSATU FAITH**. Also, my correct date of birth is **11/7/1992**, not **11/7/1994** as wrongly used in my school certificate (**WASSCE**). All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and the general public please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, formerly known as **MISS EKHATOR BLESSING ELOGHOSA**, now wish to be known and called **MRS. ERIBO BLESSING ELOGHOSA**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and the general public please take note.

ADDITION OF NAME

The general public is hereby notified that **AKALONU NDIRIBE NELLY CHIOMA** and **AKALONU NELLY CHIOMA**, are one and the same person. Henceforth, I wish to be known and called as **AKALONU NDIRIBE NELLY CHIOMA**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and the general public please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, formerly known as **FRANK EVBUOMWAN**, now wish to be known and addresses **SAVIOR OVIASUYI**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and the general public please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, formerly known as **MISS VIOLET AGBONDIAFO**, now wish to be known and called **MRS. VIOLET OGUN**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and the general public please take note.

ADDITION OF NAME/CORRECTION OF DATE OF BIRTH

I, formerly known as **OSAROGIAGBON LAURA**, now wish to be known and addressed as **OSAROGIAGBON IMUETINYANOSA LAURA**, also my correct date of birth is **8/9/1989**, not **8/9/1987** as wrongly used on my **BVN**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and the general public please take note.

MISSING LAND DOCUMENTS

The general public is hereby notified that I, **PRINCE CHARLES UYIEKPEN** was the lawful owner of a parcel of land, measuring 200 feet by 200 feet and a deed of transfer was made **29/4/2020** to one **LINDA OMON UHUNMWANGHO** on behalf of her late husband **EGHOSA UHUNMWANGHO** and herself empowered me to sell the piece of land. The said documents were discovered missing and all effort to trace it has proved abortive.

Hence, this publication is for record purpose. Concerned authorities and the general public please take note.

Signed:

PRINCE CHARLES UYIEKPEN

Dr. Inegbenehi issued the warning on Saturday in Benin City after monitoring the monthly environmental sanitation exercise across parts of the metropolis.

Addressing journalists shortly after the exercise, he expressed satisfaction with the progress made so far, noting that the state government's efforts to improve cleanliness and sanitation are beginning to yield visible results.

"I can boldly say that we are on the right track in our efforts to keep Edo State clean. While

we may not yet be where we aspire to be, we are certainly no longer where we used to be," he said.

He recalled that the sanitation situation in the state was significantly worse two years ago but has since improved considerably. However, he emphasized that authorities would intensify enforcement in densely populated areas.

"We will revisit these areas to issue sanitation notices. By the next monthly exercise, we expect to see notable improvement. Residents must be able

to present proof of payment to their waste collectors. Failure to do so will result in prosecution," he added.

The EDWMB boss urged residents to adopt proper sanitation habits, including regular cleaning of their surroundings and clearing of gutters, stressing that environmental cleanliness is a collective civic responsibility.

He further disclosed that the Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo, has directed strict adherence to environmental sanitation practices,

including participation in the monthly exercise and consistent upkeep of residential and commercial premises.

Citing provisions of the state's environmental laws, particularly Section 38, Dr. Inegbenehi reiterated that all business premises must be kept clean at all times, warning that defaulters would face appropriate sanctions.

"The government remains committed to enforcing environmental standards to ensure a cleaner and healthier Edo State," he said.

**SALLAH HOMAGE:**

President Bola Tinubu (8th L); Gov Babajide Sanwo-Olu of Lagos State (7th L) Deputy Governor of Lagos, Obafemi Hamzat (8TH R) and some APC Candidates for the 2027 National Assembly election during their Sallah Homage to the President in Lagos on Friday.

Special Marshals' National Coordinator, urges peace among members

BENIN CITY

The National Coordinator of the Special Marshals, Dr. Usman Adaji, has reiterated his dedication to fortifying the organisation's operational framework in strict alignment with guidelines issued by the National Assembly.

Speaking during an interactive session with Special Marshals in Benin City, Dr. Adaji stated that the organisation is poised to enter a new phase of expansion and corporate excellence, with the renewed objective of deepening its contributions to road safety across the country.

He further noted that research and documentation—central pillars of the organisation's mandate—will receive renewed attention as part of deliberate efforts to curb road traffic crashes nationwide.

According to him, the Special Marshals are distinctive assembly of professionals drawn from diverse spheres of human endeavour, including academia, business, and public service.

He reminded members that selfless service to humanity remains one of the organisation's defining principles, and urged them to deploy their expertise, time, and resources towards sustaining and advancing road safety initiatives.

Dr. Adaji also disclosed that his administration has introduced a personal insurance scheme to provide financial relief for the families of deceased members. Under the scheme, eligible beneficiaries are entitled to receive up to ₦2 million, while participating members are required to contribute an annual premium of ₦3,700.

He clarified that participation is entirely voluntary, urging members to appraise the benefits and take advantage of the opportunity.

In the same vein, the National Coordinator stressed the necessity of discipline, regimentation, unity, and exemplary conduct among members.

"A Special Marshal must be a man or woman of proven integrity, outstanding character, and means, who is always prepared to serve humanity," he said.

Addressing concerns raised by members, Dr. Adaji assured them that the long-standing challenge of obtaining membership identity cards has been resolved.

He noted that new identity cards can now be processed and delivered within two to three weeks from the date of application.

He also announced the redesign of the organisation's regalia, adding that members' identification pin numbers have been properly coded and streamlined to enhance operational efficiency.

He called for greater cohesion among members, urging them to hold fast to trust and integrity as guiding principles in their interactions and service.

Earlier, the RS 5.1 Deputy Corps Commander (DCC), Manga William, who represented the Sector Commander, described the relationship between Special Marshals and Regular Marshals as that of "siamese twins"—distinct in appearance yet inseparable in purpose and service.

He noted that the interactive session with the National Coordinator was both timely and inspiring, and would inject re-

newed vigour into the activities of Special Marshals within the state and beyond.

Also speaking, the National Secretary of the organisation, SM Friday Ekhator, and the Edo State Coordinator, SM Marcel Ighalo, expressed optimism that the National Coordinator's visit would mark the commencement of a new era of progress and unity for Special Marshals in the zone.

SM Ekhator said the central message of the visit was peace, stressing that harmony remains indispensable to the growth and success of any organisation.

He added that the leadership's renewed commitment would further strengthen cooperation and operational effectiveness among members.

On his part, SM Marcel Ighalo said Special Marshals in Edo State were honoured to host the National Coordinator during his familiarisation tour of RS 5.1, 5.2, and 5.3, covering Edo, Delta, and Anambra States, respectively.

The highlight of the event was the formal induction of more than 40 new members into the Special Marshals family in Edo State.

IOM rescues 67,000 stranded Nigerian migrants, supports 30,000

MINNA

The journalists' training had the theme: "From Headlines to Impact: A

Capacity Building on Ethical and Data-driven Migration Reporting in Nigeria.

It is targeted at equipping Nigerian journalists with ap-

propriate migration reporting knowledge.

Adeyemi said that IOM was determined to drive solutions to displacements.

"On migrant protection, the IOM has rescued over 67,000 stranded Nigerian migrants through its Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration pro-

gramme since 2017.

"So far, over 30,000 of those Nigerian returned migrants have received psychological, social and economic integration-related support.

"Now, as an organisation, our major mission is that we act with our partners to drive solutions to displacements, save lives, take people on the roads and make sure that they are passed through to regular evaluation.

"Down south here, we focus more on facilitated migration and immigration management.

"We also have free movements and migration where we work with entities such as ECOWAS to ensure that immigration issues are followed through legally," Adeyemi said.

According to her, IOM is making efforts to sensitise more Nigerians about the right ways to migrate.

"We are working with government secondary schools, including unity schools and military schools as well as schools close to borders to raise awareness on illegal migration.

"We want schoolchildren to be sensitised before they are brainwashed to migrate illegally.

"We are sensitising the children about how to properly migrate.

"In Nigeria, we have the Migration Resource Centre in the Federal Ministry of Labour and Employment, where we educate potential migrants and verify information about where they are going.

"Not many people are aware of the services that IOM offers migrants, and that is where the media comes in to help to increase this sensitisation drive," she said.

She added that IOM was working with the National Commission for Refugees to develop a national referral mechanism for stranded migrants.

"If someone finds himself stranded, he should locate the IOM office or the Nigerian Embassy in that country.

"We focus mainly on ensuring their safe return.

"We will also try to improve integration of returned migrants," she said.

**GLOBAL DAY OF PARENTS 2026:**

Parents and caregivers in a group photograph after actively participating in discussions on positive parenting, child protection, and family well-being during CHIADE's Global Day of Parents 2026 commemoration held in Benin City, on Monday, 1st June, 2026.

Ex-APC spokesman warns against politicising insecurity ahead of 2027 polls

LAGOS

Former Lagos State spokesman of the All Progressives Congress (APC), Mr Seye Oladejo, has cautioned against the politicization of insecurity ahead of the 2027 general elections.

Oladejo, in a statement on Monday in Lagos, alleged that some political actors were attempting to exploit security challenges for electoral advantage.

He said the recent resurgence of terrorist activities, banditry and attacks on communities should not be viewed solely through a political lens.

According to him, the timing of recent security incidents raises concerns about efforts to create fear and erode public confidence in national institutions.

"As Nigeria gradually moves to-

wards the 2027 general elections, a troubling pattern is becoming increasingly difficult to ignore.

"Across various parts of the country, there has been a noticeable resurgence of insecurity, renewed terrorist activity, coordinated attacks on communities, and a steady attempt to amplify fear and uncertainty within the public space.

"To dismiss these developments as mere coincidence would be to ignore both history and common sense," he said.

Oladejo said Nigerians had witnessed similar situations at critical political periods when vested interests allegedly sought to exploit instability.

"Nigeria has witnessed this script before.

"At critical political junctures, when electoral contests begin to take shape and political inter-

ests become heightened, forces that thrive on instability often emerge from the shadows.

"They exploit existing fault lines, sponsor narratives of despair, fuel public anxiety, and seek to create the impression of a nation under siege," he said.

The APC chieftain urged citizens to critically assess narratives surrounding insecurity and question who stood to gain from a climate of fear and instability.

"The Nigerian people must ask themselves a fundamental question: Who benefits from a climate of fear and instability?"

"Certainly not the farmer whose crops are abandoned because of insecurity. Certainly not the trader whose business suffers.

"Certainly not the young graduate searching for opportunities. Certainly not the families who simply desire peace and stability," he said.

Oladejo alleged that some

opposition figures had turned national security challenges into political tools.

"The beneficiaries are often those who view every national challenge through the narrow prism of political advantage.

"They see insecurity not as a tragedy to be defeated but as a tool to be exploited.

"They see terrorism not merely as a security threat but as an opportunity to score partisan points and advance political ambitions," he said.

He expressed concern that insecurity was increasingly being used to shape political narratives ahead of the next general election.

"Increasingly, it appears that what the opposition has lost in cohesion, direction, and confidence in its electoral prospects, it seeks to regain through a politics of fear and national pessimism.

FCT corps members lament rising transport, rent, feeding costs

ABUJA

Corps members serving in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) have identified high transportation costs, accommodation difficulties and rising feeding expenses as major challenges affecting their service year.

The corps members made the observations in separate interviews with newsmen on Monday in Abuja, while reflecting on their experiences under the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) scheme.

Miss Grace David said the high cost of transportation in Abuja

consumed a significant portion of her monthly allowance.

"The allowances paid by the government and my place of primary assignment are not enough to cover transportation, feeding and accommodation expenses," she said.

Similarly, Miss Dorothy Samuel said she spent about N3,000 daily commuting between her residence and place of assignment.

"Transportation has really affected my service year because I spend almost all my money on transport and have little or nothing left at the end of the month," she said.

Samuel appealed to the government to increase corps members' allowances to enable them cope with the rising cost of living.

Miss Esther Ekwe also acknowledged that many corps members were facing accommodation and transportation challenges during their service year.

In spite of the difficulties, the corps members described the NYSC scheme as a valuable platform for cultural integration, professional growth and personal development.

Ekwe said the scheme had enabled her to interact with people from different parts of the country and learn about

their cultures and ways of life.

"Meeting new people and learning their ways of life has exposed me to the culture of other Nigerians," she said.

She added that serving in Abuja had positively impacted her photography career through exposure to experienced professionals.

"In spite of coping with accommodation and transportation challenges, being in the midst of highly experienced people in the photography profession is a boost to my job.

"I have learnt more in both video and photo editing," Ekwe said.

Lagos empowers 5,339 residents, graduates 5,310 from skills centres

LAGOS

The Lagos State Government has empowered 5,339 residents with business tools and equipment, and graduated 5,310 others from its tuition-free skills acquisition centres in the last one year.

This is part of efforts by the State to tackle poverty and promote economic self-reliance.

The state Commissioner for Women Affairs and Poverty Alleviation (WAPA), Mrs Bolaji Dada, disclosed this on Monday during the 2026 Ministerial Press Briefing.

Dada said the intervention, implemented through the ministry, reflected the government's commitment to reducing poverty, creating jobs and strengthening entrepreneurship.

She said the government had continued to invest in human capital development through its 19 skills acquisition centres located across the state's five divisions and its Women Development Centre in Agege.

"A total of 5,310 trainees successfully completed vocational programmes in fashion design, catering, cosmetology, barbing, information and communication technology, welding, furniture making, photography, textile production and other trades.

"Many of the graduates have become business owners and employers of labour.

"Our skills acquisition centres are not only training residents, but are transforming lives by

producing entrepreneurs who are creating jobs and contributing to the economic growth of Lagos State," she said.

Dada said the government complemented the vocational training with business support through the Micro Enterprise Support Initiative (MESI) under which the 5,339 beneficiaries received tools and equipment to establish or expand their enterprises.

She disclosed that about 70 per cent of those empowered under the initiative were graduates of the state's skills acquisition centres.

"Through MESI, beneficiaries have been provided with equipment and tools to grow businesses, turning dreams into livelihoods and livelihoods into engines of economic growth.

"Our objective is to ensure that skills acquired by residents translate into sustainable income, financial independence and long-term economic stability," she said.

The commissioner said that the ministry had also intensified efforts to promote digital inclusion among artisans, traders and small business owners.

She said 600 beneficiaries received Android phones after completing a three-day digital marketing and e-commerce training programme organised by the ministry.

According to her, the participants were trained in online marketing, social media branding, customer engagement and e-commerce strategies to enable them to compete effectively.

NEWS

Troops rescue 23 kidnap victims, recover vehicles after Kogi attack

ABUJA

Troops of 12 Brigade Nigerian Army, have rescued 23 kidnap victims following an attack by suspected bandits along the Ayegun-

le-Bunu road in Kabba-Bunu Local Government Area of Kogi.

This was contained in an operational report made available to Defense Correspondents on Monday in Abuja.

The report said the incident occurred in the early hours of Monday, when the attackers barricaded the road and abducted an unspecified number of passengers.

According to the report, troops of 12 Brigade, deployed

in Kabba, responded swiftly to the distress call but the assailants had fled before their arrival.

"On reaching the scene, the troops discovered two dead bodies, five injured victims, as well as two Toyota commer-

cial buses and a HOWO truck abandoned by the roadside.

"The troops immediately launched pursuit operations along the kidnappers' withdrawal routes, leading to the rescue of 23 passengers who had been abandoned due to the

sustained pressure.

"The injured victims were evacuated to St. Joseph Hospital, Kabba, for medical attention.

"Efforts are ongoing to track down the fleeing criminals and rescue the remaining victims."

Cost of healthy diet stands at N1,541 in March —NBS

ABUJA

The National Average Cost of a Healthy Diet (CoHD) per adult a day stood at N1, 541 as at March 2026, the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) has said.

The NBS revealed this in its CoHD report for March 2026 released in Abuja on Monday.

The bureau said the CoHD in March increased by 1.89 per cent compared to the N1,513 recorded in February 2026.

It said the increase was driven by the rise in prices across all food groups.

The NBS said the CoHD was the least expensive combination of locally available items that met globally consistent food-based dietary guidelines.

It said it was used as a measure of physical and economic access to healthy diets.

"This is a lower bound (or floor) of the cost per adult per day excluding the cost of transportation and meal preparation."

The NBS also said that in March, the average CoHD was highest in the South-East at N1,899 per adult per day, followed by the South- West at

N1,801 per day.

It said the lowest average CoHD was recorded in the North-East at N1,233 per adult per day.

The NBS further said that at the state level, Ekiti, Imo and Abia recorded the highest CoHD at N2,091, N2,052, and N1,970, respectively.

The bureau said Adamawa, FCT, and Taraba recorded the lowest CoHD at N1,004, N1,113 and N1,149, respectively.

The NBS said CoHD had steadily increased over the past year.

It said that as of March 2026, the CoHD was 4.38 per cent higher than what was recorded in March 2025, increasing from N1,477 to N1,541.

"While the price of starchy staples and vegetables decreased, all other food groups experienced price increases."

The report added that animal-source foods were the most expensive food group recommendation to meet in March, accounting for 39 per cent of the total CoHD to provide 13 per cent of the total calories.

It noted that fruits and vegetables were the most expensive food groups in terms of price per calorie.

Kogi Govt suspends Echane festival over security threats

LOKOJA

The Kogi Government has suspended the Echane Festival in Ebi-raland with immediate effect over security concerns.

The announcement was made on Monday by the Commissioner for Information and Communications, Mr Kingsley Fanwo.

The government cited credible security intelligence that activities tied to the festival could threaten public peace and lead to a breakdown of law and order in parts of Kogi Central Senatorial District.

"Credible intelligence reports indicated that activities associated with the festival could threaten public safety and potentially destabilize affected communities.

"Gov. Ahmed Ododo approved the suspension in the interest of maintaining peace and public safety," the commissioner said.

While reaffirming respect for cultural heritage and the role of traditional festivals, the government stressed that the protection of lives and proper-

ty remains its foremost responsibility.

"All security agencies in the state have been directed to ensure strict compliance with the suspension order," the commissioner said.

The government warned that anyone found promoting activities connected to the suspended festival would face the full weight of the law.

The commissioner reaffirmed the state government's commitment to safeguard lives and property and will continue to take proactive measures to sustain the peace and stability Kogi is known for.

The government called on traditional rulers, community leaders, opinion leaders, youth groups and residents of affected communities to cooperate with security agencies and support efforts aimed at maintaining peace and harmony.

"The government is committed to protecting citizens and ensuring that security considerations remain paramount in all decisions affecting public gatherings and activities," the commissioner said.

**INSPECTION VISIT:**

Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo (in white faze cap), during an inspection visit to Edo Broadcasting Service (EBS), yesterday.

Abeokuta residents protest, seek release of abducted Oyo school children

ABEOKUTA

Residents of Abeokuta on Monday staged a peaceful protest, calling on appropriate authorities to ensure immediate release of abducted school children and teachers in Oyo state.

