

1.06m voters set for June 20 Ekiti guber poll as INEC defends 2027 election timetable

● Commission appeals conflicting court rulings

CAROLINE AMEH

ABUJA

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has announced that 1,059,360 registered voters are expected to participate in the forthcoming Ekiti State

Governorship Election scheduled for June 20, even as the Commission moves to defend its authority over electoral timelines ahead of the 2027 General Election.

INEC Chairman, Prof. Joash Amupitan (SAN), disclosed this on Tuesday during the Commis-

sion's Second Quarterly Consultative Meeting with leaders of political parties in Abuja.

According to him, the voter figure includes 66,664 newly registered voters captured during recent phases of the Continuous Voter Registration (CVR) exercise, while 2,103 cases of

double registration were detected and invalidated to protect the integrity of the voters' register.

Amupitan expressed confidence in the Commission's readiness for the election, assuring stakeholders that logistics, deployment of election technology, personnel training, and voter education programmes were progressing as scheduled.

"We remain committed to the simultaneous opening of all 2,445 polling units across the 16 local government areas of the state at 8:30 a.m. on Election Day," he said.

The INEC chairman also commended political parties for signing a Peace Accord ahead of the election and urged candidates, party officials,

agents, and supporters to strictly comply with its provisions.

INEC further announced that six bye-elections will be conducted simultaneously with the Ekiti governorship election.

The affected constituencies are: Enugu North Senatorial District;

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#200

Insecurity waves: Gov. Okpebholo demands release of abducted victims

● Warns against using insecurity to undermine governance, national stability ● Says no vacancy in Aso Rock

RICHARD EWEKA

BENIN CITY

Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo has urged those behind recent abductions across the country to release their victims immediately and unconditionally.

He also declared that no political party can attain power

through kidnapping, banditry, or other forms of criminality.

Speaking at the flag-off of the APC campaign for the Edo South Senatorial District local government elections at Urhokpota Hall in Benin City, on Tuesday, the governor condemned the growing wave of kidnappings and warned against using insecurity as a

tool to undermine governance and national stability.

According to him, political ambition must never be pursued through violence, fear, or criminal acts.

"Those seeking political power should not distract President Bola Ahmed Tinubu from delivering good governance to Nigerians. Kidnapping

innocent citizens will not win elections. Political power cannot be secured through criminal activities," Okpebholo said.

The governor expressed concern over the recent abduction of students, teachers and other citizens in different parts of the country, including Oyo State, and called for their immediate release. He maintained that in-

security should not be allowed to derail the administration's development agenda.

Governor Okpebholo praised President Tinubu's economic reforms, particularly the removal of fuel subsidy, saying the policy

had increased resources available to states for critical infrastructure and development projects. He pledged the support of Edo State for the President ahead of the

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FLAG OFF OF CAMPAIGN:

L-R: Chairman, Governing Council, Edo Polytechnic, Usen, Hon. Sam Oboh; Speaker, Edo State House of Assembly, Rt. Hon. Blessing Agbebaku, Edo State Deputy Governor, Rt. Hon. Dennis Idahosa, Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo; State APC Chairman, Emperor Jarret Tenebe; Edo South Women Leader Mrs. Betty Okoebor; and APC Edo South Senatorial candidate, Hon. Ogbeide Ihama, during the flag off of Edo South senatorial local government campaign in Benin city.

PHOTO: OKONDOH TALLE EBOSE

LG campaign: Tenebe presents party's candidates to public, says opposition party is dead in Edo

RICHARD EWEKA

BENIN CITY

Chairman of the All Progressive Congress (APC) Edo State Chapter, Jarrett Tenebe has presented the party's candidates in the forthcoming local government election to party faithful and the general public.

Tenebe who presented the candidates during the flag off of Edo South local government Chairmanship campaign rally at Urhokpota Hall, Benin City, said the APC is changing the narrative in the political landscape of Edo as the party has presented very young, intelligent, vibrant and committed youths to drive governance at the grassroots.

He noted that the governor has done so well in transforming various sectors of the State's economy, noting that these Chairmen when elected would team up with Governor Monday Okpebholo to

extend development to the rural areas, ensuring the people enjoy the dividends of democracy.

Governor Monday Okpebholo who addressed party faithful at the occasion, unveiled the Edo South Senatorial candidate of the APC Engr. Ogbeide Ihama, the Oredo Federal Constituency candidate, Dr. Paddy Iyamu, his Ovia Federal Constituency counterpart, Barr. . Omosede Igbinedion, urging the party faithful to ensure they mobilize for them to emerge victorious at the polls.

APC candidates in the forthcoming local government election in July 2026 were individually introduced to the general public by the party chairman and they include Hon. Gabriel Iduseri (Oredo); Hon. Osaro Eribo (Egor); Hon. Eric Osawaru (Ikpoba Okah); Hon. Thompson Osagie (Orhion-

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NEWS

Sen. Dafinone, Ex-Delta SSG among passengers as four die in train derailment

LAGOS

Senator Ede Dafinone and a former Secretary to the Delta State Government, Mr Patrick Ukah, were among the 482 passengers and crew members aboard a train that derailed along the Warri-Itakpe rail corridor on Monday, leaving four persons dead and several others injured.

The Permanent Secretary, Federal Ministry of Transport, Mr Funsho Adebisi, disclosed this in a statement issued on Tuesday, noting that a full investigation had commenced to determine the cause of the accident.