The protesters, comprising youths, mothers, traders and others, gathered at the Panseke skating ground armed with placards with inscriptions such as "Bring back our kidnapped children", "Help us stop kidnapping", among others.

The protest followed the abduction of 39 pupils and seven

teachers from three schools in Oriire Local Government Area of Oyo State in May.

Speaking on behalf of the protesters, Pastor Juwon Owolabi said that the situation had left many residents living in fear and uncertainty.

Owolabi stressed that businesses and daily activities cannot flourish in an insecure environment, urging the government to deploy all necessary resources to secure the victims' release and safeguard communities.

The cleric called on Nigerians to unite and peacefully demand decisive action against insecurity.

Also speaking, Mrs Ada Comfort, an entrepreneur, said the worsening security situation had disrupted her business activities.

She said the fear of travelling had prevented her from fulfilling customers' orders and conducting normal business operations.

Comfort expressed sympathy for the abducted children and their families, describing their ordeal as heartbreaking.

A nursing mother, Mrs Precious Jonathan, said she joined the protest because she desired a safer future for her children.

Jonathan said she frequent-

ly thought about the abducted children and their wellbeing, especially during harsh weather conditions, and appealed to the government to prioritise the safety and welfare of citizens.

Mr Ayodeji Ojo, a businessman, urged security agencies to intensify efforts to rescue the victims, while demanding a temporary closure of schools in vulnerable areas until security improves.

He urged government authorities to adopt stronger measures against kidnappers and other criminal groups.

Security personnel, including officers of the police and NSCDC, were strategically deployed across the state to maintain security.

FRSC cracks down on overloading, fake diplomatic number plates, arrests 1,691

ABUJA

The Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC), says it has arrested no fewer than 1,691 persons for overloading, mixed loading and fake diplomatic number plates usage of fences within the last five days.

The Corps Public Education Officer (CPEO), Osundu Ohaeri, who revealed this in a statement on Monday in Abuja, also said that the arrests were made through the special intervention of an operation code named "Operation Guduma".

According to Ohaeri, the arrests were made in a sweeping nationwide enforcement offensive that reinforces the corps zero-tolerance stance on road safe-

ty violations and security threats under the leadership of the Corps Marshal, Shehu Mohammed.

Ohaeri said the operation was executed simultaneously across critical transport corridors in eleven states.

"The operation targeted dangerous practices such as overloading, mix-loading, fake diplomatic number plates and other fraudulent vehicle identification violations that continue to threaten lives and compromise security across the country.

"The operation yielded remarkable results, with 683 persons arrested for overloading and mix-loading, 1,003 for number plate-related offences, and five persons apprehended for using fake diplomatic num-

ber plates," he said.

The CPEO noted that beyond the figures lay a disturbing growing culture of impunity among road users who exploited illegal vehicle identities and flagrantly disregard safety regulations.

He said that the discoveries made during the operation further exposed the widespread abuse of unauthorised association number plates and other deceptive registration schemes designed to evade lawful scrutiny.

He quoted the corps marshal, Shehu Mohammed, as saying that the operation had exposed critical vulnerabilities capable of fueling road traffic crashes, facilitating criminal activities and undermining public trust in ve-

hicle identification systems.

Mohammed emphasised that the misuse of diplomatic number plates and persistent loading violations represented not merely traffic offences, but direct threats to public safety and national security.

He said that the corps would continue to deploy intelligence-led enforcement strategies to dismantle such practices wherever they exist.

He also said that the operation had uncovered numerous vehicles operating with dangerously unlatched containers and overloaded cargoes; conditions he said significantly increase the likelihood of catastrophic crashes, fatalities and economic losses.

Strike: Oyo public schools comply with NUT directive

IBADAN

Teachers in public primary and secondary schools across Oyo State on Monday began an indefinite strike to protest the kidnapping of teachers and pupils of three schools in Oriire Local Government Area of the state

Armed men on May 15 attacked Community Grammar School, L.A. Primary School, both in Ahoro- Esinele and

Baptist Nursery and Primary School, Yawota, near Ogbomoso, where pupils and teachers were abducted and two persons killed.

Following the incident, the NUT, Oyo State Wing, directed teachers in the state to embark on an indefinite strike to start on June 1.

Our correspondent who monitored the strike in public schools in Ibadan reports full compliance with the indefinite

strike.

Some of the schools visited included Anglican Junior Secondary School, Orita-Mefa; St. Patrick Secondary School, Bashorun; St. Louis Grammar School, Mokola; Oba Akinbiyi Model School; and St. Brigid's School, Mokola.

Many students who arrived at their schools as early as 7:45 a.m. were turned back and asked to return home.

It was also observed that only

candidates sitting for the ongoing West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) and teachers assigned to invigilation duties were allowed into school premises.

One of the teachers, Mrs Yemisi Alao, told NAN that staff members in her school had been directed not to report for duty in compliance with the union's directive.

"We are all complying in solidarity with the affected teachers,

pupils and their families. We pray that the abducted victims will regain their freedom and return home safely," she said.

Another teacher, Mrs Tayo Olutayo, said both students and teachers had been adequately informed ahead of the industrial action.

"Only WAEC candidates and

teachers involved in the examination process are expected to be in school," she said.

Reports from other parts of the state including Oyo, Ogbomoso, Iseyin, Saki, Eruwa and Igboora in Ibarapa indicate full compliance with the strike by teachers in public primary and secondary schools.

**INTERACTIVE SESSION:**

Special Marshals' National Coordinator, Dr. Usman Adaji (middle), flanked by National Secretary, SM Friday Ekhaton (left), and Edo State Coordinator, SM Marcel Ighalo, after an interactive session in Benin City, recently.

Federal workers reject N100,000 minimum wage proposal

● threaten strike action, insist on living wage**ABUJA**

The Federal Workers Forum (FWF) has rejected the proposed N100,000 national minimum wage, describing it as inadequate and incapable of addressing prevailing economic realities facing Nigerian workers.

This was contained in a communiqué issued at the end of a meeting and opinion poll FWF conducted at the weekend that x-rayed current hardship and insecurity across the country.

The communiqué was jointly signed by Mr Andrew Emezie, National Coordinator of FWF, Mr Ayo Ogundele, National Secretary, and Mr Aminu Yerima, National Mobilisation officer of the forum.

The forum said federal workers were grappling with worsening living conditions, low wages, unpaid arrears and rising insecurity, despite repeated government assurances on workers' welfare.

According to the communiqué, the implementation of the N70,000 national minimum wage has fallen short of workers' expectations and has failed to improve their purchasing power.

It alleged that only N40,000 was added uniformly to salaries across grade levels and that deductions further reduced the actual benefits received by workers.

The forum also expressed concern over the non-implementation of the 40 per cent peculiar allowance and outstanding wage award arrears promised by government officials.

"Federal workers nationwide are living daily in fear and uncertainty. We are constantly confronted with the challenges of survival and safety," they said.

"Workers have continued to face severe economic hardship arising from inflation, high living costs, fuel subsidy removal and declining value of the naira.

"Many federal workers are still being owed promotion arrears, wage awards, Duty Tour Allowances and other entitlements accumulated over several years," the forum said.

On the proposed N100,000 minimum wage reportedly canvassed by governors, the forum said the offer fell far below what could be regarded as a living wage.

"To us, this is the height of hypocrisy. These same govern-

nors, most of whom said they could not afford the N70,000 minimum wage, are now proposing N100,000," it said.

The forum described the proposal as a "Greek gift" and urged authorities to follow due process in negotiating a wage that reflects current economic realities.

"The N100,000 proposal is not a living wage. We condemn and reject this proposal in all its entirety," the forum stated.

The forum also decried the worsening security situation, saying workers and ordinary citizens were increasingly exposed to kidnappings, killings and other violent crimes.

It noted that schools had become major targets of criminal attacks, while many victims, including children, remained in captivity across different parts of the country.

Police detain 13 suspects over alleged kidnapping, other crimes in Jigawa

DUTSE

The Police in Jigawa have apprehended 13 suspects over alleged kidnapping, robbery, theft and cattle rustling.

The police also recovered a fabricated AK-47 Rifle, three motorcycles and six sheep during separate operations.

This was contained in a statement by the spokesman of the command, SP Shiisu La-

wan, on Sunday in Dutse.

He said operatives of the command apprehended the suspects during a sustained intelligence-led operations and coordinated raids aimed at curbing criminal activities and strengthening public safety across the state.

Lawan said operatives of the State Intelligence Department (SID) on May 22, detained three suspected members of a robbery syndicate allegedly linked to a

series of attacks in Hadejia.

He said the suspects (names withheld) hailed from Malam-madori and Kaugama Local Government Areas of the state.

"A fabricated AK-47 rifle was recovered during a search at the suspect's residence, while investigation is ongoing to apprehend other fleeing members of the group," he said.

Lawan said the operatives also uncovered a suspected kidnapping plot, and detained

two suspects (names withheld), adding that the suspects hailed from Kafin- Hausa LGA.

"Preliminary investigation indicated that the suspects, alongside other accomplices, allegedly planned to abduct two persons from Jama'are town before the operation was foiled," he said.

Lawan said the operatives attached to Gwaram Division, on May 23, detained two suspects for alleged theft of two sheep.

Ogudu-Alapere crash: LASTMA rescues 2 trapped victims

LAGOS

The Lagos State Traffic Management Authority (LASTMA) has rescued two persons trapped in a multi-vehicle crash along the Ogudu-Alapere inward Toll-gate corridor in Lagos.

The General Manager of LASTMA, Mr Olalekan Bakare-Oki, confirmed this in a statement issued by the agency's Director of Public Affairs, Mr Taofiq Adebayo, on Sunday night in Lagos.

Bakare-Oki said the accident involved a 12-tyre DAF articulated truck and a commercial Volkswagen T4 bus with registration number AA 60 YF.

He said preliminary investigations revealed that the bus somersaulted following a violent impact, leaving the driver and a passenger trapped in the wreckage, thus obstructing traffic along the corridor.

"LASTMA operatives, who were on routine patrol along the corridor, swiftly responded and activated emergency rescue protocols to safeguard lives and restore traffic flow.

"The operatives, in collaboration with other emergency

responders, successfully extricated the victims and handed them over to officials of the Lagos State Ambulance Service (LASAMBUS) for urgent medical attention," he said.

He added that officers of the Ketu Division of the Nigeria Police Force provided security support and ensured effective crowd control during the rescue operation.

Bakare-Oki said the accident scene was secured while the damaged vehicles were promptly evacuated to ease traffic congestion in the area.

He commended the operatives for their courage, professionalism and prompt response, noting that the successful rescue underscored the agency's commitment to saving lives and ensuring road safety.

The LASTMA boss, however, urged motorists, particularly operators of articulated vehicles and commercial buses, to adhere strictly to traffic regulations and ensure proper vehicle maintenance.

He stressed that road safety remained a collective responsibility and called on all road users to exercise caution, patience and discipline on the highways.

Deputy senate whip tasks Izzi people on unity

ABAKALIKI

The Deputy Senate Whip, Onyekachi Nwibonyi has urged the people of Izzi clan to desist from divisive actions and follow their leaders to bring about unity and development.

Nwibonyi (APC- Ebonyi North) made the admonition while addressing newsmen on political situation in his district, following the emergence of candidates from different political parties for the various elective positions.

The deputy senate whip said that God has used Government Francis Nwifuru, who also hails from the clan, to unify the people to enable them live above all divisive tendencies.

"The wave of kindred dichotomy presently in the clan is caused by an external force which we know.

"We still have some propagators among us but our message to them is that the days of kindred division are over," he said.

He noted that the people of the

clan were united in supporting the governor as nothing would bring division among them again.

"The governor is from the Igbojima kindred while I come from Unwueroh but we have bonded well to lift, not just the Izzi people but entire Ebonyi.

"Our style of leadership is devoid of high-handedness, it epitomises humility and hard-work, which our people are known for," he said.

Nwibonyi who won the primary to represent the district for another term under the APC, said he did not violate any political arrangement.

"There is no political or constitutional basis stopping me from a second term bid. Those making such claim should provide evidence of such arrangement.

"The former Ebonyi Governor, Sen. Sam Egwu represented the district for two terms, so I am not the only senator seeking a second term," he said.

He declared that he had no formidable rival ahead the 2027 senatorial election, attributing his confidence to his effective representation and impactful constituency projects.

NEWS**MAPOLY expels 365 students over fake admission documents****ABEOKUTA**

The management of the Moshood Abiola Polytechnic (MAPOLY), Abeokuta, has expelled 365 students for securing admission with falsified academic documents.

This was contained in a statement on Monday in Abeokuta by the institution's Head of Public Relations and Protocol, Mr Yemi Ajibola.

Ajibola explained that the affected students were enrolled in various Higher National Diploma (HND) programmes across its schools.

According to the statement, investigations revealed that the students submitted fake National Diploma (ND) results and forged academic transcripts from different institutions.

He added that the documents were used to facilitate admission into the polytechnic.

The institution's spokesperson said that the expulsion followed a comprehensive verification exercise on credentials submitted during admission and registration processes.

He noted that the action was part of efforts to sanitise its academic system and uphold standards.

"The institution reiterated its zero-tolerance policy on fraud, forgery and other forms of academic misconduct.

"A breakdown showed that 156 students were expelled from the School of Communication and Information Technology.

"The School of Business and Management Studies recorded 117 expulsions, while 54 students were affected in the School of Science and Technology.

"The School of Engineering accounted for 36 expelled students, while two students were

affected in the School of Environmental Studies," he said.

According to the statement, the Rector, Dr Koye Jolaoso, warned prospective applicants against using fake credentials to gain admission into the institution.

Jolaoso said the decision reflected the polytechnic's commitment to academic integrity, excellence and professionalism.

He added that the institution remained focused on promoting transparency and credibility in tertiary education.

Abduction: Tinubu approves 1,000 forest guards for Oyo, deploys rescue team**ABUJA**

President Bola Tinubu has approved the recruitment of 1,000 forest guards in Oyo State as part of measures to strengthen security following the abduction of pupils and teachers in the state.

The approval was announced during a visit by a high-powered Federal Government delegation, led by Mr Femi Gbajabiamila, the Chief of Staff to the President, to Ahoro-Esinele and Yawota communities near Ogbomoso in Oriire Local Government Area on Sunday.

The delegation conveyed the President's concern over the abduction of pupils and teachers of Community Grammar School, Ahoro-Esinele, Baptist Nursery and Primary School, Yawota and L.A. Primary School, Ahoro-Esinele on May 15.

According to a statement issued by the President's spokesman, Mr Bayo Onanuga, the recruitment of the forest guards will be undertaken in collaboration with the Oyo State Gov-

ernment to improve security in the affected communities and surrounding areas.

The delegation also informed community leaders and lawmakers that their request for the establishment of a military base in the area would be conveyed to the President for consideration.

Tinubu also directed a specialised security unit with advanced rescue capabilities to intensify efforts toward securing the release of the abducted pupils and teachers.

Also present on the delegation were; National Security Adviser, Nuhu Ribadu, Inspector-General of Police, Olatunji Disu, Minister of Defence, Christopher Musa, and the Special Adviser to the President on Media and Public Communications, Sunday Dare.

Addressing residents, Gbajabiamila said Tinubu was deeply troubled by the incident and had directed the nation's security leadership to deploy every available resource to secure the victims' release.

I-G cautions against indiscriminate recording, circulation of officers' videos**ABUJA**

The Inspector-General of Police (IGP), Mr Olatunji Disu, has cautioned against the growing trend of indiscriminate recording and circulation of videos of police officers on routine and sensitive duties.

A statement by the Chairman, Crime Correspondents Association of Nigeria (CCAN), Mr Festus Fifen in Abuja said the I-G gave the warning during an interactive session with members of the association.

Disu warned that the misuse of such video materials could undermine officers' morale, distort public perception, and negatively affect ongoing security operations across the country.

"While reaffirming the Nigeria Police Force's commitment to accountability, transparency, professionalism, and respect for human rights, it is important to

balance public scrutiny.

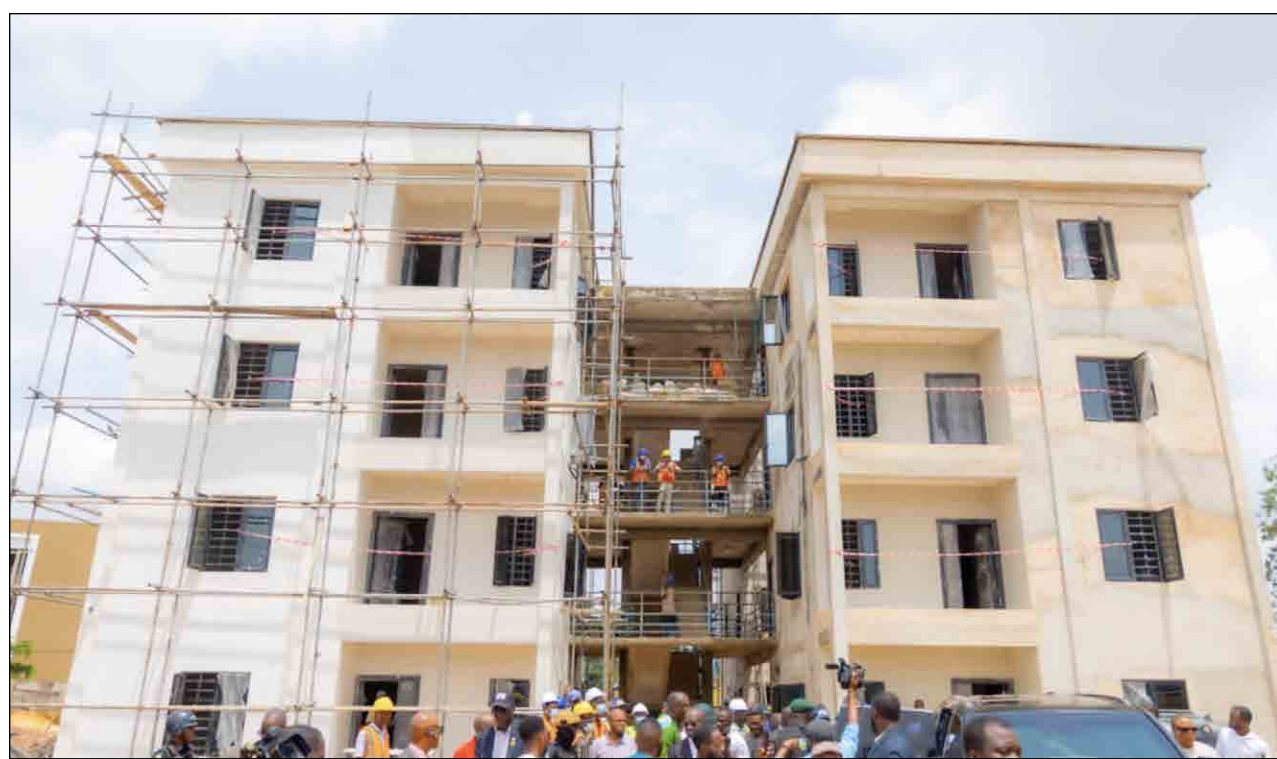
"Public scrutiny must be balanced with operational realities and the welfare of officers working under difficult and high-risk conditions.