The incident occurred near Agbor in Delta State when four coaches of the train capsized and another coach derailed.

According to Adebisi, preliminary reports showed that four passengers lost their lives in the accident, comprising two adult women, one adult man and an infant.

He said a total of 442 passengers had booked for the trip, while 40 crew members, security personnel and third-party service providers were also on board, bringing the total number of occupants to 482.

“Notable individuals on board include the Senator representing Delta Central Senatorial District, Senator Ede Dafinone, and a former Secretary to the Delta State Government, Mr Patrick Ukah,” Adebisi stated.

He said emergency rescue and evacuation operations were immediately activated with support from the Delta State Government, the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), the Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC), the Nigeria Police Force, the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), local authorities and other emergency responders.

According to him, the rescue operations were successfully concluded by 6:30 p.m. on Monday.

The permanent secretary disclosed that injured passengers were evacuated to medical facilities in Agbor for treatment.

“As at the time of this release, 24 serious injuries were recorded, while several other passengers sustained varying degrees of injuries and are receiving medical attention.

“One Nigerian Railway Corporation (NRC) staff member suffered a traumatic limb injury and is currently receiving

treatment and is reported to be in stable condition,” he said.

Adebisi conveyed the condolences of the Federal Ministry of Transport and the Nigerian Railway Corporation to the families of the deceased

and wished those injured a speedy recovery.

He also commended the Delta State Government, emergency response agencies, security personnel, NRC’s Mechanical Directorate, the

Special Rescue and Emergency Team, medical personnel and members of the public for their swift intervention and support during the rescue operation.

He added that the full passenger manifest had been re-

trieved and would be made available to relevant authorities when required.

Efforts, he said, were ongoing to identify all injured and deceased persons for proper documentation and further action.



MEETING WITH POLITICAL PARTIES:

L-R: National Commissioner Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), Real Admiral Jamila Manafa; Natural Commissioner, May Agbamuche-Mbu, and Chairman, Prof. Joash Amaputa, during the Commission’s meeting with political parties leaders in Abuja, yesterday.

PHOTO BY OMOYE AMINU

Nigeria ready to evacuate first batch of citizens from S/Africa

ABUJA

The Federal Government says it is set to evacuate the first batch of Nigerians from South Africa following reported xenophobic attacks on foreign nationals.

The spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Kimiebi Ebienna, disclosed this in a statement on Tuesday.

According to him, the affected Nigerians will depart O.R. Tambo International Airport in Johannesburg on Wednesday night.

He said the evacuees are expected to arrive at the Murtala Muhammed International Airport, Lagos, at about 5:00 a.m. on Thursday.

Ebienna added that the evacuation exercise will be carried out by Air Peace Airline.

He said the Federal Government has fully funded the operation, adding that beneficiaries would not bear any cost.

“The first batch of Nigerian nationals to be evacuated due to xenophobic attacks will depart Johannesburg on Wednesday night,” he said.

Ebienna also said relevant ministries, departments and agencies have made arrangements to receive and support the returnees.

“Upon arrival, the evacuees will undergo documentation and profiling and will receive necessary assistance before being reunited with their families,” he said.

20,000 people displaced In Philippine earthquake as death toll hits 37

Rescuers searched ruined buildings in the southern Philippines on Tuesday to ensure no one was still trapped a day after one of the strongest earthquakes to hit the country in a half-century killed at least 37 people and displaced more than 20,000.

Only four people were considered missing on official records in the southern provinces near where the 7.8 magnitude quake struck Monday morning, but the Office of Civil Defence acknowledged several collapsed and heavily damaged buildings must be thoroughly inspected for possible survivors or casualties.

The earthquake centred off Mindanao, the second most populous Philippine island, injured nearly 500 people and displaced more than 20,000, most of whom

fled to emergency shelters.

Many people who left their homes feared a tsunami. Waves up to 1.4-meter (4.6-foot) above tide level were measured in the Philippines, but the only tsunami damage reported was to six shanties on stilts in a coastal village. Smaller waves washed ashore in Indonesia and Palau and as far away as southern Japan.

The earthquake left a trail of destruction, including in General Santos, a lively coastal city of more than 700,000 people known as the country’s tuna capital, where at least 13 people were killed in collapsed buildings and due to falling debris.

Officials warn buildings hit by the strongest Philippine quake in 50 years could still collapse in aftershocks. The quake

triggered small tsunami waves and forced thousands into shelters, disrupting travel and school for days in the region.

At least 18 died in Sarangani province mostly in a landslide that buried houses in the mountainside town of Glan, according to Rafaelito Alejandro of the Office of Civil Defence.

The other deaths were reported in the southern provinces of South Cotabato and Davao Occidental, and on Balut Island, disaster-response officials said.

About 2,000 houses and 117 government buildings and facilities were damaged in several provinces, according to an initial government damage assessment. The international airport in General Santos remained shut, forcing the cancellation of 63 domestic flights except for those on humanitarian missions.

About 6,000 public school buildings in quake-hit prov-

inces must be assessed before classes can resume. The quake struck on the first day of classes nationwide after a two-month summer break and many who sustained injuries were young students who had gathered with excitement for morning flag-raising ceremonies.

Authorities have warned that buildings that sustained cracks could collapse due to aftershocks, some of them dangerously powerful.

“We cannot force the immediate reopening of schools because we have to ensure the integrity of the buildings,” Alejandro said.