"Police personnel who have continued to make enormous sacrifices daily in the discharge of their constitutional responsibilities deserve public understanding and support," he said.

While noting that accountability is important, Disu said the force remains committed to it, but recordings and public engagements involving police officers must be done responsibly.

The I-G said such recordings should not be used to harass officers or undermine their operational effectiveness.

"Police officers operate under extremely challenging conditions, often risking their lives to protect citizens and maintain public safety," he said.



RENOVATED DORCTORS' QUARTERS:

The renovated abandoned Dorctors' Quarters on Ezotti Street, Benin City.

Group commends FG's investment in dairy sector**ABUJA**

The Dandalin Makiyaya (Coalition of Herders) has commended the Federal Government for its commitment to investing 2.5 billion dollars in livestock development and the transformation of Nigeria's dairy sector.

The National Organising Secretary of the group, Mr Comrade Pariya, gave the commendation in an interview with newsmen on Monday in Abuja to mark the 2026 World Milk Day, celebrated annually on June 1.

The theme for this year's commemoration is "Celebrating Women Dairy Farmers: Promoting Fresh Milk Consumption for a Healthy Nation". Pariya said the investment

was aimed at modernising livestock production systems, improving dairy value chains, enhancing processing capacity and reducing dependence on imported dairy products.

According to him, implementation of the initiative is being coordinated by relevant government agencies and stakeholders.

He said the investment was expected to significantly increase local milk production, improve the genetic quality of dairy cattle, establish modern dairy farms and milk collection centres, and create employment opportunities for women and young people.

"The initiative will also strengthen milk processing and cold-chain infrastructure, reduce dairy import bills, conserve

foreign exchange and improve food and nutrition security through increased availability of quality milk and dairy products.

"It will equally enhance the livelihoods of pastoralists and smallholder dairy farmers," he said.

Pariya also commended President Bola Tinubu for establishing the Presidential Pulaaku Initiative, which he said was designed to support affected pastoralist communities.

He said the initiative had provided assistance to victims of insecurity in some communities, including those affected by the Tudun Biri incident.

Speaking on the 2026 World Milk Day theme, Pariya said it recognised the critical role women play across the dairy

value chain.

According to him, women are actively involved in milking, milk handling, processing, marketing, distribution, household nutrition management and small-scale dairy enterprise development.

He said celebrating women dairy farmers was important because empowering them could lead to increased productivity, improved household incomes, better child nutrition and stronger rural economies.

"Promoting fresh milk consumption is equally important because fresh milk is rich in high-quality protein, calcium, vitamins and minerals that support growth, immunity, bone health and overall well-being," he said.

Court sentences tricyclist to death for murder in Anambra**AWKA**

A High Court in Oba, Idemili South of Anambra, has sentenced a commercial tricycle operator, Makuachukwu Ezike, to death by hanging for the murder of a passenger during a "one chance" robbery operation.

Trial judge, Justice Lauretta Oyeka, in her judgment, convicted Ezike of the murder of Jude Onwuegbuchunam, an indigene of Umuoji in Anambra.

Justice Onyeka, held that the circumstantial evidence Ezike was compelling, citing the abandoned tricycle and him fleeing from the scene as

strong indicators of guilt.

She also relied on the convict's voluntary confession and the medical evidence linking the victim's death to the injuries he sustained after being pushed from the moving tricycle.

The court consequently found Ezike guilty of murder and sentenced him to death by hanging.

Earlier, the prosecution, led by Mrs L.N. Umeozulu, told the court that on November 17, 2019, Ezike and two accomplices, who are at large, operated a "one chance" robbery syndicate along the Oba-Obo-si-Nkpor-Umuoji Road.

The gang, the prosecution

said, disguised themselves as commercial transport operators, picked up Onwuegbuchunam as a passenger and attempted to rob him of his mobile phone and other valuables while in transit.

The prosecution said that when the victim resisted and raised an alarm, the assailants pushed him out of the moving tricycle at high speed near Abidi Hall, Umuoji, where local vigilante operatives were stationed.

According to the prosecution, Onwuegbuchunam sustained severe injuries from the fall and died two days later.

The prosecution told the court that Ezike returned to the area the following day to

recover the abandoned tricycle but was apprehended by vigilante operatives and handed over to the police.

The prosecution called five witnesses, including the medical doctor who conducted the post-mortem examination and testified that the victim's death resulted from injuries sustained when he was pushed from the moving tricycle.

Although the defence argued that there was no eyewitness account to the incident, Justice Oyeka held that the law permits conviction based on direct evidence, confessional statements or circumstantial evidence.



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Repositioning for effective justice delivery and democratic stability in Nigeria

Being A Keynote Address Delivered By Hon. Justice Mohammed Baba Idris, JSC. At Nigerian Bar Association, Benin Branch Law Week with the theme: "Reforming Today, Securing Tomorrow"

It is both an honour and a privilege to address this distinguished assembly at the Law Week of the Benin Branch of the Nigerian.

"The Repositioning for Effective Justice Delivery and Democratic Stability in Nigeria," is particularly apt and compelling at this defining moment in our national history. The continued survival of constitutional democracy and the preservation of the rule of law depend substantially upon the strength, credibility, independence, and efficiency of our justice system. Indeed, no democratic society can endure where justice is weakened by delay, compromised by interference, or rendered inaccessible to the ordinary citizen.

INTRODUCTION

A democratic system is sustained only where there exist strong, credible, and enduring institutions that guarantee transparency, accountability, and fidelity to constitutional governance; where freedom of expression and civic participation are meaningfully protected; and where citizens retain unwavering confidence in the independence, impartiality, and integrity of the judiciary. The true essence of democracy is not to be measured solely by the periodic conduct of elections, but by the assurance that disputes are resolved in accordance with due process, that rights are effectively protected, and that all governmental authority is exercised strictly within the limits prescribed by the Constitution and the law.

Indeed, where justice is compromised or denied, the foundations of stability are inevitably eroded. Where the courts are weakened, undermined, or perceived as lacking independence, the democratic order becomes increasingly vulnerable. Equally, where public confidence in the administration of justice diminishes, the inevitable consequence is the gradual substitution of lawful processes with self-help, disorder, and, in extreme cases, violence and anarchy.

Nigeria's democratic trajectory since the restoration of constitutional governance in 1999 reflects both commendable progress and significant institutional challenges. While the nation's democratic institutions have expanded in scope and visibility, persistent concerns remain, including delays in the dispensation of justice, congested court dockets, declining public confidence, perceptions of corruption, instances of political interference, insecurity, and the increasing burden placed upon the



HON. JUSTICE MOHAMMED BABA IDRIS, JSC

judiciary as the ultimate guarantor of justice for the ordinary citizen.

Against this backdrop, it is evident that a democratic future cannot be secured with institutions that are not adequately equipped to meet present demands. Therefore, the repositioning and strengthening of the justice sector is not merely desirable; it is an urgent constitutional and national imperative.

THE NEXUS BETWEEN JUSTICE DELIVERY AND DEMOCRATIC STABILITY

Effective justice delivery denotes a judicial system that is prompt, impartial, accessible, transparent, and affordable, within which disputes are resolved expeditiously by competent, independent, and constitutionally constituted courts. It presupposes not merely the existence of adjudicatory institutions, but their capacity to deliver justice in a manner that is both substantively fair and procedurally efficient, thereby ensuring that every litigant is heard and dispute determined within a reasonable time in accordance with the dictates of the Constitution.

Democratic stability, on the other hand, refers to the resilience of a political system to sustain its democratic institutions, processes, and the rule of law in the face of internal or external pressures. It is anchored on legitimate governance, continuity of constitutional order, public confidence in institutions, peaceful and lawful transitions of power, economic stability, and the vigilance of civil society in holding authority accountable. At its core, democratic stability is sustained by the endurance of constitutionalism, respect for the rule of law, protection of human rights, and adherence to institutional accountability.

Consequently, when reference is made to the repositioning of the justice sector, it encompasses a deliberate and strategic commitment to structural

in a number of recent decisions involving the enforcement of fundamental rights, particularly in relation to public order, protests, and the exercise of civil liberties, the courts have reaffirmed the principle that constitutional guarantees remain operative even in times of tension or public unrest

reforms, institutional renewal, technological modernisation, and ethical re-orientation within the justice delivery system. These pillars are indispensable to ensuring that the judiciary remains responsive, efficient, and credible in the discharge of its constitutional mandate.

It must be emphasised that the judiciary remains the stabilising fulcrum of any constitutional democracy. In Nigeria, the courts have consistently discharged this role by resolving constitutional and electoral disputes, ensuring compliance with the provisions of the Constitution, and checking any exercise of power that is inconsistent with the rule of law. In the discharge of this sacred responsibility, the judiciary has, on several occasions, acted as the final arbiter in moments of institutional tension, thereby preventing constitutional crises from escalating into systemic disorder.

In more recent jurisprudence, the Supreme Court has continued to affirm the supremacy of constitutional



HON. JUSTICE D. I. OKUNGBOWA, CHIEF JUDGE, EDO STATE

governance in matters relating to federalism and local government autonomy. Notably, in the series of decisions concerning the constitutional status and financial autonomy of local government councils, the apex court restated in unequivocal terms that the Constitution does not contemplate the arbitrary interference with, or unlawful dissolution of, democratically elected local government administrations. In reaffirming this position, the Court underscored that local governments, as constitutionally recognised federating units^{2z} for administrative purposes, are entitled to exist and function in accordance with law, free from unlawful executive encroachment.

Similarly, in matters arising from the declaration and administration of a state of emergency, the courts have consistently maintained that while the Constitution vests certain emergency powers in the executive, such powers are not absolute. They remain subject to constitutional limitations and judicial review. In this regard, the judiciary has continued to serve as the guardian of constitutional balance, ensuring that emergency governance does not metamorphose into constitutional aberration.

Furthermore, in a number of recent decisions involving the enforcement of fundamental rights, particularly in relation to public order, protests, and the exercise of civil liberties, the courts have reaffirmed the principle that constitutional guarantees remain operative even in times of tension or public unrest. The grant of bail and the enforcement of due process protections in such circumstances reflect the judiciary's unwavering commitment to the rule of law and the preservation of human dignity, even where security considerations are invoked by the State.

It is therefore evident that the legit-

imacy of democratic governance is inextricably linked to the efficiency and credibility of justice delivery. However, where justice is unduly delayed, selectively applied, or perceived to be inaccessible, public confidence in the system is eroded. As the enduring maxim reminds us, justice delayed is justice denied. Such delay not only undermines individual rights but also weakens institutional legitimacy and, by extension, democratic stability itself.

CHALLENGES CONFRONTING JUSTICE DELIVERY IN NIGERIA

Notwithstanding the resilience, dedication, and constitutional importance of the Nigerian judiciary, several systemic and institutional challenges continue to impede the effective administration of justice in our country. These challenges, if not decisively addressed, possess the capacity to weaken public confidence in the justice system and, by extension, undermine democratic stability and the rule of law.

1. Delay in the Administration of Justice: One of the most persistent and troubling challenges confronting the Nigerian judicial system is the inordinate delay in the determination of cases. Matters, in certain instances, remain unresolved for several years, and sometimes even decades, owing to procedural bottlenecks, incessant adjournments, multiplicity of interlocutory applications, abuse of appellate processes, inadequate judicial manpower, and congested court dockets. The consequences of such delays are profound. It is not uncommon for litigants who initiated proceedings to pass away before the final determination of their cases, thereby leaving the burden of litigation to subsequent generations. Such prolonged adjudication not only occasions hardship on parties but also diminishes public confidence in the capacity of the courts to deliver timely and meaningful justice. The administration of justice must therefore not only be fair but also expeditious, for justice delayed invariably amounts to justice denied.

2. Inadequate Funding and Deficient Infrastructure: The effective functioning of the judiciary is inextricably linked to adequate funding, institutional support, and genuine financial autonomy. Sections 81(3) and 121(3) of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (as amended), expressly guarantee the financial independence of the judiciary. However, the practical realization of that constitutional guarantee remains a continuing challenge. While it is commendable that certain States have embarked upon reforms aimed at improving court infrastructure and judicial facilities, many courts across the Federation still operate under deplorable conditions, with inadequate technological facilities, insufficient libraries, limited research tools, and poor digital infrastructure. A judiciary that remains financially dependent on the goodwill of other arms of government for its operational survival may inevitably struggle to assert and maintain the full measure of its institutional independence as envisaged by the Constitution.

Continues in next edition...

ANALYSIS

When the earth shook: Sydney's 5.1 quake and the world's new normal

MARTHA OBI-DIKE

At 8:17am Monday, Sydney woke up. Not to an alarm, but to a rumble. Buildings swayed. Pictures fell. For 12 seconds, Australia's largest city experienced a 5.1 magnitude earthquake — the strongest in 30 years.

No one died. Twenty people had minor injuries. But the Sydney Opera House has small cracks. Trains stopped. Schools closed. Insurance claims hit \$50m in 24 hours.

For a country that sits on a "stable" tectonic plate, the quake was a shock. For the world, it was a reminder: climate change, urbanization, and geological shifts mean no place is truly safe anymore.

This feature looks at Sydney's quake, what it teaches the world, and how Nigeria and other nations must prepare for disasters they think "cannot happen here."

THE QUAKE THAT NO ONE EXPECTED

Australia is not on the Pacific "Ring of Fire." It sits in the middle of the Indo-Australian plate. Geologists say quakes here are rare and usually below magnitude 5.

So a 5.1 quake in Sydney was unusual. The epicenter was 35km west of the city, near Blacktown. The depth was shallow — 8km — which made shaking stronger.

Dr. Sarah Mitchell of Geoscience Australia said, "We get small quakes yearly. But a quake this size in a major city reminds us that risk exists everywhere."

The quake was felt 200km away. In Newcastle, office workers ran outside. In Wollong, a church bell rang on its own.

DAMAGE AND RESPONSE: A TEST OF READINESS

Sydney's response was swift. Emergency services were on the ground in 10 minutes. Trains were suspended for safety checks. Schools sent children home. The PM visited affected suburbs.

Damage was mostly minor: cracked walls, broken glass, fallen chimneys. The Opera House suffered hairline cracks in the concrete shell. Engineers say it is safe but will need repair.

Insurance company IAG reported 15,000 claims in 2 days. Most were for broken items and roof tiles. Total estimates: \$50m and rising.

Residents described it as "scary but short." Tom, a café owner in Parramatta, said, "My cups fell. My customers screamed. Then it stopped. We laughed, but we were shaking."

3. THE GLOBAL CONTEXT: DISASTERS ARE MOVING

Sydney's quake is part of a pattern. Disasters are no longer

predictable by region.

- *Heatwaves in India*: 120 dead in Delhi in May 2026 as temperature hit 49.2°C.

- *Floods in Brazil*: Rio faces rising seas ahead of COP30.

- *Floods in Nigeria*: NI-HSA warns River Benue is 1.3 meters from danger level. In 2022, floods displaced 1.4 million Nigerians.

Climate scientists say global warming is increasing extreme weather. Geologists say melting ice can change pressure on tectonic plates, possibly trig-

gering quakes.

The lesson: Every country must prepare for "unexpected" disasters.

4. LESSONS FOR NIGERIA:

ARE WE READY?

Nigeria is not on a major fault line, so big earthquakes are rare. But Nigeria faces other disasters: floods, desertification, erosion,

and building collapse.

Floods: Benue, Kogi, and Bayelsa flood almost yearly. In 2022, 1.4 million were displaced. Many buildings in floodplains have no drainage.

Building Collapse: Lagos and Abuja have recorded multiple collapses. Poor materials, weak regulation, and corruption are causes.

Desertification: The Sahara moves south 0.6km yearly. In Sokoto and Katsina, farmland is turning to desert.

Yet disaster preparedness is

weak. NEMA is underfunded. Many states have no emergency response plan. Buildings do not follow code. Early warning systems are poor.

If a 5.1 quake hit Lagos or Abuja, the damage could be far worse than Sydney because of weak infrastructure.

5. WHAT THE WORLD IS DOING RIGHT

Countries that survive disasters do 3 things well:

1. Building Codes: Japan and Chile enforce strict earthquake codes. Buildings sway but don't fall. Sydney will now review its codes.

2. Early Warning: Japan has an earthquake early warning system that sends alerts 10 seconds before shaking. That time saves lives.

3. Public Education: In New Zealand, every child learns "Drop, Cover, Hold On." Drills are regular.

Australia will now invest more in seismic monitoring and public education. The PM said, "We were lucky this time. Luck is not a strategy."

WHAT NIGERIA MUST DO NOW

Nigeria cannot prevent earthquakes, but it can prevent disaster.

1. Enforce Building Codes: SON and COREN must ensure buildings use quality materials. Collapsed buildings kill more Nigerians than earthquakes.

2. Invest in NEMA and SEMA: Give them funding, equipment, and trained staff. Pre-position relief materials before floods, not after.

3. Map Risk Zones: Identify floodplains, erosion sites, and unstable soil. Stop building there.

4. Teach Disaster Response: Schools should teach children what to do during fire, flood, or storm. Knowledge saves lives.

5. Climate Action: Plant trees to stop desertification. Dredge rivers to prevent floods. Nigeria must be part of global climate solutions, not just a victim.

PREPAREDNESS IS THE NEW POWER

Sydney's 12 seconds of shaking cost \$50m and closed a city. Imagine 12 seconds in Lagos.

Disasters do not ask for permission. They do not care about GDP or politics. The only defense is preparation.

As the world faces climate change and geological shifts, Nigeria must ask: If the earth shook here tomorrow, would we be ready?

Sydney got lucky. Nigeria must not rely on luck. We must build a nation where every child, like Tolu and Tola in Oriire, and every family, like those in Makurdi floodplains, can sleep knowing they are safe.

Because the next disaster is not "if." It is "when."

”
Yet disaster preparedness is weak. NEMA is underfunded. Many states have no emergency response plan.

PERSPECTIVES



A CROSS SECTION OF PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS WHO ATTENDED THE COMMEMORATION OF GLOBAL DAY OF PARENTS 2026 ORGANISED BY CHIADE, ON MONDAY, 1ST JUNE, 2026.

Global Day of Parents 2026: CHIADE calls for stronger family support systems to protect children and strengthen communities

FRANCIS ODUPUTE

Caring Heart Initiative for Advocacy Development and Empowerment (CHIADE), a leading non-governmental organisation committed to child protection, family strengthening, advocacy, community development, and the empowerment of vulnerable populations, has joined families, stakeholders, and communities across the world in commemorating Parents Day 2026 under the theme: "Together For Parents."

The event served as an opportunity to recognise and celebrate the invaluable contributions of parents and caregivers who continue to provide love, guidance, protection, and support to their children despite the increasing social and economic challenges confronting families today.

Speaking on behalf of the organisation, the Executive Director of CHIADE, Grace Ese Obakina, CSW, emphasised the critical role parents play in shaping the future of society and called for collective action to support families in fulfilling their responsibilities.

According to her, parenting in today's world comes with enormous pressures, including economic hardship, social instability, changing family dynamics, child protection concerns, substance abuse, trafficking, violence, neglect, and other vulnerabilities that place children at risk.

She noted that while many parents are making extraordinary sacrifices to provide for and protect their children, they cannot shoulder these responsibilities alone.

"On this Parents Day, we stand in solidarity with all parents striving to raise children in safe, loving, and supportive environments. We particularly acknowledge parents whose children are exposed to risks, vulnerabilities, violence, exploitation, trafficking, substance abuse, negative peer influence, neglect, and other threats to their future. Every child deserves a nurturing environment, and every parent deserves access to support, resources, and opportunities that enable them to fulfil their vital role," she stated.

The Parents Day commemoration highlighted the importance of family and parenting support as essential social policies for promoting child well-being, emotional stability, healthy development, positive family relationships, and safer communities.

The event further reinforced CHIADE's commitment to: Strengthening

family systems and parenting capacities; Promoting child protection and safeguarding practices; Preventing violence, abuse, exploitation, trafficking, and neglect; Supporting the rescue, rehabilitation, and reintegration of vulnerable children and survivors; Advocating for policies and programs that improve family welfare and community resilience; Building partnerships that create safer and more inclusive environments for children and families.

Participants and stakeholders were encouraged to recognise parenting as a shared responsibility that requires support from governments, civil society organisations, educational institutions, faith-based organisations, communities, and the private sector.

A major takeaway from the event was the urgent need for increased investment in family-centred programs, parental education, psychosocial support services, economic empowerment opportunities, and child protection systems that strengthen the capacity of families to thrive.

CHIADE also used the occasion to call on community leaders, policymakers, development partners, and citizens to work together in creating a society where every child is protected, every parent is supported, and every family has the opportunity to flourish.

As the world commemorates Parents Day 2026, Caring Heart Initiative reaffirms its commitment to advancing family well-being, promoting positive parenting, protecting children from harm, and empowering communities through advocacy, education, and support services.

Caring Heart Initiative for Advocacy Development and Empowerment (CHIADE) is a registered non-profit organisation dedicated to promoting child protection, gender equality, family strengthening, youth development, mental well-being, social justice, community development, and the protection of vulnerable persons through advocacy, awareness creation, capacity building, support services, and strategic partnerships.

THINKING IT OVER:

The theme of Parents' Day this year provides a timely opportunity for reflection on the role parents play in raising children who are responsible, compassionate, disciplined and productive members of society. It also calls for urgent conversations about the growing challenges confronting families and young people in contemporary Nigeria.

Across communities in the country, concerns continue to grow over increasing cases of youth violence, substance abuse, cultism, cybercrime, school dropouts, sexual exploitation, social indiscipline and the erosion of moral values. While many factors contribute to these social challenges, experts and child development advocates consistently point to weakened family structures, poor parenting practices, neglect, economic pressures and the decline of community support systems as significant contributors.

A child who grows up without proper guidance, emotional support, positive discipline and value-based upbringing often becomes vulnerable to negative influences. On the other hand, children raised in loving, stable and responsible homes are more likely to develop confidence, empathy, resilience and respect for societal values.

Parents therefore occupy a critical position in nation-building. Every responsible citizen, professional, leader, entrepreneur, teacher, doctor, engineer, journalist or public servant begins life as a child nurtured within a family. The future of any nation is largely determined by the quality of parenting available to its children today.

The changing realities of parenting in Nigeria today brings it home to us that economic hardship, unemployment, inflation, insecurity and increasing social distractions will keep making the task of raising children more difficult than ever before, except something is done drastically now..

Many parents struggle to balance the demands of work with quality family time. Others face challenges associated with single parenthood, migration, family instability and inadequate support systems. Technology, while offering enormous benefits, has also introduced new concerns relating to excessive screen exposure, online exploitation, cyberbullying and harmful digital influences.

These realities have created an urgent need for stronger family support programmes, parenting education, child protection initiatives and community-based interventions aimed at safeguarding children's wellbeing.

It is within this context that organisations such as Caring Heart Initiative for Advocacy Development and Empowerment (CHIADE) have emerged as important partners in the collective effort to build healthier families and stronger communities.

Research across the world continues to show that the earliest years of a child's

life are among the most critical stages of human development. During this period, children acquire foundational social, emotional, cognitive and behavioural skills that shape their future.

Organisations working within the child development sector increasingly emphasise the importance of responsive parenting, proper nutrition, education, healthcare and emotional support during childhood. Early childhood development programmes are designed to strengthen these critical foundations and improve long-term outcomes for children.

For families facing economic difficulties, access to support systems can significantly influence a child's development trajectory. This reality reinforces the need for greater collaboration between government institutions, civil society organisations, schools, faith-based groups and development partners.

When parents receive adequate support, guidance and resources, they are better equipped to nurture children who can contribute positively to society.

CHIADE's commitment to children, families and community development:

For years, Caring Heart Initiative for Advocacy Development and Empowerment (CHIADE) has remained committed to addressing some of the most pressing social challenges affecting vulnerable children, women, youths and families.

Operating as a nonprofit organisation focused on advocacy, empowerment, sensitisation and social intervention, CHIADE has consistently championed initiatives designed to protect vulnerable populations and promote inclusive development. The organisation has been involved in community sensitisation programmes, grassroots mobilisation, advocacy campaigns and interventions aimed at addressing issues affecting children and families.

At a time when many families struggle with social and economic pressures, CHIADE's interventions seek not only to provide immediate support but also to encourage long-term social transformation. The organisation recognises that sustainable development begins with strong families and empowered communities.

Through collaborative engagements with stakeholders, government agencies, community leaders, schools and civil society organisations, CHIADE has continued to advocate for child protection, family wellbeing,

youth development and community empowerment.

Its work aligns closely with growing calls for increased attention to children's rights, parental responsibilities, gender-based violence prevention and youth-focused social development.

PARENTS - THE MOST IMPORTANT INFLUENCE!

Despite technological advancement and changing social realities, parents remain the most influential figures in a child's life.

Children learn not only through instruction but through observation. They absorb values, attitudes and behaviours demonstrated within their homes. Parents who model honesty, discipline, empathy, hard work and respect often transmit those same values to their children.

Conversely, environments characterised by neglect, abuse, violence, substance misuse or emotional instability can have lasting consequences on children's development.

Parents therefore have responsibilities that extend beyond providing food, shelter and education. They must also provide emotional security, moral guidance, positive role modelling and consistent support.

Quality parenting involves listening, mentoring, teaching accountability, encouraging education, promoting healthy relationships and helping children develop strong character.

As society continues to evolve, parents must remain actively involved in their children's lives, including monitoring their digital activities, understanding their emotional needs and creating safe spaces for open communication.

BUILDING A BETTER NIGERIA THROUGH FAMILY VALUES:

The future of Nigeria cannot be separated from the condition of its families. Communities with strong family values often experience lower levels of social instability and higher levels of civic responsibility. Children who grow up in supportive environments are more likely to become responsible adults who contribute positively to national development.

This is why Parents' Day should not be viewed merely as a ceremonial celebration. It should serve as a national call to action—a reminder that every parent, guardian, teacher, community leader and policymaker has a role to play in shaping the next generation.

ArtsWorld with Francis Odupte 08023680030

Modernisation and the erosion of traditional culture in Nigerian society

EJEMOGO REBECCA ANWURI

Once upon a time when Adire was not just a fabric, but also served as a symbol of cultural identity, creativity and pride among the Yorubas such that those who couldn't afford to get theirs felt like the world has left them, raising a silent jealousy and envy within them, or was it the period where women had pride in plaiting their natural hair of Shuku and Kolesé (all back) or the period where men boast about their occupation of hunting games and farming, or the period where elders filled with the well of wisdom are very much reliable in seeking answers to questions, where festivals are something people look out for and also a time where respect for elders is not only written on the hearts, but expressed through the gesticulation of greetings, and also an era when people valued their languages. But it is rather unfortunate that those values that people once cherished are gradually fading out due to the emergence of a concept called 'modernisation'.

While modernisation is credited for introducing technology, education, urbanisation as well as globalisation, it has created a subtle effect of gradually replacing the true essence of our culture and tradition. This has raised a question on if modernity or modernisation has helped to build or tarnish the existence of the importance of traditional culture in the Nigerian society.

Modernization is the process of updating systems, methods, or appearances to make them contemporary and suitable for present-day needs. It encompasses and blurs the line between the outdated and the current method on how things should be done.

Traditional Culture refers to the shared beliefs, values, customs, practices, and social behaviours of a particular group or society, passed down from one generation to the other, which includes language, art, music, rituals, festivals, social norms etc. which gives the culture its unique sense of historical identity.

Modernisation has led to the innovation of modern technology, quality education, as well as improved communication especially with the advent of social media and globalisation. Despite the advantages it presents, there are short-comings that have contributed to the gradual loss of traditional culture.

One major effect of modernisation is the loss of native languages. It is no longer news that people take pride in their ability to be able to communicate effectively in foreign accents and languages and become ashamed to do the same to their mother tongues because they now see their indigenous languages as outdated. This was as a result of the early contact of these cultures with foreign countries which was as a result of colonialism. For instance, Nigeria was colonised by Britain, and she ended up adopting the English language as part of



X

Despite the shortcomings of modernisation, it has contributed immensely to the advancement of society especially in a developing one like Nigeria in terms of better education. Modernisation is what resulted in the 6-3-3-4 system of education she now practices t has also improved school infrastructure in both Government and private sector, training teachers, producing a young, skilled workforce ready for global Markets and also expanded access to quality education, especially for Students in remote parts of the country

the predominant languages such that there are limited opportunities for those who cannot communicate with it, hence, the younger generations met such occurrences and decided to run with it. In fact it has grown worse because most parents don't know their native language and talkless of teaching their children. The implication is that it has successfully bred a generation who will not value what their culture has to offer because it has been watered down.

Changes in dressing and lifestyle are another gruesome effect of mod-

ernisation. In the past, people listened to traditional music, anticipated entertainment like Cultural dance, and appeared with decent hairstyles, dressing and behaviour. All these have gradually been replaced by modernity such that people who still hold onto them are called 'archaic', especially in this present generation of the Gen-Zs. For instance workplaces or corporate organisations demand that their staff appear in Corporate wear such as Suit, tie, blouse and trousers which demean cultural fabrics like Adire, Ankara, George, Lace and even Kam-

pala. Indecent dressing has ravaged the society such that the delicate parts of the body which ought to be covered by clothing are opened for public display without having an iota of feeling remorseful. Some hairstyles like dreadlocks if not properly presented can mistake the carrier of such for a mad person. These and many more have heightened the rate of social vices and crimes in the Nigerian society.

Furthermore, it has contributed to the decline in traditional values. The widely used social media and modern entertainment has disrupted certain traditional practices in the sense that it has incurred loss of respect for elders i.e. On social media platforms especially on X, we will realise that the shortcomings of any government, pastor or society authorities are being dragged, insulted and disrespected without any form of fear or honour. Also, people have thwarted the original way of greeting in their culture to adopting the modernised way of 'handshakes, hugs, and pecks on the cheeks' which when compared to the Yorubas is totally different where the male will prostrate on the floor, and the ladies are on their knees.

Despite the shortcomings of modernisation, it has contributed immensely to the advancement of society especially in a developing one like Nigeria in terms of better education. Modernisation is what resulted in the 6-3-3-4 system of education she now practices. It has also improved school infrastructure in both Government and private sector, training teachers, producing a young, skilled workforce ready for global Markets and also ex-

panded access to quality education, especially for Students in remote parts of the country.

Furthermore, modernisation has enhanced communication through the widespread use of Smartphones, social media platforms i.e WhatsApp, Twitter now known as X, Instagram, TikTok etc. which has helped to strengthen the connection of persons within and outside the country. Businesses also have benefitted from it such that the barrier of having clients and contracts has been blurred to the extent they can reach out to their partners within or outside their geographical location through mail, zoom or google meet which has countered the 'face-to-face' method of conversation.

In addition, modernisation has contributed to the economic growth of societies. It has helped to cause a shift in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth through sectors like Oil and gas, e-Commerce, entertainment, Content creation, telecommunications, and most importantly created job opportunities for Nigerian youths.

As much as modernisation has contributed a lot to the development of societies, it should erode the place of culture, instead these cultures should be upheld with high-esteem and preserved for the generations to come because it helps to give identity, preserves history, promotes unity, and connects generations. Hence, societies should guard against losing their identity because modernisation is expected to improve our lives, and not erase the value of our traditions which define who we are.

ArtsWorld



ORLANDO MARTINS

The First Nigeria Hollywood Star



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Orlando Martins: Pathfinder and a blueprint of Nigerian film industry

DAVIDSON IMOSIME IZEGAEGBE

In a country where history is non-existent and politicians don't celebrate history and those that made history, certainly, people like late Pa Orlando Martins would live in the labyrinth of shadows. It is a culture that has become a philosophy within the doors of Nigeria powers, irrespective of who walks through it adorned with all elements of principalities and powers. It is a cultural philosophy, that even an emeritus professor of history would be affected by once given any form of political powers to preside over in Nigeria. However, history will remember us for not remembering history.

However, do not forget that history has it long before now, before the frantic hum of digital cameras seized and defined the bustling streets of Lagos, Benin City, Enugu, Asaba, Kano, Port Harcourt, Ogun etc, before the term Nollywood was coined and became a global shorthand for African cultural industry, and well before the contemporary generation of Nigerian filmmakers began commanding multi-million-Naira streaming budgets, there was a voice. Not a still small voice. It was a voice that did not merely speak but reverberated. It was a rich, cavernous, unforgettable baritone that commanded the attention of London's West End, Hollywood's elite directors, and post-war global cinema audiences. That voice belonged to late Pa Orlando Martins.

Born Emmanuel Alhandu Martins in Lagos on December 8, 1899, this creative titan of the screen would go on to become Nigeria's first globally recognised film icon. I got to hear that name and lucky to watch one of his films as a kid. I was more concerned with seeing an African on screen acting far better than his white colleagues. To me, I saw him as a better actor. Whether it's because I could relate with him made the difference then is a matter for another day. Yet, to view Martins merely as a historical footnote or a trivia answer to the question of "Who was Nigeria's first international actor?" is to fundamentally misunderstand his legacy. Pa Orlando Martins was not just a participant in global cinema; he was a creative pioneer who actively laid the psychological, artistic, and structural foundations for what would eventually become the Nigerian film industry. Many may argue this same way many argued with me as a kid that no Nigerian actor has acted on the international film stage. They even attempted to convince me then that Pa

Orlando was an American. However, his influence then led to an enduring blueprint for creative resilience, material authenticity, and the uncompromising pursuit of cultural dignity and philosophy.

To understand Martins' unique but profound influence on Nigerian cinema, one must first look at the crucible in which his artistry was forged for the world to see. Leaving Nigeria as a teenager in 1917 amidst the geopolitical chaos of World War I, Martins however, survived the harsh, racially stratified realities of post-Edwardian London through sheer, unyielding grit. Many within his age group then would understand how difficult it was for a man who is not white skinned to attract attention from these people. He tried many things just to survive the harsh reality of life as a growing man. He was a stoker in the Merchant Marine, a night watchman, a circus snake-handler, and even a professional wrestler billing himself as "Black Butcher Johnson."

When Pa Orlando finally broke into the British entertainment scene as an extra in the 1920s, you can imagine how the cinematic landscape was deeply hostile to this African persona. The reasons are not hidden because, the global screen then was widely dominated by colonial narratives that reduced Black characters to subservient, fearful, or comical caricatures. These Black characters were nameless extras whose sole purpose was to validate the colonial gaze for all to see without them being seen.

Martins as a growing up youth with the Nigerian spirit was resolute. He refused to bow to the limitations harshly facing him. With his towering physical frame and an innate, regal composure, he subverted every reductive script handed to him the Nigerian way. By the time he co-starred with African-American icon Paul Robeson in *Sanders of the River* (1935) and *Toussaint Louverture* (1936), Martins was already modelling a new kind of Black performative presence, the type that steeped in gravity, intelligence, and an undeniable command of the space he boldly occupied.

His breakthrough as "Blossom" in the 1949 Hollywood film *The Hasty Heart*, alongside Ronald Reagan and Patricia Neal, proved to the world that an African actor could carry the emotional weight of a major Western production. That in itself was a huge achievement. In a famous 1947 poll, British filmgoers voted him among England's top 15 favourite actors. Now he was a voice not hidden in the shadows anymore, so the Britons

instantly laid claim to him. He was to them now a British actor instead of a Nigerian actor. This was more than a personal triumph for him and to Africans. We may not know it, but his resilience was a radical disruption of the global cinematic hierarchy. It sent a powerful message back home to Nigeria, that the African identity was no longer a caricature but a profound cinematic subject.

When Martins made the definitive choice to return home to a newly independent Nigeria in 1959, he did not return merely to retire and bask in the twilight of his international fame. Instead, he brought back a wealth of institutional knowledge, a sophisticated understanding of international style and process of production standards, and an unwavering commitment to nurturing local talent.

The 1960s and 1970s were creatively transitional and formative decades for Nigerian cultural expression. As our country Nigeria grappled with defining its post-colonial identity, Nigerian arts became the battlefield for self-determination. I can still remember a slim part of that history as a little boy. Pa Martins, maybe without his knowing it, became the vital bridge between the classical international stage and the burgeoning Nigerian celluloid era. He immediately integrated into the local creative ecosystem, offering mentorship to younger actors, playwrights, and directors who were trying to build a distinct Nigeri-

an cinematic voice from scratch. How can such a voice be silenced?

His later career choices in Nigeria perfectly mirror this commitment to national self-definition. He chose to collaborate with the country's leading literary and theatrical minds then. In 1970, he starred as Dr. Gbenga in the film adaptation of Wole Soyinka's biting political satire, *Kongi's Harvest*, directed by Ossie Davis. As if inspired or motivated by the previous production, the following year, he delivered a masterful performance as Obierika in the screen adaptation of Chinua Achebe's seminal masterpiece, *Things Fall Apart*. By intentionally anchoring these foundational Nigerian cinematic texts with his legendary presence, Pa Martins did something extraordinary. He deliberately legitimised the young domestic film industry. He clearly demonstrated that the same actor who had shared screens with Audrey Hepburn in *The Nun's Story* (1959) had found the greatest creative fulfilment in interpreting the unique stories of his own people.