It was the strongest Philippine quake since 1976

Monday’s earthquake was centred at sea at a depth of 33 kilometers (20 miles), about 32 kilometers (20 miles) southwest of Maasim town in Sarangani province.

TikTok removes 4m videos, disrupts 86,000 LIVE sessions in Nigeria —Report

LAGOS

TikTok says it removed more than four million videos and interrupted over 86,000 LIVE sessions in Nigeria in the fourth quarter of 2025 as part of efforts to strengthen safety and integrity on the platform.

The social media platform disclosed this in its Q4 2025 Community Guidelines Enforcement Report released on Tuesday.

It noted that the platform

removed 4.02 million videos in Nigeria for violating its Community Guidelines during the period under review.

It added that 99.9 per cent of the offending videos were detected and removed proactively before users reported them, while 98.4 per cent were taken down within 24 hours of posting.

The platform said the figures reflected its growing investment in automated detection technologies and rapid response systems, aimed at curb-

ing harmful content.

Globally, TikTok removed more than 175.3 million videos during the quarter under review, representing about 0.5 per cent of all content uploaded on the platform.

TikTok said more than 152.5 million of the videos were removed through automated detection tools, while about 8.4 million videos were later reinstated following further reviews.

It highlighted enforcement actions on TikTok LIVE, with

the company interrupting more than 86,000 LIVE rooms in Nigeria for breaching community guidelines.

Worldwide, TikTok said it issued warnings, demonetised content and took other enforcement actions against more than 17.7 million LIVE sessions and 9.2 million creators who violated LIVE monetisation policies.

According to the company, warnings are designed to educate creators and enable them to correct content that may

breach platform rules.

TikTok also reported intensified efforts to tackle harmful and misleading artificial intelligence-generated content.

The platform said it continued to require creators to label realistic AI-generated images, audio and video content, while deploying automated detection systems and industry-standard Content Credentials technology to identify such materials.

It noted that the measures had contributed to labelling of more than 1.3 billion AI-gen-

erated videos globally.

TikTok reaffirmed its commitment to providing safe digital environment by combining advanced moderation technologies with the expertise of thousands of trust and safety professionals worldwide.

The company said it would continue collaborating with government agencies, including the Office of the National Security Adviser and Civil Society Organisations to promote safer digital spaces and combat harmful online content.

Edo Police arrest Oluchi and syndicate for staged kidnapping, recovers firearm used in ransom videos

BENIN CITY

The Edo State Police Command has uncovered a carefully orchestrated kidnapping scam and arrested four suspects who conspired to fraudulently obtain Fifty Million Naira (₦50,000,000) as ransom from unsuspecting family members through a fabricated abduction plot.

This was disclosed by ASP Eno Ikoedem, Police Public Relations Officer, Edo State Command in a statement in Benin City.

According to the statement, "on 1st June, 2026, one Mr Tony Ugbowan of Agbor Road, Benin City, reported at the Command that his wife, Mrs. Oluchi Ugbowan, aged 45 years, had been kidnapped on her way to her shop at Ramat Park along Agbor Road. He explained that on 28th May, 2026, he received a call from a concealed telephone number demanding a ransom of Fifty Million Naira (₦50,000,000) for her release.

"Upon receipt of the report, operatives of the Anti-Kidnapping Unit immediately commenced a discreet investigation, deploying both intelligence and technical resources to unravel

the circumstances surrounding the alleged kidnap. Thorough investigation led to the arrest of one Israel Ability, male, aged 28 years, at Ramat Park, Agbor Road, Benin City. During his arrest, the mobile phone belonging to the purported victim was recovered from him. Upon interrogation, the suspect confessed that he had been contracted by Mrs. Oluchi Ugbowan to negotiate ransom with her family while falsely presenting her as a kidnapped victim.

"Further investigation subsequently led operatives on 5th June, 2026, to a hotel in Ukwuani Local Government Area of Delta State, where Mrs. Oluchi Ugbowan was arrested. During interrogation, she confessed to staging her own kidnapping and thereafter led investigators to the residence of an accomplice in Delta State, one Ochukwudem Uwadia, male, aged 38 years.

"Investigation revealed that the residence was used as the location where videos depicting the victim with tied hands and feet were recorded and circulated to family members as proof of captivity. The suspect further disclosed that Uwadia's son, Chibuzor Ochukwudem, male,

aged 18 years, was the individual seen in the videos pointing a firearm at her head in order to further lend credibility to the false kidnapping narrative.

"All suspects connected to the criminal conspiracy have

been arrested. A search conducted at the premises led to the recovery of an automatic pump-action gun used in the ransom videos.

"The Commissioner of Police, Edo State Command, CP

Monday Agbonika, fdc, commended the operatives for their painstaking investigation and professionalism in the timely unraveling of the elaborate deception. He warned that the Command treats every reported kidnapping incident with the utmost seriousness and deploys all available resources to

ensure victims are rescued and perpetrators brought to justice. He further cautioned members of the public against engaging in false kidnapping schemes, stressing that such acts not only constitute serious criminal offences but also divert critical security resources from genuine victims of crime.



MEETING WITH THE SENATE:

L-R: Executive Director, Natural Resources, Agriculture and Rural Development, South East Development Commission (SEDC), Dr. Cliff Ogbede; MD/CEO, Mark Okoye; Executive Director, Finance, Stanley Ohajuruka, and Executive Director, Cooperate Services, Dr. Sylvester Okonkwo, during a meeting with Senate Committee on South East Development Commission in Abuja, yesterday.

PHOTO BY OMOYE AMINU

Nigeria Labour leader dies in Geneva

SWITZERLAND

The Nigerian delegation to the 114th Session of the International Labour Conference (ILC) in Geneva and the labour movement have been thrown into mourning following the death of labour leader Domingo Michael Adeleke.

Adeleke, Chairman of the Lagos State Joint Negotiating Council (JNC), died on Tuesday in Geneva after a brief illness.

He was in Switzerland as part of Nigeria's delegation to the conference when he reportedly became ill and was later taken for medical attention before his passing.

The incident was confirmed by an official of the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC), who described Adeleke as a committed trade unionist who was dedicated to the welfare of workers.

"It is with deep sorrow that the Nigeria Labour Congress and the entire trade union movement in Nigeria, especially the 2026 Workers' Delegates to the International Labour Conference, announce the passing of Comrade Domingo Michael Adeleke, who died today (Tuesday) in Geneva after a brief illness while attending the 114th Session of the International Labour Conference," the official said.

Adeleke was a member of the Nigeria Civil Service Union (NCSU). He also served as Chairman of the Lagos State Joint Negotiating Coun-

cil, where he was involved in labour-related advocacy and workers' welfare initiatives.

According to the NLC, he remained committed until his demise to the promotion of decent work and social justice.

"Comrade Domingo was a committed trade unionist whose dedication to Nigerian workers and the struggle for decent work took him to the global stage right to the end.

"His loss is felt deeply by all who knew him and worked alongside him," the official added.

The leadership of NLC disclosed that a visit has been made to the hospital where his body is being kept and arrangements are being made for the repatriation of his remains.

"The NLC leadership earlier today went to the hospital to see his body in solidarity, mourn his passing, and begin the process of arranging the necessary procedures," the official said.

His death has cast a shadow over Nigeria's participation in the ongoing International Labour Conference, which brings together governments, employers and workers' representatives from around the world to discuss labour and employment issues.

Tributes have continued to come from labour leaders and workers who remembered Adeleke for his contributions to labour relations and workers' welfare. Many have described his death as big blow to NLC.

Oborevori mourns victims of Agbor train mishap

Directs immediate government response

ASABA

Delta State Governor, Rt. Hon. Sheriff Oborevori, has expressed deep sorrow over the tragic train accident in Agbor, Ika South Local Government Area, which claimed four lives and left several others injured.

Oborevori in a statement issued by his Chief Press Secretary, Sir Festus Ahon, commiserated with the families of the deceased and prayed for the speedy recovery of those receiving treatment from injuries sustained in the incident.

The Governor described the

accident as heartbreaking and unfortunate, noting that the loss of lives was a painful tragedy for the affected families and the state at large.

He assured residents that the state government had swiftly mobilized relevant authorities to the scene of the accident to provide assistance to victims and ensure an effective emergency response.

According to the statement, Governor Oborevori immediately directed the Commissioner for Special Duties, along with the Chairmen of Ika South and Ika North-East Local Government Areas, to move to the scene and coordinate rescue efforts.

The Governor also commended security agencies for their prompt intervention, disclosing that the Commissioner of Police was also at the scene and had deployed adequate security personnel to safeguard passengers' luggage and other valuables in the train.

The statement further revealed that those who sustained injuries were promptly evacuated to nearby hospitals for medical attention, other survivors without injuries were moved to town, while the remains of deceased victims were deposited in the mortuary.

To facilitate the evacuation process, buses were immediately dispatched to convey survivors and injured passengers from the scene.

Providing an update on the condition of the victims, Chairman of Ika North-East Local Government Council, Hon. Monday Odigwe, disclosed that 35 injured passengers were receiving medical attention across three hospitals.

According to him, 13 victims are being treated at Central Hospital, Agbor, 12 at General Hospital, Owa-Oyibu, and 10 at General Hospital, Owa-Alero.

Odigwe also stated that officials had received assurances that efforts would be made to lift up the train on Tuesday.

Governor Oborevori prayed for the peaceful repose of the souls of those who lost their lives and also the fortitude for the families to bear the irreparable loss.

Stakeholders urge Rivers govt to set up the Ministry of Blue Economy

ABUJA

The Rivers State Government has been advised to make haste and begin steps to enthrone a Blue Economy. The government has also been called upon to leverage the Ogoni cleanup scheme to launch appeals for total cleanup of the state by starting with the environmental audit of the state.

These were the key resolutions at the activity on the World Ocean Day which took place at the Rivers State Council of the Nigerian Union of Journalists (NUJ) in Port Harcourt by the Energy and Maritime Reporters (EMR) of Nigeria.

Stakeholders regretted that

Rivers State, a key coastal state, did not seem to lead in taking advantage of low hanging fruits in the dawn of the Blue Economy, and called on the state government to set up a dedicated ministry to this and develop a blue print to explore the sector the way the Federal Government has already done.

The stakeholders said if such a Ministry had been set up, that EMR members and other stakeholders would be engaging with it to render support and ideas to make Rivers State a leading state in the Blue Economy headway.

On cleanup, the stakeholders observed that Rivers State stood at huge advantage to leverage Ogoni Cleanup to get the

experts and resource persons that audited Ogoni environment to also audit the state and invite oil majors, the Federal Government, and the international community to support cleanup of the state.

Experts said such would have laid a drive for other states to latch on the Rivers blue print to push for the cleanup of the entire Niger Delta.