Aside from his formidable acting talent, Orlando Martins' influence extends deeply into the aesthetics and material culture of Nigerian filmmaking. Having worked in major British and American studio systems, Martins understood that cinema is a visual language where every prop, every costume, and every set design speaks volumes about the dignity of the subjects on screen.

During his prime years in European cinema, Martins frequently fought behind the scenes against the inaccurate, generalised, and souvenet degrading set dressings used to depict African life. When he returned to Nigeria, he championed a philosophy of scenographic authenticity. He urged local filmmakers and theatre practitioners to look inward, to meticulously study and preserve the material culture of Nigeria's diverse ethnic groups, and to present them on screen without Western filters.

This insistence on visual truth heavily influenced the art direction of early Nigerian celluloid experiments. Martins understood that if Africans did not control the visual texture of their own stories, the world would continue to view them through a distorted lens. Today, as contemporary Nigerian filmmakers invest heavily in period pieces, detailed set styling, and authentic cultural representation, they are walking a path that Pa Orlando cleared decades ago. He taught the industry that our material culture—our attire, our architecture, our sacred spaces—is not mere exotic

background decoration; it is the very soul of the narrative.

Pa Martins proved that to be globally relevant, an artist does not need to erase their identity, since their identity is their greatest asset. He was a founding member of efforts in the UK to establish a formal foundation to showcase Black talent which demanded multifaceted, dignified roles at a time when such advocacy was dangerous to one's career. This same spirit of collective advocacy and global ambition is the lifeblood of today's Nigerian entertainment industry. The tenacity Martins displayed while wrestling as "Black Butcher Johnson" just to pay for his heater auditions is the exact same hustle that fuels the modern independent Nigerian filmmaker. We may not know this but Pa Orlando bequeathed to the Nigerian creative industry a legacy of defiance, a bold refusal to accept the margins, to be silenced, but a deep belief that African talent belongs on the grandest stages of human storytelling.

Sadly, Pa Orlando Martins passed away on September 25, 1985, at the age of 85 in Lagos, and left behind a nation that was just beginning to realise the full potential of the cinematic seed he had planted. His recognition as a Member of the Order of the Niger (MON) in 1982 and his honorary life membership in the British Actors' Equity Association were well-deserved laurels for a life spent in service of artistic excellence.

For the modern Nigerian film stakeholder in the African creative economy, whether a film festival director curating films for international audiences, a playwright formatting a script for maximum emotional impact, a film award organiser or a researcher analysing the strategic growth of regional cinema, always remember that Pa Orlando Martins remains the ultimate reference point. Ultimately, he is the North Star of Nigerian cinema.

As the Nigerian film industry continues to evolve, adapting to new technologies and conquering new creative frontiers, it must constantly look back to the towering figure of Pa Orlando. His legacy is a timeless reminder that cinema, at its absolute best, is an act of cultural freedom. He went out into the world as a lone pioneer, conquered the global screen on his own terms, and returned home to hand the torch to the generations that followed. It is a torch that will continue to burn brightly forever, illuminating the creative path for African actors and their unique stories to capture the imagination of the entire world.

His legacy is a timeless reminder that cinema, at its absolute best, is an act of cultural freedom. He went out into the world as a lone pioneer, conquered the global screen on his own terms, and returned home to hand the torch to the generations that followed

INTERVIEW

Why Edo State is combating erosion, flooding with community solutions —Okoyomoh

SEBASTINE EBHUOMHAN

The government of Edo State has adopted community-led solutions for environmental degradation.

Disclosing the resolution, Chief Executive Officer of Edo State Flood, Erosion and Watershed Management (EdoFEWMA), who doubles as the Coordinator of Edo State's Nigeria Climate Adaption—Erosion and Watershed (NEWMAP—EIB) Project, Honourable Mohammed Bawa Okoyomoh, said Localised Adaptation (LA) and Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EA) present the best community tools for forging environmental resilience against degradation just as they help to sustain achievable success in the management of the environment.

The Edo State government under Senator Monday Okpebholo's leadership has prioritised investment in flood and erosion control, demonstrated by its prompt commitment to counterpart funding obligations required for the execution of Edo State NEWMAP-EIB Project. The government has also embarked on a continuous desilting and maintenance of drainage systems across the three senatorial districts, accelerate construction works at key flood and erosion control sites, while rebuilding impassable roads with plans to expand interventions to further mitigate flooding risks in the state.

Commending Governor Okpebholo for the political will that aimed at preventing erosion and flooding as a core mandate of the state's SHINE Agenda that aligns with President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's Renewed Hope Agenda's sustainable management of the environment, Okoyomoh said, "The theme: From Vulnerability to Resilience: Empowering Communities to Combat Climate-driven Floods and Gully Erosion capture the urgent transformation we are driving through the NEWMAP-EIB Project, which is a shift from helplessness to empowerment and from disaster response to climate resilience."

Climate change continues to accelerate land degradation across Nigeria. In Edo State, the problem is characterised by fragile soil and high rainfall that manifests as severe flooding and gully erosion.

Climate models predict frequent and intense rainfall, leading to concentrated runoff that overwhelms drainage systems, destroys infrastructure, and endangers lives. Poor land management practices like deforestation, improper waste disposal, and unsustainable farming further compound the problem.

"The narrative is shifting from government-centric to community-led solutions. While government-engineered projects are crucial, the most sustainable line of defence lies with our communities. We must highlight the role of Localised Adaptation and Ecosystem-based Adaptation as tools for resilience. Community ownership is the foundation of resilience.



HON. MOHAMMED BAWA OKOYOMOH

Communities possess invaluable local knowledge of drainage paths, soil types, and vulnerable areas. Their active participation ensures sustainability and long-term project success," Okoyomoh explained.

The executive coordinator listed some community-led prevention strategies to be harnessed as: Tree Planting, Agroforestry, Contour Barriers and Vetiver Grassing, Drainage Maintenance, Sustainable Land Use, and Rainwater Harvesting and Runoff Diversion.

Tree Planting: Planting especially deep-rooted indigenous species that stabilise soil and slopes.

Agroforestry: Integrating trees with crops to reduce surface runoff.

Contour Barriers and Vetiver Grassing: Creating natural terraces to slow water flow and prevent erosion.

Drainage Maintenance: Clearing surrounding drainage channels and keeping them free from waste, so as to complement government desilting efforts.

Sustainable Land Use: Encouraging cover cropping and avoiding cultivation on steep slopes.

Rainwater Harvesting and Runoff Diversion: Turning floodwater from a threat into a valuable resource for dry-season use.

"Climate resilience is built from the

ground up. The most successful and sustainable defence mechanisms are those built upon local knowledge and executed through community ownership.

"The link is undeniable: climate-driven intense rainfall is often exacerbated by poor land manage-



The link is undeniable: climate-driven intense rainfall is often exacerbated by poor land management, including deforestation, improper waste disposal and unsustainable farming. We must move beyond reactive disaster management to proactive and preventive measures, rooted in the communities.

ment, including deforestation, improper waste disposal and unsustainable farming. We must move beyond reactive disaster management to proactive and preventive measures, rooted in the communities," Okoyomoh further explained.

The government called for media support and partnership to make a success of the intervention shift.

"The goal today is to shift the media narrative from reactive disaster reporting to proactive storytelling that empowers citizens. The media serves as a vital bridge that helps educate residents, provide motivation and amplify community-driven success stories. By championing these local efforts, the media can provide the blueprint and motivation to secure a safer, more sustainable future for our vulnerable communities," he underlined.

As a call to action, the government specifically wants the media to: Amplify Local Voices, Shift Focus from Disaster Reporting to Preventive and Solution-based Reporting, Simplify the Science by Translating the Complex Link, Promote Accountability, Educate on Policy, Spotlight Farmers, and Promote Civic Responsibility.

- **Amplify Local Voices:** Seek and tell the stories of communities successfully preventing floods through simple, low-cost innovations.

- **Shift Focus from Disaster Reporting to Preventive, Solution-Based Reporting:** Highlight what communities are doing right to educate others, not just the aftermath of destruction. Raise awareness among communities about everyday practices that worsen flooding and erosion risks.

- **Simplify the Science:** Translate the complex link between climate change, flooding, and erosion into simple messages that the average resident can understand.

- **Promote Accountability:** Track both government actions and community

commitments to ensure the sustainability of flood and erosion interventions.

- **Educate on Policy:** Help the public see how local actions align with national and global climate adaptation goals.

- **Spotlight Farmers:** Showcase how local farmers are implementing climate-smart agricultural practices that promote environmental sustainability and secure livelihoods.

- **Promote Civic Responsibility:** Educate residents on the direct link between improper waste disposal habits and major flooding disasters, highlighting the role they can play in the fight against floods and erosion.

"Edo State stands at the forefront of climate adaptation and environmental resilience. But no government can achieve sustainability alone. It requires the active participation of the people, with the media as a key catalyst. Together with the state government, we can turn the story of Edo from vulnerability to that of resilience, from erosion to regeneration, and from fear to foundation."

Foreign

NEWS

**MISSILE AND DRONE ATTACK:**

The Strait of Hormuz remains blocked as attacks continue despite ceasefire negotiations

US says it struck Iranian radar sites as Kuwait reports missile and drone attacks

The US has said it struck Iranian military sites over the weekend while Tehran said it responded by targeting an American base, marking the third known escalations in a week around the Strait of Hormuz.

US Central Command (Centcom) said it launched "self-defence strikes" in response to "aggressive Iranian actions", which it said included a US drone being shot down over international waters.

Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) said it had targeted an air base used by US forces for an attack on southern Iran.

Meanwhile Kuwait said its air defence system had confronted "hostile" missiles and drones - with its foreign ministry later condemning "heinous and repeated Iranian attacks".

Trump urged his critics to "sit back and relax" in a post on

Truth Social early on Monday, saying it would "all work out well in the end". He said Iran "really wants to make a deal, and it will be a good one for the USA".

The strikes mark the latest exchange between the two sides after negotiations on a deal to end their months-long war failed to advance over the weekend, with US media reporting Trump had requested changes to its terms.

The changes are related to the Strait of Hormuz shipping channel and the removal of highly enriched uranium, the BBC's US news partner CBS News reported. The White House did not respond to a request for comment.

On Monday, Iran's foreign ministry spokesman said the US was "constantly changing its views and putting forward new or contradictory demands", which he said would naturally

"prolong negotiations".

The country's chief negotiator had said on Sunday that Tehran would not agree to any deal unless Iranian rights were fully secured.

The US military said it had on Saturday and Sunday conducted "self-defence strikes on Iranian radar and command and control sites for drones" in the city of Goruk, near Iran's southern coast, and Qeshm, an island in the Strait of Hormuz.

In a post on X, Centcom said US fighters struck the Iranian military's air defences, a ground control station and two drones that it said "posed a clear threat to ships transiting through regional waters". No American personnel were injured in the attacks, it said.

Iran's foreign ministry spokesman said the strikes had been a violation of the ceasefire.

Iran attacks damage 20 US military sites since start of war, satellite images show

Iran has damaged 20 US military sites since the start of the war, satellite images and videos analysed by BBC Verify show, suggesting the attacks are more extensive than publicly acknowledged.

Iran has targeted key facilities across eight countries in the Middle East since the end of February, causing millions of dollars of damage to state-of-the-art air defence systems, refuelling aircraft and radars.

Tehran has targeted both US bases and shared military facilities in retaliation to the US-Israeli strikes across Iran and Lebanon over the past three months. The Pentagon says it has hit more than 13,000 targets in Iran since the start of Operation Epic Fury.

Mojtaba Khamenei, Iran's supreme leader, has sought to highlight his military's success in striking US facilities. In a statement on Tuesday he claimed the Middle East was no longer a "safe place" for American bases.

While the White House has repeatedly claimed that Iran's military has been almost wiped out, analysts said that the damage seen at US facilities suggests that Tehran's counter-attacks have been more precise and extensive than American officials have previously acknowledged.

A US defence official declined to comment on BBC Verify's findings, citing "operational security reasons".

The US has sought to limit satellite analysis of the conflict

by requesting Planet, a major provider, to impose an "indefinite" restriction on new images of Iran and most of the Middle East. The company justified the move, saying that it wanted to ensure its images were not used "by adversarial actors to target allied and Nato-partner personnel and civilians".

BBC Verify has used satellite imagery from other international providers combined with older images from Planet to track the damage caused by Iranian attacks. The facilities are in Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Qatar, Kuwait, Iraq, Jordan, Bahrain and Oman. The actual figure could be higher, with some analysts placing the number of bases hit as high as 28.

Huge blast kills dozens in rebel-held village in Myanmar

At least 46 people have been killed and dozens more wounded after an explosion in a village in a region of Myanmar under insurgent control, rescue teams have told the BBC.

A rescue worker in Kaung Tat, a village in Namkham Township in Shan State, near the Chinese border, said six children including a one-year-old toddler were among the dead.

The blast is said to have damaged around 200 homes in Kaung Tat and another 100 in the nearby Pan Lone village.

The Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA), which controls the area and has been fighting the military junta, said explosives kept in a warehouse for use in local mining operations had ignited, causing the blast.

A source familiar with the situation on the ground previously told the BBC at least 55 people had died.

The bodies of all 46 victims, including three Chinese nationals, were cremated on Sunday evening, with rescue operations expected to resume on Monday.

Around 74 injured people were transferred to the nearby Namkham General Hospital for treatment, rescue teams added.

The "accidental explosion" occurred at around 12:00 local time (05:30 GMT) on Sunday, the TNLA said.

"Because of this explosion, many local villagers lost their lives and suffered injuries and damage to their homes," the group said,

without providing details.

Footage from the scene shows a vast crater of earth and rubble surrounded by shattered buildings, with smoke still drifting from charred debris and twisted trees.

Taking to social media, one resident said some villagers initially believed the blast was caused by an air strike.

"By sheer luck, my phone saved my life," the resident wrote.

"I was sitting in my bedroom eating noodles and looking at my phone. If I had been eating in the kitchen, I probably would not be alive today."

The resident, who said she had suffered a minor leg injury and her own home had been destroyed, described scenes of panic and grief in the aftermath of the blast.

"People were crying, calling out for their parents," she wrote.

"It felt as if the world had come to an end."

She questioned why a facility containing explosives had been allowed to operate close to residential areas, saying families of those killed would not be satisfied unless the authorities provided a full explanation.

According to the TNLA, the facility contained gelignite stored by the group's economic department for mining purposes.

An investigation is under way to determine how the material was detonated, the group said.

The TNLA is one of the most powerful ethnic armed groups opposed to the junta in Myanmar, formerly known as Burma.

Israel PM orders strikes on Beirut suburbs as Hezbollah conflict escalates

Israel's prime minister has ordered attacks on the southern suburbs of Lebanon's capital, Beirut, as its conflict with the Iran-backed armed group Hezbollah escalates.

Benjamin Netanyahu said "terror targets" in the Hezbollah stronghold of Dahieh would be struck in response to its rocket and drone attacks on Israeli civilians and other violations of a ceasefire announced in April that has failed to end the fighting.

Soon afterwards, there were traffic jams on roads out of the suburbs as many families tried to flee to safety.

A senior Lebanese government official said it was relying on US mediation efforts to pressure Israel to end its own violations and prevent further civilian casualties.

On Sunday, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio proposed a plan for "gradual de-escalation" to Netanyahu and Lebanon's president, according to an American official.

In a joint statement released on Monday morning, Israel's prime minister and defence minister said they had ordered the Israeli military to carry out strikes on Dahieh "following the Hezbollah terrorist organ-

isation's repeated and ongoing violations of the ceasefire in Lebanon and its attacks against our civilians and cities".

They gave no further details and there were no immediate evacuation orders issued by the Israeli military - a move that usually precedes Israeli aerial attacks.

But families, crammed into cars stuffed with suitcases, blankets and whatever belongings they could carry, streamed out of the suburbs in response, joining thousands fleeing towards the mountains as fears of further violence mounted.

Two parents and their two children were squeezed on to a single scooter. Other vehicles carried several generations packed together, with babies sitting on their parents' laps, clutching small toys as they crawled through the gridlock.

Few drivers wanted to stop and talk, anxious not to hold up the traffic and focused on reaching safety.

But almost everyone who slowed down enough to speak said they were prepared to stand by Hezbollah, while also doing whatever they could to protect their loved ones from the threat of further Israeli attacks.

The Israeli military has struck

Beirut twice since the ceasefire between Israel and Lebanon came into force on 16 April, most recently on Thursday.

But that is a huge reduction on what went before, with reports that the White House has been pressuring Israel to limit its military action in Beirut to avoid jeopardising efforts to strike a broader deal to end the war between the US, Israel and Iran.

Iran, which has long provided Hezbollah with significant ideological, military and financial backing, has said any agreement must include peace in Lebanon, too.

Lebanon was drawn into the war on 2 March, when Hezbollah launched rockets into Israel in retaliation for an Israeli strike that killed Iran's supreme leader. Israel responded with an air campaign across Lebanon and a ground invasion in the south, which has been escalating in recent weeks, even as the strikes on Beirut became far less frequent.

At least 3,412 people have been killed in Lebanon since the start of the war, according to the country's health ministry. Its figures do not distinguish between combatants and civilians.

NEWS**Foreign****Ethiopia election under way, but not everyone can vote**

Polls have opened in Ethiopia's general election as conflict rages in parts of the country, meaning many people will not be able to vote.

In fact, the whole northern region of Tigray, which has been trying to recover from a brutal civil war that ended in 2022, has been totally excluded from the poll.

It is the seventh election since the downfall of the military regime in 1991 - an upheaval that led to Eritrea's secession two years later - and it takes place as Ethiopia's relations with its northern neighbour are once again dangerously fraught.

The media is tightly regulated and many organisations, including the BBC, have not been given press accreditation.

Who is likely to win?

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed - although he is not directly elected. Voters elect representatives to the 547-member parliament and the party that secures at least 274 seats earns the right to form the next government to lead the country for the next five years.

Abiy, 49, came to power in 2018 following widespread anti-government protests against the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), a coalition - dominat-

ed by politicians from Tigray - that had ruled since 1991.

He went on to dissolve the EPRDF, of which he was a part, and replace it with his Prosperity Party, a more centralised and less federal form of governing.

Prof Merera Gurdina, a veteran opposition politician and member of the Oromo Federalist Congress, alleges the upcoming election is the least competitive in Ethiopia's recent history.

"We are participating symbolically because the law says you cannot boycott elections consecutively. We are participating, mainly to avoid deregistration," he told the BBC.