At the World Ocean Day event at the NUJ, Dr Suka Monta, an energy expert, once again affirmed that his firm has found a way to clean up pollution faster, better, and cheaper. He said his nano method does it once while the existing technology runs a site thrice to get results. He said oil companies and agen-

cies of government have his discovery to test and saw it is true. He said his firm is expecting to land its first cleanup project.

At the event, Dr Fyeface Dumnamene Fyeface, Executive Director, Youth and Environment Centre (YEAC) Nigeria, joined the call for total cleanup of the Niger Delta, saying modular refineries would have since made pipeline vandalism and artisanal refining a thing of the past.

Comrade Paul Bazia-Nsane, the state NUJ Chairman, commended the EMR and called it a unique beat association. He pledged total support to the group to help give voice to the energy and maritime sub sectors in the Niger Delta.

NEWS

Uromi JDPCI tasks stakeholders on fight against child labour

JUDE EHEBHA

UROMI

The Uromi Justice, Development, Peace and Caritas Initiative (UROMI JDPCI) has advocated for stronger collaboration among stakeholders to eradicate child labour, abuse, trafficking and exploitation, while promoting the rights and welfare of children across communities.

JDPCI equally advocated for the empowerment of parents and caregivers through sustainable livelihood, fair wages and economic opportunities to be able to fend for their children.

The calls were made at the commemoration of the 2026 World Day Against Child Labour and Abuse organised by the Uromi JDPCI under its Human Rights Education and Paralegal Scheme in Edo Central

Senatorial District with the support of MISEREOR Germany.

Speaking at the event, the Executive Director of Uromi JDPCI, Very Rev. Fr. Dr. Fidelis Arhedo, said the global observance provided an opportunity to draw attention to the plight of millions of children whose rights, education, health and future are threatened by child labour, abuse, neglect, exploitation and trafficking.

According to him, the theme of the celebration, "Red Card to Child Labour: Fair Play for Children, Decent Work for Adults," conveys a strong message that

society must reject every form of child labour and abuse.

"In sports, a red card signifies conduct that is unacceptable and must stop immediately. In the same way, we are called today to reject every form of child labour and abuse that deprives children of their childhood, education, dignity and opportunity to achieve their God-given potential," he said.

Fr. Arhedo stressed that fair play for children means creating an environment where every child is free to learn, play, grow and flourish.

"It means ensuring that children carry books rather than burdens, sit in classrooms rather than hazardous workplaces, and pursue dreams rather than struggle under the weight of exploitation and poverty," he stated.

The cleric further noted that the fight against child labour

must go beyond rescuing children from exploitative situations.

"The second part of the theme, 'Decent Work for Adults,' reminds us that child labour is often rooted in poverty, unemployment, inequality and lack of social protection. When parents and caregivers



CHILD LABOUR AND ABUSE:

Executive Director, Uromi JDPCI, Very Rev. Fr. Dr. Fidelis Arhedo (right), and Child Safeguarding/Gender Based Violence officer of the Edo State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB), Dr. Mrs. Isoken Osemwengie at the 2026 World Day Against Child Labour and Abuse organised by the Uromi JDPCI.

Insecurity: I-G orders redeployment of DIGs to respective zones

ABUJA

The Inspector-General of Police (I-G), Mr. Olatunji Disu has ordered the deployment of Deputy Inspectors-General of Police (DIGs) to their respective zones with effect from June 15.

Disu gave the order on Tuesday in Abuja during his conference with the Strategic Police Managers, consisting of officers from the rank of Commissioners of Police (CPs).

The I-G said the order aims to strengthen supervision, improve operational coordination, enhance accountability and pro-

vide strategic oversight of policing activities within their zones.

He said the DIGs were expected to work closely with the Assistant Inspectors-General of Police (AIGs), and CPs in their various zones to ensure that operational directives were effectively implemented and measurable results achieved.

"Let me make it clear that this deployment is not ceremonial; it is intended to bring leadership closer to the field, improve response mechanism and ensure that emergency reports receive prompts attention," he said.

Disu also directed CPs to immediately establish what he

termed "handshake" patrol to ensure that criminals were stopped from committing an offence in one state and escaping to another.

He said the practice of committing crime in one state and escaping to another must be thwarted through deliberate collaboration and joint operational planning.

"Accordingly, CPs are to establish coordinated patrols along major entries and exit routes of their various states.

"Intelligence sharing mechanisms should be strengthened, operational communication channels kept open at all times and joint responses initiated whenever circumstances

requires.

"I expect CPs to maintain direct communications with their counterparts in their neighbouring states and to jointly review security deployments on regular basis," he said.

The I-G said security must be approached from the original rather than purely territorial perspective.

He urged the senior officers to maintain professional and constructive engagement with the media, adding that the force's relationship with the media should not be limited to announcing arrest or personal successes.

LG campaign: Tenebe presents party's candidates to public...

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mwon); Hon. Austin Imafidon (Uhumwonde); Hon

Orobosa Christopher (Ovia North East); and Hon. Osarobo Anthony, Ovia South West.

"All these are the people to vote for; also vote for the councilors on that day of the election. The victory is sure following the good works of governor Monday Okpebholo. This is the time to test the 2.5 million votes promised Mr. President".

The chairman said PDP, NDP and other opposition parties are dead in Edo State leaving only the

APC, as the message of the developmental stride of Governor Okpebholo will reach the grassroots.

"The Council Chairmen when elected will take the message of the governor's developmental strides to the grassroots. We are strong onboard very young, vibrant, intelligent and good crop of leaders to government at the grassroots. We present them to you all today.

"Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) is dead in Edo State, Nigeria Democratic Congress (NDC) is not a party to follow. They can't even do a decent primary like the one done by APC

which was very transparent.

"The Chairman of NDC in Edo State is the number one suspect in the killing of the Governor's Orderly at the Benin Airport during the 2024 Governorship election in the State. He should be invited for questioning".

Tenebe received decampes from other political parties into the APC, urging them to join forces with the party to win the forthcoming local government election and every other election in the State for the people to enjoy the dividends of democracy.

Former Deputy Governor

of Edo State Pius Odubu, commended Governor Okpebholo for his infrastructural development across the State, especially the renovation, remodelling of the Oba Market which was raised down by fire in 2020.

He called on the people to continue to support the governor and ensure he delivered on his electioneering promises to Edo State. "The governor is developing the economy of the State, empowering youths and women as well as the employment of 5,000 teachers, in addition to the award of scholarships to deserving students.

Insecurity waves: Gov. Okpebholo...

«CONTINUED FROM PG 1

2027 general elections.

"There is no vacancy in Aso Rock. Edo State will stand firmly behind President Tinubu and his Renewed Hope Agenda," he said.

The governor also unveiled what he described as a new political direction for Edo State, announcing that the APC had fielded youthful and energetic crop of candidates for the forthcoming local government elections.

"We are changing the face of politics in Edo State by giving young and capable people the opportunity to lead at the grassroots level. The future belongs to our youths, and we

are creating pathways for them to contribute meaningfully to governance," he stated.

Deputy Governor Rt. Hon. Dennis Idahosa commended Okpebholo's commitment to youth inclusion and leadership development, noting that the administration had created opportunities for young people to occupy key positions in government.

Highpoint was the official unveiling of the Edo South Senatorial candidates of the party by the Governor, to include Engr. Ogbeide Ihama as the Senatorial candidate, Dr Paddy Iyamu, Oredo Federal Constituency, Bar Morede Igbinedion, Ovia Federal constituency among others

1.06m voters set for June 20 Ekiti...

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Nasarawa North Senatorial District; Rivers South-East Senatorial District; Ondo South Senatorial District; Dawakin Kudu/Warawa Federal Constituency, Kano State; and Zuru State Constituency, Kebbi State.

The Commission said the same technological safeguards, security measures, and operational standards designed for the Ekiti election would be deployed for the bye-elections.

Beyond Ekiti, INEC disclosed that preparations have commenced for the Osun State Governorship Election slated for August 15, 2026.

Amupitan urged political parties to adhere strictly to the electoral timetable and regulatory guidelines, noting that lessons learned from the Ekiti exercise would strengthen preparations for the Osun poll.

Speaking on behalf of political parties, the National Chairman of the Inter-Party Advisory Council (IPAC), Dr. Yusuf Dantalle, called for an urgent amendment of the Electoral Act, arguing that recent party primaries exposed significant shortcomings in the law.

Dantalle criticised provisions limiting parties to direct primaries or consensus arrangements, saying the exclusion of indirect primaries created logistical, financial, and administrative difficulties.

According to him, several parties struggled to conduct primaries and, in some cases, resorted to consensus arrangements that generated disputes among aspirants who felt excluded from the process.

"The experience of the recently concluded primaries demonstrates that the removal of indirect primaries created considerable constraints for political parties," he stated.

Meanwhile, INEC has filed

appeals against conflicting Federal High Court judgments challenging aspects of its 2027 Election Timetable and Schedule of Activities.

Amupitan said the Commission took the legal step to obtain definitive pronouncements from appellate courts and ensure certainty in preparations for the 2027 General Election.

According to him, one court ruling questioned aspects of the Commission's timetable, while another affirmed INEC's authority to issue electoral schedules but invalidated specific timelines relating to candidate nomination and substitution.

"In view of the differing conclusions reached in the judgments and to ensure certainty and stability in preparations for the 2027 General Election, the Commission has filed appeals and taken the necessary legal steps to obtain authoritative pronouncements from the appellate courts," he said.

The INEC chairman maintained that electoral activities are interconnected processes requiring careful coordination to ensure transparency, efficiency, and credibility.

He explained that critical activities such as submission and verification of party membership registers, monitoring of party primaries, candidate nominations, ballot printing, voter education, deployment of election materials, and configuration of BVAS machines require timelines not specifically provided for in the Electoral Act.

"The absence of coordinated timelines for such activities would create uncertainty, disrupt election planning, and undermine the Commission's constitutional responsibility to organise, undertake, and supervise elections in an efficient and credible manner," he added.



PUBLIC NOTICE

ISSUANCE OF TAX CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE (TCC) VIA E-MAIL

The Edo State Internal Revenue Service (EIRS) wishes to inform taxpayers, stakeholders, and the general public that, as part of our ongoing commitment to simplifying digital processes and improving the taxpayer experience, **Tax Clearance Certificates (TCC) will now be sent directly to taxpayers' registered email addresses.** This automated service will take effect on **July 1, 2026.**

To ensure seamless delivery, all taxpayers are advised to verify and update their email addresses by ensuring they provide a correct and active email address during tax registration, service request, or TCC application.

Taxpayers are encouraged to visit the nearest EIRS Branch or Zonal Tax Office across the state to update their email records before the commencement date.

Signed
Management
9th June, 2026

NEWS**Asagba of Asaba summons tricycle operators over abductions****ASABA**

The Asagba of Asaba, Prof. Epiphany Azinge, on Tuesday met leaders of the Commercial Motorcycle and Tricycle Operators Association (COMTOA) over rising abduction cases linked to tricycle operations.

The meeting, held at the

Asagba's Palace, brought together COMTOA executives, task force members, and palace chiefs to discuss measures to curb the growing security concern.

Azinge expressed concerns over reports of recent kidnappings carried out with commercial tricycles, describing the development as a serious

threat to public safety.

He said maintaining peace and security in Asaba remained a top priority, stressing that any activity capable of undermining law and order would not be tolerated in the kingdom.

The Asagba noted that Asaba's reputation as a peaceful and investment-friendly city must be protected, warning

that criminal elements operating through tricycles could damage the community's growth and stability.

He challenged COMTOA leaders to strengthen oversight of operators and develop effective control measures capable of preventing criminal activities within the transport sector.

The traditional ruler also

raised concerns on the enforcement of existing regulations, including the profiling of tricycle owners, drivers, routes, and operational limits across the city.

Azinge warned that the association would be held accountable if further abductions were linked to commercial tricycles, insisting that immediate solutions must be implemented.

He pledged the support of the traditional institution in ensuring that tricycle operations remained safe and free from criminal infiltration.

Responding on behalf of COMTOA, the Director-General of the association's task force, Chief Uchenna Okafor, said several monitoring mechanisms were already in place.

He explained that tricycle owners, riders, and guarantors were profiled by the state Ministry of Transport, while regular patrols were conducted to

monitor compliance and deter criminal activities.

Okafor assured the traditional ruler that surveillance and enforcement operations would be intensified to prevent the involvement of tricycle operators in kidnapping and other crimes.

Participants at the meeting also urged passengers to remain vigilant by confirming the official identification codes displayed on tricycles before boarding.

They advised commuters to record or share the registered code numbers with relatives or friends to aid investigations in the event of any security incident.

The meeting ended with a renewed commitment by both the traditional institution and transport operators to work together in safeguarding residents and preserving peace in Asaba.

**RECEPTION:**

A cross section of Edo All Progressive Congress (APC) faithful, during the flag off of Edo South Local Governments' chairmanship campaign rally in Benin City on Tuesday.

Insecurity threatening Nigeria's education future, says NUT president**GENEVA**

The Nigeria Union of Teachers (NUT) has expressed concern over rising insecurity across the country, warning that continued attacks on schools threaten the future of education.

The National President of NUT, Mr Audu Amba, said this while responding to questions from journalists on the sidelines of the ongoing 114th International Labour Conference (ILC) in Geneva.

Amba said teachers, learners and education stakeholders were increasingly worried about growing incidents of banditry, kidnapping and attacks on schools across several parts of Nigeria.

According to him, insecurity initially appeared manage-

able but has gradually spread, posing serious threats to basic education and undermining efforts to develop the nation's human capital.

He cited recent attacks in Kebbi and Niger states, where schools were reportedly targeted by criminals, leading to abductions and the killing of a teacher.

"The situation is becoming alarming. We recently witnessed attacks in Kebbi State where a school was invaded and a teacher was brutally killed before family members.

"We also had reports from Niger State where students were taken into captivity. These incidents are deeply disturbing and unacceptable," he said.

Amba said education remained the backbone of national development and should be protected from criminal elements

seeking to disrupt learning activities across communities.

"When education, especially basic education, comes under threat from insecurity, then something must have gone wrong somewhere within the system," he said.

The NUT president said the union had expected earlier incidents to serve as a wake-up call but noted that attacks were becoming more frequent.

He said recent developments in Oyo State further demonstrated that insecurity around schools was spreading and required urgent and coordinated government intervention.

"It is a matter of concern for all Nigerians because when education is threatened by banditry and kidnapping, the future of our country becomes uncertain.

"That is why government must be more proactive in addressing these security challenges before they cause irreversible damage to the education sector," he said.

Amba said the union's responsibility was to continue advocating for safer schools, teachers and learners, since it lacked the powers and resources of security agencies.

"The only weapon available to us is advocacy. We do not carry guns and we are not security agencies, but we must continue speaking up.

"Our responsibility is to advocate for the safety of schools, our teachers and the learners entrusted to our care across the country," he said.

According to him, fear and uncertainty have already affected teaching and learning, especially in communities considered vulnerable to attacks by criminal groups.

138m children trapped in labour, ILO urges global action**GENEVA**

June 9, 2026 (NAN)The International Labour Organisation (ILO) has called for urgent and coordinated global action to end child labour, saying nearly 138 million children remain trapped in the practice worldwide.

ILO Director-General, Mr Gilbert Hougbo, made the call ahead of the 2026 World Day Against Child Labour, observed annually on June 12 to mobilise efforts against exploitation.

The call was made in the sidelines of the ongoing 114th International Labour Conference (ILC) on Tuesday in Geneva, Switzerland.

Hougbo said about 54 million of the affected children were engaged in hazardous work that endangered their health, safety, development and future opportunities across different regions.

According to him, the situation remains unacceptable despite progress recorded globally in reducing child labour and advancing access to education, social protection and decent employment opportunities.

"Today, nearly 138 million children remain in child labour, including 54 million in hazardous work. This is unacceptable, we must accelerate action," Hougbo said.

He said the Marrakech Global Framework for Action against Child Labour provided a practical roadmap anchored on decent work, universal quality education and stronger

institutions.