When Abiy first assumed office, he was hailed as a champion of democracy and press freedom after releasing hundreds of politicians and journalists from prison.

He was awarded the 2019 Nobel Peace Prize mainly for bringing an end to the 20-year military stalemate with neighbouring Eritrea.

Seven years later things could not be more different.

How did Abiy blot his copy-book?

Critics accuse his government of suppressing dissent, forcing opponents into exile and arresting political rivals.

UK wins court case over collapsed Rwanda asylum deal

The UK will not have to pay Rwanda millions of pounds over the collapsed asylum agreement that was cancelled by Keir Starmer shortly after he took office, an international court has ruled.

The Rwandan government had sought to sue the UK for more than £100m, saying it had breached the terms of the deal.

Signed by the previous Conservative government, it was meant to see the UK pay Rwanda to host asylum seekers who had arrived illegally in the UK.

Lawyers representing the UK during the three-day hearing in the Netherlands had argued that it was "entirely logical" the plan would be scrapped when Labour came to power and "simple common sense" that no further payments would be due.

They also denied the UK breached parts of the deal.

"Rwanda is not entitled to any of the forms of relief it seeks," they told the Hague's Permanent Court of Arbitration.

Emmanuel Ugirashebuta, Rwanda's minister of justice and attorney general, previously told the court the country had incurred "significant costs" preparing for the partnership, but the UK "then sought to walk away from its legal obligations".

He also said the UK "did not do Rwanda a courtesy of informing it in advance" that it was scrapping the deal, and leaders were "left to read about this development in the media".

Former Prime Minister Rishi Sunak introduced the scheme as a deterrent to those looking to illegally cross the English Channel in small boats.

The plan had first been announced in 2022 by then-prime minister Boris Johnson. It was designed so that asylum seekers arriving in the UK "illegally" from a safe country, such as France, would be sent to Rwanda and have their claims processed there.

If successful, they could be granted refugee status and allowed to stay in Rwanda.

The first flight that had been scheduled to take off under the plan in 2022 was grounded minutes before take-off due to an intervention from the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR), which triggered a series of legal challenges in London courts.

The scheme faced a number of legal battles before it was ultimately scrapped.

A voluntary removals programme was subsequently announced in 2024, under which migrants whose claims were rejected were offered up to £3,000 to move to the east African country.

Only four people were voluntarily removed to Rwanda.

Dropping the scheme was one of Labour's manifesto pledges ahead of the 2024 general election, and when Starmer came into office he declared the plan "dead and buried".

Responding to the court's decision, a government spokesperson said the UK had "robustly" defended its position.

Five patients recover from Ebola in DR Congo and leave hospital

Health authorities in the Democratic Republic of Congo are celebrating after five patients, who had Ebola and now recovered, were allowed to leave hospital.

The current outbreak is suspected to have killed almost 250 people. But those infected can get better and officials stress that people should seek medical help if they believe they have contracted the virus.

On Sunday, there was a ceremony for a group of four nurses who were discharged from a hospital in Bunia, the provincial capital of Ituri, the epicentre of the outbreak.

"You are living stories that this outbreak can be stopped," World Health Organization (WHO) chief Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus told the four on a visit to Bunia.

"We were really demoralised

because we knew that at some point... we were going to die. That was it... I'm telling you, if you have never been isolated, you will not know that it's not easy," Nurse Etienne Ezo told the Reuters news agency as he reflected on his experience.

The first survivor, a laboratory worker, to have recovered left hospital last week.

Health workers are on the frontline in the battle against the spread of the virus and are often the most at risk.

"It pains me to see health workers who have already died because of Ebola while serving others... this is the risk which comes with the profession, but your commitment and coming back again to serve means a lot," Tedros told the four nurses, three men and one woman, at Sunday's ceremony where they all received certificates

recognising their recovery.

"This encouraging milestone bears witness to the effectiveness of field interventions: early detection, medical care, contact tracing and community engagement," DR Congo's Institute of Public Health wrote on social media.

Its director, Dr Mwamba Kazadi, described the recoveries as a victory worth celebrating, adding that early detection and strong care make a difference.

Tedros has called on communities to work with medical staff after some residents attacked health centres over strict burial rules. The bodies of those suspected of having died of Ebola are not allowed to be handled by grieving relatives, regulations which clash with local traditions.

In a joint statement with

the Congolese government on Sunday, he said local communities are "at the heart of the solution" and that "success" in their response depends on their trust and engagement.

"Persistent challenges include early detection and isolation of cases, contact tracing, safe and dignified burials, robust infection prevention and control in health facilities, and strong community awareness.

"The Government and WHO call on all communities to continue adopting protective behaviours, including regular hand hygiene, early care seeking in health facilities, and sharing accurate information."

There are now more than 1,000 suspected Ebola cases in the DR Congo, and at least 246 deaths. Neighbouring Uganda has reported nine confirmed cases and one death.



RECOVERED NURSES FROM EBOLA:

Makati Tagirabo (L) and Baraka Bulambula (R) were two of the nurses who had recovered from Ebola in this latest outbreak.

France seized sanctioned Russian oil tanker with UK help, Macron says

France intercepted a sanctioned oil tanker suspected of being part of Russia's so-called shadow fleet on Sunday with UK support, French President Emmanuel Macron has said.

Officers boarded the Tagor in the Atlantic, which maritime authorities said had been flying a false flag when it was detained around 400 nautical miles west of Brittany.

"It is unacceptable for ships to circumvent international sanctions, violate the law of the sea, and fund the war that Russia has been waging against Ukraine," Macron wrote on X.

A British helicopter provided support during the operation, the UK Ministry of

Defence (MoD) told the BBC.

The Kremlin said the "illegal" seizure was "bordering on international piracy".

"Russia is taking measures to ensure the safety of its cargo," said spokesman Dmitry Peskov.

Moscow has been operating a "shadow fleet" of tankers with obscure ownership structures to evade international sanctions imposed on its oil exports since launching its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022.

It is the fourth ship suspected shadow fleet vessel that France has boarded since September 2025.

Macron said the operation, which took place in international waters, had been undertaken with allies including the

UK "in strict compliance with the law of the sea".

An MoD spokesperson said a helicopter which had been on board HMS Somerset provided "tracking and monitoring in support of the French operation".

"Alongside our allies, we are stepping up our response to shadow vessels - to choke off the funds that fuel Putin's illegal invasion of Ukraine."

"These vessels, which fail to adhere to the most basic rules of maritime navigation, also pose a threat to the environment and to everyone's safety," he said.

In a video shared by the French president, armed naval officers could be seen boarding the tanker via a helicopter. The

BBC has not verified the footage.

Previously, French authorities had allowed these ships to continue operating after their owners paid fines but have since vowed to block them.

UK Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer announced in March he similarly had granted permission for the UK military to board sanctioned Russian ships.

But almost 200 Russian "shadow fleet" vessels had entered UK waters as of 11 May since the prime minister threatened to intercept them in mid-March, BBC Verify analysis suggests.

The MoD said at the time it was "disrupting and deterring" shadow fleet vessels, without providing specific details.

Feature

The guns in our Classrooms: Nigeria's insecurity crisis and the children paying the price

GRACE IJEOMA UMEH

O RIIRE, OYO STATE

On May 15, 2026, the quiet farming communities of Esinele, Yamota, and Alawusa in Oriire LGA were shattered. At dawn, gunmen stormed homes and a local primary school. By sunset, 45 people were missing. Among them were 3 teachers and 12 pupils aged 6 to 14. The youngest abductee was 2 years old, taken from his mother's arms.

Three weeks later, Amotekun and police are still combing the forests. Schools are closed. Parents sleep with one eye open. The Yoruba Council of Elders says the kidnapers want to speak only to Governor Seyi Makinde. The children remain in the bush.

This is not an isolated incident. It is Nigeria's new normal. From Katsina to Zamfara, from Niger to Kaduna, from Borno to Oyo, insecurity has moved from headlines to homesteads. And children — the future — are now the currency of terror.

This feature examines the anatomy of Nigeria's insecurity crisis, why schools and children are now prime targets, and what must be done before another generation is lost.



PROTESTERS OF THE OYO STATE KIDNAPPING

1. THE SCALE OF THE CRISIS: FROM BOKO HARAM TO BANDITS

Insecurity in Nigeria has evolved in 3 phases.

Phase 1: Insurgency 2009-2015—Boko Haram in the Northeast. Their goal was ideological. Their weapon was terror. The 2014 Chibok abduction of 276 girls announced to the world that schools were no longer safe.

Phase 2: Farmer-Herder Conflicts 2016-2020—Climate change, desertification, and population pressure pushed herders south. Land disputes turned bloody. Benue, Plateau, and Southern Kaduna became killing fields.

Phase 3: Banditry and Kidnapping 2020-2026 — Armed groups in the Northwest and North-Central shifted from ideology to economics. Kidnapping for ransom became a multi-billion-naira industry. The Northwest alone recorded over 4,000 abductions between 2021 and 2025.

Today, the lines are blurred. Some bandits collaborate with insurgents. Some are local youths who picked up guns due to poverty and lack of justice. The result is the same: Nigeria is bleeding.

2. WHY CHILDREN AND TEACHERS ARE NOW TARGETS

Kidnappers have discovered 3 truths:

1. Children attract ransom. Parents, communities, and even government will pay to save children. The emotional pressure is higher than for adults.

2. Schools are soft targets. Unlike banks or government houses, most

rural schools have no fence, no guard, no CCTV. In Katsina, 300 schools are shut because they cannot be protected.

3. Abduction creates chaos. When pupils are taken, schools close. When schools close, parents withdraw children. When children are idle, they become recruits. Terror wins without firing a shot.

In Oyo's Oriire case, the kidnapers specifically targeted a school during morning assembly. Teachers were taken to demoralize the community. Pupils were taken to break the parents. The 2-year-old was taken because "no mother will sleep until her baby is returned."

3. THE HUMAN TOLL: BEYOND THE STATISTICS

Numbers numb us. Stories wake us.

Aisha, 13, Katsina: She was abducted in 2021 from her boarding school. She spent 6 months in the forest. "They fed us once a day. We drank dirty water. I still have nightmares," she says. She returned home but stopped speaking for 8 months. Today she is in therapy, but thousands of girls are not.

Mr. Dele, Teacher, Niger State: He was kidnapped with 27 pupils in 2024. He negotiated with the bandits to release the smallest children first. He was shot in the leg. "I am a teacher. My job is to protect them," he says. He has not returned to class.

Parents of Oriire: In Yamota village, Mrs. Kehinde's twins were taken. She has not eaten properly since. "I keep hearing their voices at night," she says. Fathers have joined search

parties. Mothers have formed prayer groups. The community is traumatized.

Psychologists warn of "collective trauma." Children who witness abductions develop PTSD, anxiety, and fear of school. An entire generation is learning that education is dangerous.

4. THE ROOT CAUSES: WHY THE GUNS KEEP FIRING

Insecurity does not appear from nowhere. It grows from unaddressed problems:

1. Poverty and Unemployment: Many bandits are youths with no jobs, no land, no hope. The National Bureau of Statistics puts youth unemployment at 42.5%. When survival is at stake, crime looks like an option.

2. Weak Security Architecture: Nigeria has 371,000 police officers for 220 million people — 1 officer to 600 citizens. The UN recommends 1 to 450. Rural areas are unpoliced. Response time is slow. Intelligence is weak.

3. Proliferation of Arms: Over 6 million illegal weapons are estimated to be in circulation, according to the National Centre for the Control of Small Arms. Cattle routes, porous borders, and corruption feed the gun market.

4. Breakdown of Justice: When communities see no justice for cattle rustling, land grabbing, or murder, they arm themselves. When court cases take 10 years, jungle justice takes 10 minutes.

5. Climate and Resource Conflict: Desertification in the North pushes herders south. Population growth increases pressure on land. Without

mediation, conflict becomes violence.

5. GOVERNMENT RESPONSE: WHAT HAS WORKED AND WHAT HASN'T

The Federal Government has deployed Operation Hadarin Daji in the Northwest, launched the Safe Schools Initiative, and approved N1.2bn for school fencing and CCTV in Katsina. States like Oyo have activated Amotekun. Borno built the Maiduguri monorail partly to improve mobility and security.

Some successes exist. In Zamfara, peace talks in 2022 reduced killings temporarily. In Borno, "super camps" strategy has pushed Boko Haram from major towns.

But the failures are glaring. Ransom is still being paid, fueling more kidnaps. Schools remain vulnerable. Intelligence is not shared between agencies. And prosecution of sponsors is rare. As Prof. Bulama Bukarti notes, "You cannot kill your way out of insurgency. You must remove the reasons young men pick up guns."

6. THE WAY FORWARD: SECURING CHILDREN, SECURING THE FUTURE

If Nigeria must win this war, it must fight on 4 fronts:

1. Physical Security:
- Fortify schools with fences, guards, and panic buttons. The Safe Schools Initiative must be fully funded.

- Increase police presence in rural areas. Use technology — drones, CCTV, and satellite tracking.

- Disarm and reintegrate bandits who surrender. Prosecute sponsors

and arms dealers.

2. Economic Security:
- Create jobs for youths. Plateau's "Digital Upskill" program for 5000 youths is a model. Kano's solar pumps for farmers is another.

- Support agriculture so rural youths don't see the gun as their only tool.

3. Social Security:
- Rebuild trust between communities and security agencies. Community policing works when locals provide intelligence.

- Address herder-farmer conflicts through mediation and ranching policies.

4. Psychological Security:
- Provide trauma counseling for rescued children and teachers. The mental wounds last longer than physical ones.

- Restore confidence in education. Parents must believe school is safer than staying home.

NO NATION SURVIVES BY SACRIFICING ITS CHILDREN

In Oriire, a mother waits. In Katsina, a classroom is empty. In Borno, a girl who survived Chibok still flinches at loud sounds.

Insecurity is not just a security problem. It is an education problem. An economic problem. A moral problem.

A nation that cannot protect its children cannot build its future. The guns in our classrooms must fall silent. The children must return to school. The teachers must teach without fear.

The Oriire children are still waiting. Nigeria cannot wait any longer.

Developing economies bear the brunt of Middle East conflict

● *as growth slows and inflation rises, UN warns*



THE PROTESTERS

OUR REPORTER

Higher energy costs, weaker trade, and tighter financial conditions weigh on an already subdued global outlook

New York, 19 May 2026 — The crisis in the Middle East has delivered yet another shock to the global economy, slowing growth, reigniting inflationary pressures and heightening uncertainty, according to the World Economic Situation and Prospects as of mid-2026 report.

Global GDP growth is now forecast at 2.5 per cent in 2026—0.2 percentage points below the January projection and well below pre-pandemic norms. A modest recovery is projected at 2.8 per cent in 2027. Solid labour markets, resilient consumer demand, and AI-driven trade and investment in select economies are expected to provide some support, but the downgrade underscores a further weakening of an already subdued global outlook.

The shock is primarily felt in the energy sector—through constrained supply, surging prices, and rising freight and insurance costs—with effects cascading through supply chains and increasing production costs globally. While the surge in prices delivers substantial windfall gains for energy companies, it has intensified cost pressures for households and businesses worldwide. The overall impact will depend on the duration of disruptions in energy markets, leaving the outlook highly uncertain and risks tilted to the downside.

The conflict has halted the glob-

al disinflation trend underway since 2023. In developed economies, inflation is forecast to rise from 2.6 per cent in 2025 to 2.9 per cent in 2026, edging further above central bank targets in most cases. In developing economies, the uptick is sharper: inflation is projected to accelerate from 4.2 per cent to 5.2 per cent, as higher energy, transport and import costs erode real incomes and broaden price pressures across a wide range of goods.

A particular concern is food prices. Fertilizer supplies have been disrupted, pushing up costs, which could reduce crop yields, exerting an upward pressure on food prices.

For central banks, the increasingly uncertain inflation environment poses a dilemma: raising interest rates to contain inflation risks further weakening growth, while standing pat risks allowing price pressures to become entrenched.

Global financial markets have so far remained resilient, absorbing the initial shock in broadly orderly fashion. However, higher energy prices have lifted inflation expectations, driving short-term bond yields higher. For developing countries, this has tightened external financing conditions and weakened fiscal positions, particularly where policy space is already limited.

“The Middle East crisis has intensified strains across developing economies,” said Li Junhua, United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs. “Rising borrowing costs and renewed capital-flow pressures risk deepening debt vulnerabilities and constraining the resources available for sustainable de-

velopment at a critical moment.”

BROAD-BASED SLOWDOWN WITH UNEVEN REGIONAL IMPACTS

The impact of the crisis is highly uneven, with the most severe damage concentrated in Western Asia. Growth in the region is projected to plunge from 3.6 per cent in 2025 to 1.4 per cent in 2026, driven not only by the energy shock but also by direct infrastructure damage and severe disruptions to oil production, trade, and tourism.

Elsewhere, outcomes vary widely, shaped above all by exposure and the capacity to respond. The United States is expected to remain comparatively resilient, with growth projected at 2.0 per cent in 2026, broadly stable from 2025, supported by solid household demand and continued investment in advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence. Europe, by contrast, is more exposed, with heavy reliance on imported energy straining households and businesses. Growth in the European Union is projected to slow from 1.5 per cent in 2025 to 1.1 per cent in 2026, while the United Kingdom faces a steeper moderation, from 1.4 per cent to 0.7 per cent.

In Asia, China’s diversified energy mix, sizable strategic reserves, and proactive policy support are providing an important buffer, with growth projected to moderate from 5.0 per cent in 2025 to 4.6 per cent in 2026. India remains one of the fastest-growing major economies, with output still expected to expand by 6.4 per cent, though the step-down from 7.5 per cent in 2025 underscores

the drag from higher energy import costs and tighter financial conditions.

In Africa, average growth is projected to ease only slightly—from 4.2 per cent in 2025 to 3.9 per cent in 2026—but this masks a deepening divide: oil and gas exporters are benefiting from elevated prices, while net energy importers face rising fiscal pressures from higher fuel and food costs. In Latin America and the Caribbean, most economies are relatively less exposed, yet the region remains on a low-growth trajectory. Growth is forecast to slow from 2.5 per cent in 2025 to 2.3 per cent in 2026, constrained by weak investment and limited policy space.

MIDDLE EAST CRISIS THREATENS DEVELOPMENT GAINS

The downgraded global outlook understates the true scale of the setback. The conflict in the Middle East threatens to reverse hard-won development gains and further slow progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals. Resulting price shocks are eroding food security, real incomes, and productive investment—heightening the risk of lasting social and economic scarring.

Low-income families bear the heaviest burden, as higher food and energy prices take up a larger share of their spending and rising costs outpace wages, increasing poverty. Yet the governments most in need of shielding vulnerable populations are the least equipped to do so: aid flows are declining sharply, rising debt-service costs are crowding out spending on health, education, and social pro-

tection, and fiscal space to respond is severely constrained.

On the environmental front, persistently high energy prices risk a short-term return to carbon-intensive fuels, even as they strengthen the longer-term case for accelerating the shift away from fossil-fuel dependence. Addressing these intersecting threats requires sustained multilateral action, including keeping trade open, expanding concessional finance, and supporting structural transformation. The Sevilla Commitment, the outcome of the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development, provides a critical framework to scale up finance, address debt challenges and support the most vulnerable countries.

RENEWED HEADWINDS TO PRODUCTIVITY GROWTH

Beyond these impacts of the Middle East conflict, the report draws attention to weakening foundations for medium-term growth. Global productivity growth has slowed since the global financial crisis, and current disruptions risk reinforcing this trend by dampening investment and trade flows. Across regions, widening gaps in capital accumulation, skills and innovation are contributing to increasingly uneven performance. Geopolitical fragmentation and constrained fiscal space risk further eroding productivity growth, entrenching existing divergences. Amid these headwinds, artificial intelligence offers significant potential but also poses considerable risks, with gains likely to be concentrated in a limited number of countries.

FEATURE

45 voices silenced: Inside the Oyo teachers and pupils kidnap that shook a nation

GRACE IJEOMA UMEH

IGBOORA, OYO

Mrs. Kehinde Adebayo has not slept in a bed since May 15. She sits on a mat in Yamota village, staring at the door. Her twins, Tolu and Tola, aged 7, were taken from their primary school during morning assembly.

"I packed their lunch that morning," she whispers. "Rice and beans. They love beans. I don't know if they've eaten."

Tolu and Tola are 2 of 45 people abducted by gunmen in Oriire LGA. The victims include 3 teachers, 12 pupils, and 30 farmers. The youngest is 2-year-old David, snatched from his mother's back. The oldest is 67-year-old Baba Sule, a farmer.

Three weeks later, the forest is still holding them. This is the story of those 45 voices — and a nation forced to listen.

THE DAY THE GUNS CAME

It was a Thursday. At 7:40am, pupils at Community Primary School, Esinele, were reciting the national pledge. Teachers Mrs. Funmilayo, Mr. Azeez, and Miss Rachael were taking attendance.

Witnesses say 8 gunmen on motorcycles entered the school compound. They fired into the air. Children screamed. Teachers tried to shield them. In 15 minutes, it was over. The gunmen took everyone they could carry — teachers and pupils — and vanished into the forest bordering Oyo and Kwara.

Simultaneously, another group attacked farms in Yamota and Alawusa, abducting farmers who came to rescue the school.

The local vigilante arrived 40 minutes later. The police came 2 hours later. By then, the trail was cold.

2. THE : FACES, NOT FIGURES

The Teachers:

- Mrs. Funmilayo Adeyemi, 42, taught Primary 3 for 15 years. Known for buying biscuits for poor pupils. Her husband said, "She would rather die than leave her pupils."

- Mr. Azeez Bello, 35, a youth corps member who chose to stay back after service because "these children need me."

- Miss Rachael Olayinka, 28, newly posted. She called her mother every night. The last call was May 14.

The Pupils:

- Tolu and Tola Adebayo, 7, twins who never spent a night apart.

- David Ojo, 2, the baby. He was not yet in school. His mother took him because there was no one to watch him.

- Amina Sule, 10, top of her class. She wanted to be a doctor.

The Farmers: 30 men and women who went to the school when they heard gunshots. They were abducted on the way back.

Each name is a story. Each story is a wound.

3. THE COMMUNITY IN GRIEF

Oriire LGA is a farming community. People grow cassava, maize, and yam. Life was hard but peaceful. That



changed May 15.

Schools closed immediately. Over 2000 pupils are now at home. Parents fear sending children to neighboring towns. "If they can take children in school, where is safe?" asked Baba Kareem, community leader.

Markets are empty. Farms are abandoned. Amotekun and police have set up camps, but the forest is vast. The kidnappers have demanded to speak directly to Governor Makinde. The governor visited May 18 and promised, "We will not rest until every child returns."

Churches and mosques hold daily prayers. Women wear black. Men have formed search parties. But hope is thin.

4. THE KIDNAPPERS: WHO ARE THEY?

Security sources say the group is part of a larger network operating between Oyo, Kwara, and Niger. They are not ideological like Boko Haram.

They are economic. Ransom is their business.

The Yoruba Council of Elders says the kidnappers contacted them, demanding direct talks with the governor. This is unusual. Most bandits negotiate through intermediaries.

Prof. Akintoye of the council said, "They want recognition. They want the government to treat them as power." That makes negotiation dangerous. If government talks, it may encourage more kidnaps. If it refuses, the children suffer.

The FG has sent drones and surveillance aircraft. But the forest terrain is difficult. Rain has washed away tracks.

5. THE NATIONAL ANGLE: OYO IS NOT AN ISLAND

Many Nigerians were shocked that kidnapping reached Oyo. "We thought it was a Northern problem," said a Lagos resident. But insecurity has no boundary.

In 2024, 287 students were abducted in Kuriga, Kaduna. In 2023, 40 students were taken in Zamfara. The pattern is the same: hit schools, take children, demand ransom.

If Oyo is vulnerable, then no state is safe. This has triggered national debate: Should schools be militarized? Should children be armed? Should government pay ransom?

6. THE CHILDREN'S VOICES: WHAT WE KNOW

One child, 9-year-old Musa, escaped on day 3. He told rescuers the captives walk for hours daily. They sleep on leaves. They are beaten if they cry. The baby, David, is carried by a female captive.

Musa said the teachers try to keep the children calm by singing. "Madam Funmi tells us stories so we don't fear," he said before breaking down.

These details haunt parents. Mrs. Kehinde now sings her twins' favorite song every night, hoping they hear it



Farms are abandoned. Amotekun and police have set up camps, but the forest is vast. The kidnappers have demanded to speak directly to Governor Makinde. The governor visited May 18 and promised, "We will not rest until every child returns"

in the forest.

7. THE WAY FORWARD: BRING THEM HOME

What must happen now?

1. Secure Release: Government must use every tool — negotiation, intelligence, force — to bring the 45 home alive. Their lives come first.

2. Justice After: Once children are safe, the kidnappers must be tracked and prosecuted. Impunity breeds more crime.

3. Prevent Repeat: Oriire and similar communities need permanent security posts, school fencing, and early warning systems.

4. Heal the Wounds: When the children return, they will need counseling, food, and safe schools. The community will need rebuilding.

Governor Makinde has said, "No ransom, but no child left behind." That is a hard line. But every parent in Oriire is praying he finds a way.

45 REASONS TO ACT

The 45 abducted in Oriire are not just statistics. They are Tolu and Tola, who love beans. They are baby David, who should be learning to walk, not walk in chains. They are Mrs. Funmilayo, who bought biscuits for poor pupils.

Until they return, Nigeria is incomplete.

We must bring them home. Then we must make sure no other community writes this story again.

● Football ● Athletics ● Golf ● Basketball ● Tennis ● Boxing

PFC round 16: Edo Queens set to tackle Delta Queens FC

KEHINDE OSAGIEDE

Former WAFU-Champions Edo Queens FC of Benin City are set to confront their South South neighbours Delta Queens FC in the round of

16 of the 2026 President Federation Cup.

The highly anticipated game will be played on Tuesday, June 2nd, 2026, at the Akwa Township Stadium Akwa Anambra State. Kickoff time is 4pm.

It promises to be a tough match as the Moses Aduku tutored side would not want to shift ground to allow their Delta state counterparts led by coach Seyi Stanley Osaze go beyond this stage.

Incidentally, coach Seyi was

one time head coach of Edo Queens, this is why focus will be on the game which to Edo Queens is fight to finish and a must win battle.

Previous records have shown that the Moses Aduku side have always had an overwhelming victory against Delta Queens. This encounter would not be an exception. Both teams will definitely parade quality players, but Edo Queens are in good shape and look dangerous and ready to carry the day.

The players are confident and have what it takes to cross this humble and fight for the cup.

Edo Queens are also preparing for the NWFL Super Six holding next week in the City of Port Harcourt. They have been charged to use the Federation cup to send a message to other teams participating in the Super 6.



EDO QUEENS IN TRAINING

SWAN urges Kano govt to immortalise 22 deceased athletes

The Sports Writers Association of Nigeria (SWAN), Kano Chapter, has urged the state government to immortalise the 22 athletes who died in a road accident while returning from the Ogun Gateway Games in 2025.

The association's Secretary, Mr Muhammad Nur-Tijani, made the call in a statement on Sunday in Kano, to mark the one-year anniversary of the tragedy.

"SWAN suggests that a sport facility in the state be named after the deceased or establish a new facility in their honour to nurture young talents and promote the development of future champions," it said.

According to the statement, the athletes' untimely death remains a profound loss to the sporting community and the state, hence, the need to recognise their contributions and preserve their legacy.

"In honour of the fallen athletes, SWAN calls on the Kano State Government to commemorate their lives through enduring initiatives.

The association also appealed to the government to strengthen grassroots sports programmes and improve facilities across the state, stressing that such efforts were crucial for discovering and nurturing emerging athletes.



SIX ATHLETES WHO DIED IN A ROAD ACCIDENT

Arsenal fans turn out in thousands to celebrate historic Premier League win

Thousands of Arsenal supporters set aside the disappointment of missing out on European glory as they flooded the streets of north London on Sunday to celebrate the club's first Premier League title in 22 years.

A sea of red and white engulfed the area around the Emirates Stadium as jubilant fans lined the parade route to catch a glimpse of their heroes proudly displaying the Premier League trophy aboard an open-top bus.

The celebrations marked the end of a remarkable domestic campaign for the Mikel Arteta's side, who were officially crowned champions on May 19 after second-placed Manchester City were held to a draw by Bournemouth.

Supporters sang club anthems, waved flags, ignited flares and cheered wildly as Arsenal celebrated their first English top-flight crown since the legendary "Invincibles" season of 2003/04.

The excitement was so intense that some fans climbed trees, rooftops and traffic lights in a bid to secure the best view of the parade.

Despite the festive atmosphere, there remained a sense of what might have been.

Arsenal had hoped to complete a historic double by lifting the UEFA Champions League trophy for the first time in the club's 140-year history.

However, their dream ended in heartbreak on Saturday in Budapest, where they suffered a penalty shootout defeat to Paris Saint-Germain after a gripping final finished 1-1 following extra time.

Eberechi Eze and Gabriel Magalhaes were unsuccessful from the spot as PSG retained

the European crown.

Kai Havertz had given Arsenal an early advantage before Ousmane Dembele levelled from the penalty spot in the second half.

The Premier League title represented a fitting reward for Arsenal's consistency after finishing runners-up in each of the previous three seasons.

Sunday's victory parade began shortly after 2:00 pm local time and was scheduled to cover a nine-kilometre route through Islington, close to the Emirates Stadium, over a two-hour period.



ARSENAL FANS HISTORIC EPL WIN

Morocco 2026: Flamingos, Ghana, South Africa inch closer to qualification after dominant wins

Nigeria's Flamingos are one round away from the 2026 FIFA Under-17 Women's World Cup after thrashing Guinea 11-0 on aggregate to advance to the final stage of the African qualifiers.

The Nigerian side completed the rout with a 6-0 victory over the Baby Syli Stars in the second leg at Remo Stars Stadium in Ikenne, Ogun State on Saturday,

following a 5-0 first-leg win in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire.

Standing between the Flamingos and a place at the global tournament scheduled for Morocco from October 17 to November 7, 2026, are Benin Republic's Baby Squirrels, who booked their spot in the final round with a 5-1 aggregate win over Sierra Leone. Benin won 2-1 in the second leg played in Lomé, Togo, where both

fixtures were held due to facility shortfalls in the two countries.

Morocco 2026: Nigeria eye spot as FIFA unveils U-17 Women's World Cup Groups

Prolific forward Harmony Chidi, along with Oluwakemi Adegbuyi, Queens Joseph and Precious Oscar, have been central to Nigeria's campaign. The first leg of the final qualifying tie is scheduled for the weekend of July 3-5, with the return leg set for July 10-12.

Read Also: Morocco 2026: Nigeria eye spot as FIFA unveils U-17 Women's World Cup Groups

Elsewhere on the continent, Ghana moved into the final round after an 8-0 aggregate demolition of Liberia, while South Africa eliminated Tanzania and will advance to face Kenya. Senegal edged past Cameroon 5-4 on penalties after two goalless encounters, and Zambia hammered DR Congo 7-0 over two legs. Ethiopia and Kenya also progressed after defeating Burundi and Uganda respectively.



FLAMINGOS

Wikki Spikers working hard to secure CGC Premier League qualification —Coach

Coach of Wikki Spikers Volleyball Club, Monday Dada, says the team will continue to work hard to secure qualification for next season's Comptroller-General of Customs (CGC) Premier League.

Dada said this in an interview with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) on Sunday in Abuja after his side defeated Kada Kings 3-1 in the ongoing 2026 National Division One and Two Volleyball League.

Wikki Spikers recorded a 3-1 (25-16, 25-18, 17-25, 25-21) victory over Kada Kings in a Division One encounter.

Wikki Spikers dominated the opening two sets, winning 25-16 and 25-18 through dis-

ciplined blocking and effective attacking play.

Kada Kings fought back in the third set, raising their intensity to claim a 25-17 victory and reduce the deficit.

However, Wikki Spikers regained control in the fourth set, maintaining composure at crucial moments to win 25-21 and seal the match 3-1.

Dada commended his players for their commitment and discipline throughout the competition.

"My dream is for my players to prosper and move to bigger teams. That is what I always encourage them to do.

"I really thank the boys for their efforts and discipline during the season."



MONDAY DADA

Sports



President FedCup 2026: Bendel Insurance FC Spank Crown FC to land in Round 16

KEHINDE OSAGIEDE

Bendel Insurance Football Club on Monday, June 1, 2026 defeated NNL

Giant Crown FC 3-1 to secure qualification to the round of 16 of the 2026 President Federation Cup tournament. The Benin Arsenal now

have El-Kanemi Warriors to contend with in the round of 16 fixtures.

Bendel Insurance came from behind to cancel Ebeniza Odeyemi's 9th minute goal lead for Crown FC with a goal scored by Alex Oweifaleya in the 19th minute of the game.

The tough encounter saw Promise Anyanwu getting a brace in the second half after scoring in the 52nd minute and 89th minute to seal victory for the Benin Arsenal in Lagos.

Recall that Kayode scored twice; in the 60th minute and in the 86th minute to seal victory for the 2023 Champions against Katsina Utd Junior team in the round of 64 to qualify for the round of 32.

Bendel Insurance FC won the 2023 edition of the Federation Cup after defeating Enugu Rangers 1-0 at the Stephen Keshi Stadium in Asaba on June 21, 2023 and secured Nigeria's 4th ticket for CAF Confederation tournament.

ROUND OF 32 RESULTS

Kwara United 0-1 Sokoto United
Sapele Lions 0-0 Adamawa United (PK: 2-4)
Bendel Insurance 3-1 Crown FC
Elkanemi Warriors 1-1 Akwa

United (PK: 3-2)
Shooting Stars 1-1 Kada Warriors (PK: 4-5)
Wikki Tourists 3-1 Bayelsa United
Bida Lions 2-0 Warri Wolves
Flight FC 1-1 Mighty Jets FC (PK: 5-4)
Rivers United 3-2 Rangers Int'l
Ejigbo City 0-3 Nasarawa United (W/O)
Kogi United 0-1 Plateau United
Ingas FC 1-1 FC Basira (PK: 7-8)
Ikorodu City 2-0 Jigawa Golden Stars
Enyimba FC 1-0 Gombe United
Sunshine Stars U19 2-1 Warinje FC
Barau FC 1-0 Abakaliki FC

ROUND OF 16 FIXTURES

Sokoto United Vs Adamawa United
Bendel Insurance Vs Elkanemi Warriors
Kada Warriors Vs Wikki Tourists
Bida Lions Vs Flight FC
Rivers United Vs Nasarawa United
Plateau United Vs FC Basira
Ikorodu City Vs Enyimba FC
Sunshine Stars U19 Vs Barau FC

#PresidentFederation-Cup2026

PRESIDENT FEDERATION CUP 2026					
ROUND OF 32 FIXTURES (MEN)					
1	KWARA UNITED	0	VS	1	SOKOTO UNITED
2	SAPELE LIONS		VS		ADAMAWA UNITED
3	BENDEL INSURANCE	3	VS	1	CROWN FC
4	ELKANEMI WARRIORS	1	VS	1	AKWA UNITED
5	SHOOTING STARS SC	1	VS	1	KADA WARRIORS FC
6	WIKKI TOURISTS	3	VS	1	BAYELSA UNITED
7	BIDA LIONS	2	VS	0	WARRI WOLVES
8	FLIGHT FC	1	VS	1	MIGHTY JETS FC
9	RIVERS UNITED	3	VS	2	RANGERS INT'L
10	EJIGBO CITY	0	VS	3	NASARAWA UNITED
11	KOGI UNITED	0	VS	1	PLATEAU UNITED
12	INGAS FC	1	VS	1	FC BASIRA
13	IKORODU CITY	2	VS	0	JIGAWA GOLDEN STARS
14	ENYIMBA	1	VS	0	GOMBE UNITED
15	SUNSHINE STARS U19		VS		WARINJE FC
16	BARAU FC	1	VS	0	ABAKALIKI FC



PSG STARS PARADE CHAMPIONS LEAGUE TROPHIES

PSG stars parade Champions League trophies at French Open ahead of France World Cup Camp

Paris Saint-Germain players presented their UEFA Champions League trophies to the French Open crowd on Monday, two days after securing Europe's premier club competition for the second consecutive season.

PSG defeated Arsenal 4-3 on penalties after a 1-1 draw at the Puskás Arena to successfully defend the title they first won last year.

"We're bringing you the second star. We're proud and happy," said Désiré Doué on Court Philippe-Chatrier. "We want to thank everyone at the club. It's a collective victory."

Doué had earlier brought out the trophy PSG won last season following their emphatic 5-0 victory over Inter Milan

in the final, before Ousmane Dembélé and Bradley Barcola carried the newly won trophy onto the court.

"We've experienced outstanding moments with this squad, and we want to win a third title," Dembélé said. "But first, we have the World Cup with France."

Dembélé, Warren Zaïre-Emery, Barcola and Doué will join France's training camp on Tuesday as preparations begin for the FIFA World Cup.

France will face Ivory Coast in Nantes on Thursday before taking on Northern Ireland in Lille next Monday. Les Bleus will then travel to the United States for the tournament, which runs from June 11 to July 19.

Gov. Otti to flag-off construction of New Umuahia Stadium, as superstar Chukwueze applauds his performance

Abia State Governor, His Excellency, Dr. Alex Otti, OFR, says that he will soon flag-off the construction of the Umuahia Stadium which will be a stadium city.

Governor Otti stated this when he received in audience a delegation led by Abia born international footballer and Super Eagles star, Mr. Samuel Chukwueze, who visited the Governor in his office, alongside his friends, to thank him for coming to identify with him during his mothers burial over the weekend.

Governor Otti stated that the land for the construction of the new stadium has already been acquired, and hinted that he would like Abia people to come and invest in the State.

"I'm sure before the end of the year, we will flag-off the construction of the new Umuahia stadium.

"The land is already acquired, and we are at the feasibility stage. Because we are not just building a stadium, we are building a stadium city, like a sports village.

"There will be hotels, there will be estates. There will be other attractions just to develop that path. The Commissioner for Youths and Sports Development will also give you details.

"We will like our people to come and invest here. Pick whatever that is of interest to you. You may be interested in

one thing or the other, and we will give priority to our people," Gov. Otti stated.

The Governor, who congratulated Mr Chukwueze on the feat he has achieved in sports and for being a good ambassador of Abia State, assured him of the support of the State Government to him.

"Let me also congratulate you for the great feat and for representing the State very well.



DR. ALEX OTTI AND SAMUEL CHUKWUEZE

15 countries to participate in 2026 NASCO/ITF J30 World Tennis championship

The Nigeria Tennis Federation (NTF) said that 15 countries, including host nation Nigeria, will participate in the 2026 NASCO/ITF J30 World Tennis Tour Junior Championship taking in Abuja.

The Participating countries include Nigeria, Cameroon, China, Great Britain, Canada,

Sri Lanka, Liberia, Lithuania, India, Togo, Benin Republic, the U.S., Sweden, and France.

The prestigious junior tennis tournament will kick-off from June 2 to June 13, at the Tennis Complex of the Moshood Abiola National Stadium, Abuja.

The two-week competition provides a premier platform

for talented young players aged 13 to 18 to compete for official ITF World Tennis Tour Junior ranking points while gaining valuable international exposure.

Saidu Musa, Technical Director of the Federation and Tournament Director, said this at a news conference ahead of the championship on Monday in Abuja.

He described the tournament as a major milestone in the federation's grassroots tennis development programme.

According to him, the ITF Junior World Tennis Tour programme began in Nigeria in 2019 and has grown into one of the federation's most successful talent development initiatives.

"This is about the sixth edition of the ITF Junior World Tennis Tour that we are organising in Nigeria.

Presidential Hopefuls Push for Lookman, Salah signings at Fenerbahçe

Turkish giants Fenerbahçe are reportedly preparing an ambitious summer recruitment drive as they seek to strengthen their squad following another disappointing league campaign that saw rivals Galatasaray finish ahead of them for a fourth consecutive season.

According to reports in Turkey, the club is targeting a high-profile double signing of Nigeria international Ademola Lookman and Liverpool forward Mohamed Salah as part of efforts to reassert themselves as genuine title contenders. Nigerian sports apparel

The proposed moves are being driven by presidential candidates Aziz Yildirim and

Hakan Safi, who are said to be working closely with their respective teams to secure marquee signings ahead of the club's presidential congress scheduled for June 6 and 7.

Turkish outlet Fanatik reports that both candidates are eager to reach agreements with Lookman and Salah, believing the arrival of the two African stars would signal a new era for the Istanbul-based club.

Fenerbahçe's interest in Lookman is not new. The club reportedly came close to signing the Super Eagles forward during the January transfer window after reaching agreements with both the player and his club, Atalanta. Nigerian football team



ADEMOLA LOOKMAN



Stanley Nwabali's curious exit from Chippa United: A goalkeeper's risky gamble

DOUGLAS BAYE-OSAGIE

Stanley Nwabali's decision to terminate his contract with Chippa United in early 2026 left many Nigerian football fans scratching their heads. After four years of steady growth in South Africa's Premier Soccer League, the Super Eagles' first-choice goalkeeper walked away as a free agent, without another club lined up.

Chippa United confirmed the mutual termination in a statement, noting that Nwabali had formally submitted a transfer request, which the club approved after "careful consideration". The exit brought an emotional end to a stint that saw him make over 76 appearances and kept 25 clean sheets.

The timing of the move raised eyebrows. Nwabali submitted his release request while on international duty with Nigeria at AFCON 2025, where the Super Eagles secured bronze after defeating Egypt. Leaving in the mid-season without a contract offer on the table, is an unusual step for a goalkeeper at his peak.

Speaking on South African radio, Nwabali admitted there was "no contract in front" and "no club in front" when he left. He insisted he wasn't desperate, but the gamble means he risks losing match fitness at a critical stage of his career.

For a goalkeeper, activity matters more than for any other position. Rhythm, sharpness, and confidence come from regular games. Even at a smaller club, weekly competitive football keeps a keeper ready for national team duty. A prolonged spell without a club could dull those edges.

Many suspect Nwabali was carried away by the high of his AFCON exploits. After becoming Nigeria's hero in 2023 and 2025, the spotlight shifted to him. Interest from clubs in South Africa and beyond followed, but interest is not the same as a signed deal.

Others point to possible misadvice from agents. Encouraging a player to walk away without a concrete offer can backfire, especially when the player is 29 and outside the main European transfer windows. The transfer market moves quickly, and free agents often wait months for the right fit.

Nwabali's rise had been meteoric. Before December 2023, he had just one cap for Nigeria from a 2021 friendly against Mexico. He was still playing in the NPFL with Katsina United, largely unknown outside Nigeria.

His move to Chippa United in 2022 changed that. The Eastern Cape side gave him a platform in a competitive league, and he quickly became a regular starter. His performances there caught the eye of José Peseiro, who travelled to Gqeberha to watch him play against Golden Arrows.

That scouting trip paid off. Nwabali kept a clean sheet in a 2-0 win and earned a call-up for AFCON 2023 in Ivory Coast. From that point, his career accelerated.

At AFCON 2023, Nwabali became Nigeria's unexpected hero. He provided the calm presence and shot-stopping that had been missing in goal for years. His penalty saves against South Africa in the semi-final, where he stopped two spot-kicks in a 4-2 shootout win, made him a national hero overnight.

Nigeria reached the final, finishing



SUPER EAGLES OF NIGERIA GOALKEEPERS IN TRAINING



as runners-up, and Nwabali's stock soared. He was praised for his command of the area, agility, and composure under pressure. For a country that had struggled with goalkeeping instability, he looked like the answer.

He carried that form into AFCON 2025 in Morocco, helping Nigeria to a third-place finish and earning another bronze medal. By then, he became undisputed first-choice for the Super Eagles.

Back at Chippa, he remained reliable. In the 2025/26 season he made

12 appearances before his reduced involvement and eventual exit. The club had already begun rotating with Dumisani Msibi and Elson Sithole.

Chippa publicly supported Nwabali during Nigeria's AFCON semi-final against South Africa, a gesture that sparked debate among local fans but showed how highly they regarded him. The relationship between player and club had been strong.

That makes the contract termination more curious. Nwabali himself

called it a "tough decision" and "not a nice feeling," but said in football you have to take a step forward. Both parties claimed the split was amicable.

Yet walking away without a guaranteed move is a gamble for a goalkeeper. Unlike outfield players, keepers need consistent minutes to stay sharp. A few months out could affect his place in the Super Eagles setup ahead of the 2027 African Nations Cup qualifiers.

Nwabali says he is prepared to wait patiently for the right opportunity.

That patience may be tested if offers don't materialize quickly. The market for African goalkeepers outside the top leagues is limited.

His story remains one of resilience. From NPFL obscurity to AFCON hero and national team regular, Nwabali proved that late bloomers can make it. But the next chapter depends on finding a club where he can play regularly again.

The Super Eagles' number 1 spot is now becoming a hot chase. Maduka Okoye enjoyed a virtuoso season with Udinese, keeping 10 league clean sheets in Serie A and reminding everyone of his quality. Meanwhile, Arthur Okonkwo of Wrexham made his Nigeria debut against Zimbabwe in the Unity Cup after a brilliant campaign where Wrexham secured promotion. With competition heating up, Nwabali needs to get a club as quickly as possible to keep his place secure.

The decision has already cost him his Super Eagles position for now, as he won't be involved in the Unity Cup games or the two high-profile friendlies against Poland and Portugal in June.

For now, Stanley Nwabali is a free agent with a reputation to protect. His AFCON heroics gave Nigerians belief in their goalkeeping future, but that belief rests on him staying active. If he was carried away by the moment or misadvised, he will hope the gamble pays off. If not, the Super Eagles may have to look elsewhere for their No. 1 goalkeeper.

The role of society in shaping children's future

EJEMOGO REBECCA ANWURI

It is widely believed that the responsibility of training and nurturing a child rests solely with parents. This belief is understandable. Parents are the ones who bring children into the world, feed them, clothe them, and make the first sacrifices. Yet, many people fail to realize that parents do not raise children in isolation. Other forces in society — visible and invisible — also shape a child's future, either directly or indirectly, for good or for ill.

Society, defined as a large organized group of people living together in a shared territory and interacting through social relationships, is the wider classroom in which every child learns. Whether a child grows into a responsible, productive adult or becomes a burden and nuisance to society depends largely on the environment in which they are raised. The home may lay the foundation, but society builds the structure.

The role of society in shaping children's future can produce positive or negative outcomes. This raises an important question: What are the major influences in society that shape children's destiny? And more importantly, what must we do collectively to ensure that the next generation becomes an asset, not a liability?

This essay examines those influences — family, education, peer groups, media and technology, government, religion, culture — and argues that raising children is a shared responsibility. It will take a whole village, a whole nation, to raise children who will build, not break, the society of tomorrow.

THE FAMILY: THE FIRST AND MOST ENDURING INFLUENCE

Charity begins at home, and so does character. The family is a child's first school. Long before a child enters a classroom, they have learned how to speak, how to greet elders, how to manage anger, and how to treat others. These lessons are taught not only through words, but through daily observation.

Children are natural imitators. A boy who watches his father beat his mother will learn that violence solves problems. A girl who sees her mother speak respectfully to neighbors will learn courtesy. A child whose parents read books at home will grow up believing that reading is normal. As the African proverb says, "The child who is not embraced by the village will burn it down to feel its warmth." The first embrace must come from the home.

Unfortunately, many Nigerian homes today are under pressure. Economic hardship, migration, and long working hours mean that some parents are physically absent. Others are present but emotionally unavailable. Children raised by irresponsible, abusive, or negligent parents often struggle with trust, discipline, and self-worth. They may find it hard to take responsibility later in life because they never saw it modeled at home.

But the family's role goes beyond biology. Extended family, step-parents, guardians, and even foster caregivers all contribute. In Igbo, Yoruba, and Hausa traditions, aunts, uncles, and grandparents were co-teachers. That communal parenting is weakening in cities, yet it remains powerful. When a child has multiple positive adult role



NIGERIAN CHILDREN

models, they have a safety net. When that net is torn, society must step in.

EDUCATION: THE BRIDGE TO OPPORTUNITY

If the family lays the foundation, education builds the bridge to the future. Schools are not just places to learn mathematics and English. They are institutions where children learn discipline, teamwork, critical thinking, and citizenship.

A good teacher can change the trajectory of a child's life. I have seen students in rural Edo State who discovered their passion for science because one teacher stayed after class to explain concepts. I have seen girls in Katsina choose engineering because a female teacher told them, "Your brain is not limited by your gender." Teachers are nation-builders in plain clothes.

However, education in Nigeria faces serious challenges. Over 10.5 million children are out of school. In Katsina, 300 schools remain closed due to banditry. In Rivers, 4000 primary schools were empty in May 2026 because teachers protested unpaid salaries. When schools are shut, children do not just lose lessons; they lose hope. Idleness becomes the classroom, and the streets become the teacher.

Quality matters as much as access. Overcrowded classrooms with 90 pupils and one teacher, as seen in Ekiador Primary School before SUBEB's intervention, cannot produce critical thinkers. Poorly paid, unmotivated teachers cannot inspire excellence.

Government must prioritize funding, teacher training, and security in schools. But society also has a role. Communities can build classrooms, parents can form PTAs that hold schools accountable, and alumni can fund scholarships. Education is too important to be left to government alone.

PEER GROUPS: THE POWER OF "SHOW ME YOUR FRIENDS"

The Bible says, "He that walketh with the wise shall be wise." Peer in-

fluence is perhaps the strongest force on adolescents. Between ages 10 and 19, children spend more time with friends than with parents. Friends shape their language, dress, values, and choices.

Purpose-driven friends motivate each other to study, start businesses, and avoid trouble. In Jos, Plateau State, groups of youths registered together for the "Plateau Digital Upskill" program because they saw their friends doing it. That peer pressure was positive.

But bad company corrupts good morals. Children who keep company with drug users, cultists, or internet fraudsters are more likely to copy those behaviors. In Lagos, many young boys were recruited into gangs simply because their friends were members. The desire to belong is powerful.

Parents cannot choose their children's friends forever, but they can teach discernment. Schools can create clubs, sports teams, and mentorship programs that connect children with positive peers. Communities can organize youth centers where talent, not crime, earns respect. Society must give children better options for belonging.

MEDIA AND TECHNOLOGY: THE NEW GLOBAL CLASSROOM

Never before has a generation grown up with so much information at their fingertips. Social media, television, YouTube, TikTok, and the internet have become powerful teachers. A child in a village with a smartphone can learn coding from MIT or watch harmful content from anonymous creators.

Media has a dual influence. Positive content can educate, inspire, and connect. During COVID-19 lockdowns, Nigerian children learned from online classes. Today, YouTube tutorials are teaching carpentry, makeup artistry, and computer skills to youths who cannot afford formal training.

But harmful content is also viral. Pornography, violence, cyberbullying, and

get-rich-quick fraud schemes are everywhere. Algorithms push sensational content because it gets clicks. A 12-year-old who spends hours on TikTok may begin to believe that fame and money come without hard work or integrity.

This is where society must act. Parents must monitor and guide, not just ban. Media platforms must regulate harmful material and promote educational content. Government agencies like NITDA and NBC must enforce standards without killing innovation. Most importantly, schools must teach digital literacy — how to search, verify, and use technology responsibly. A child who understands media will not be controlled by it.

GOVERNMENT POLICIES: THE ARCHITECTURE OF OPPORTUNITY

Government is society organized. Its policies create the environment in which children grow. When government builds roads, children can get to school. When it funds primary healthcare, children survive diseases. When it creates jobs, parents can afford school fees.

Recent FAAC allocations of N1.1 trillion to states give governments the resources to invest. In Kano, the state government's distribution of 2000 solar irrigation pumps shows how policy can directly improve children's nutrition and their parents' income. In Sokoto, the 10MW solar plant powers 20 villages where children can now study at night.

But policy failures also shape children's futures. When primary teachers are owed 5 months' salaries, as in Rivers, children lose learning time. When 300 schools are closed in Katsina due to insecurity, government policy has failed to protect the right to education.

Children cannot vote, but they are the most affected by policy. Therefore, society must demand child-friendly budgets, transparency, and accountability. Civil society, religious leaders, and the media must ask: How much of FAAC is going to schools, clinics,

and child protection?

RELIGION, CULTURE, AND COMMUNITY LEADERS: THE MORAL COMPASS

Religion and culture are society's moral language. In Nigeria, churches, mosques, and traditional institutions have always taught values: honesty, hard work, respect for elders, and care for the weak.

A good pastor or imam can reach a child when parents cannot. Community leaders can settle disputes and protect children from abuse. Cultural festivals, proverbs, and storytelling pass on wisdom. The Yoruba proverb "Omoluabi" teaches character. The Igbo concept of "Ife onye metara" teaches personal responsibility.

But when religious and cultural leaders are silent on corruption, abuse, or injustice, children learn that morality is optional. When culture promotes child marriage or discrimination against the girl-child, it limits potential.

Religious and community leaders must therefore be intentional. Sermons should address bullying, drug abuse, and online safety, not just heaven and hell. Traditional rulers should protect children's rights and speak against harmful practices. Communities should create safe spaces where children can report abuse without fear.

THE COST OF NEGLECT: WHAT HAPPENS WHEN SOCIETY FAILS

When children grow up in a negative environment, the consequences are predictable and painful.

Academically, they perform poorly. A child who sleeps on a classroom floor and treks 12km daily, like Destiny Osamede in Edo, may pass WAEC through sheer grit, but many others drop out.

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FEATURE



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The role of society in shaping children's future can produce positive or negative outcomes. This raises an important question: What are the major influences in society that shape children's destiny? And more importantly, what must we do collectively to ensure that the next generation becomes an asset, not a liability?

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Socially, they become vulnerable. Juvenile delinquency, drug abuse, and cybercrime increase. A child who feels rejected by family, school, and society will seek belonging in gangs or fraud

networks.

Nationally, the cost is huge. Insecurity costs Nigeria \$18 billion yearly. Every child lost to illiteracy or crime is a lost engineer, doctor, or entrepreneur. The future of society is literally being wasted.

THE WAY FORWARD: RAISING CHILDREN AS A SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

If children are the future, then raising them must be everyone's business. Parents must spend quality time with their children, not just money. A 15-minute conversation at dinner can prevent years of delinquency.

Schools must go beyond exams. They should teach values, emotional intelligence, and skills for the 21st century. Teachers should be trained and paid well.

Media platforms must balance profit with responsibility. They should promote content that educates and uplifts, while regulating harmful material. Parents and schools must teach children to be critical consumers, not passive scrollers.

Communities must protect children's rights. Neighbors should speak up against abuse. Traditional rulers should create child protection committees. Youths should mentor younger ones.

Government must make education accessible, affordable, and secure. Budgets should prioritize children. Security agencies must protect schools. Policies should support families, not just corporations.

Most importantly, society must change its mindset. Raising children is not "women's work" or "parents' problem." It is national security. It is economic policy. It is the definition of development.

CONCLUSION: SOCIETY REAPS WHAT IT SOWS

Just as a seed produces the harvest, children are the future of society. The child who grows up loved, educated, and guided will become a builder. The child who grows up neglected, hungry, and angry will become a destroyer.

Nigeria's \$1 trillion economy dream will not be achieved by oil alone. It will be achieved by the character, skills, and dreams of our children. Destiny Osamede, who reads by torchlight, and Youssef, the refugee boy who wants to be a doctor like his mother, are the real measure of our development.

Therefore, society must invest deliberately, consistently, and collectively in raising responsible, morally upright, and educated children. The home must do its part. The school must do its part. The media must do its part. Government must do its part. The community must do its part.

The future of every child reflects the condition of the society in which they grow up. If we want a better Nigeria in 2040, we must raise better children in 2026. It takes a village. It takes a nation. And the time to start is now.