The ILO chief said the framework also promoted expanded social protection measures and effective enforcement of laws aimed at eliminating child labour in all forms.

According to him, the framework introduces measurable indicators and an accountability mechanism designed to monitor implementation and sustain international attention beyond the 2030 target.

"For the first time, it includes clear indicators of progress and a built-in accountability mechanism to track implementation," he said.

Hougbo said the mechanism would help governments, employers, workers and development partners assess commitments and ensure that efforts translated into tangible outcomes for children.

He noted that this year's campaign theme, "Red Card to Child Labour: Fair play for children, decent work for adults," underscored the urgency of collective action.

According to him, every child deserves the opportunity to learn, play and grow up in a safe environment free from exploitation and hazardous labour.

"This year's theme reminds us that every child has the right to learn, to play and to grow up protected and safe," he said.

Hougbo called on governments, businesses, workers' organisations, civil society groups and communities to intensify efforts addressing the root causes of child labour globally.

He said improving access to quality education, expanding social protection coverage, creating decent jobs for adults and strengthening law enforcement remained critical interventions.

"Together, let us act with urgency and determination to end child labour," Hougbo said.

Woman docked for allegedly causing grievous hurt on her neighbour**ABUJA**

A woman, Hajara Jibril, 39, on Tuesday, appeared before a Dutse Magistrates' Court in Abuja charged with assault and causing her neighbour grievous harm.

Jibril, who is an inhabitant of Gudna Village, Abuja pleaded not guilty to the charge of causing grievous hurt.

Earlier, the Prosecuting counsel, Ogeheneke Agbodo, told the court that the defendant allegedly committed the offence on June 4.

She said that the complainant,

David Onnkuro reported the matter at the Divisional Police Headquarters, Deidei, Abuja.

The prosecutor said that on June 3, Onnkuro went out to buy some food items to cook but on reaching his house, he discovered that he had been locked out.

Agbodo further explained that while the claimant was complaining that his brother had locked him outside his house, the defendant shouted at him to leave her side of the apartment.

The prosecutor said that irked by the reaction, an alter-

cation ensued between both parties.

"Jibril angrily went into her apartment, brought out a bowl containing hot water and poured it on Onnkuro's face," Agbodo said.

She said that the action caused grievous injuries to the head and left eye of the claimant.

Agbodo further said that during Police investigation and interrogation, the defendant could not give a satisfactory reason for her actions.

The prosecutor stated that the offence contravened Section 265 of the Penal Code Law.

The defence counsel, Ebenezer Abdul, however, applied for bail for his client citing Sections 162 and 165 of the Administration of Criminal Justice Act (ACJA).

He said that the offence was a bailable one and until proven guilty the defendant was deemed innocent.

Abdul also informed the court that the defendant was also a first time offender with no previous criminal record.

The Senior Magistrate, Ibrahim Alkali admitted the defendant to N500,000 bail and with two sureties in like sum.

REMOVAL OF NAME/DATE OF BIRTH
I, formerly known as **OGWUCHE JUNIOR JOHN**, now wish to be known as **OGWUCHE JOHN**, also my correct date of birth is **26/6/2006** and not **5/6/2000**. All former documents remain valid concerned authorities and the general public please take note

KWASU confirms N2.14bn NELFund loan disbursement for 11,434 students

ILORIN

The Vice-Chancellor of Kwara State University (KWASU), Malet, Prof. Jimoh Shaykh-Luqman, has confirmed the receipt of N2,135,857,150 from the Nigerian Education Loan Fund (NELFund) for the benefit of 11,434 students of the institution.

Shaykh-Luqman disclosed this on Tuesday while responding to questions from journalists during an interactive session held in his office.

The vice-chancellor said the fund was received under the Federal Government-backed student loan scheme designed to improve access to tertiary education across the country.

The News Agency of Nigeria

(NAN) reports that the university had earlier acknowledged receipt of the money in a letter dated April 21 and addressed to the Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of NELFund.

According to the letter, which was made available to journalists, the institution confirmed receiving the funds on April 17 as payment for student loans approved for eligible beneficiaries.

The disbursement covers tuition support for 11,434 KWASU students who successfully accessed the education loan programme through NELFund.

Shaykh-Luqman described the intervention as a major milestone in higher education financing and a significant relief for thousands of students and their families.

He noted that many students faced financial challenges that often threatened their academic progress, adding that the scheme would help reduce such pressures.

The vice-chancellor said the initiative would strengthen access to tertiary education and ensure that deserving students are not denied opportunities because of financial constraints.

He commended the Federal Government and NELFund for the smooth processing and timely release of the funds.

According to him, the intervention demonstrates the government's commitment to supporting students and promoting inclusive access to higher education.

He expressed optimism that

the programme would enhance academic stability among beneficiaries and enable them to focus more on their studies.

"On behalf of the university, I sincerely thank the Federal Government and the Nigerian Education Loan Fund for the timely processing and disbursement of the funds in support of education," he stated.

The vice-chancellor added that the university would continue to support initiatives aimed at expanding educational opportunities and improving student welfare.

The NELFund scheme was introduced by the Federal Government to provide financial assistance to eligible students in tertiary institutions across Nigeria.

Ohanaeze Ndigbo prohibits installation of Eze Ndigbo, Igwe in Edo

BENIN CITY

The Edo State chapter of Ohanaeze Ndigbo has warned against the installation or coronation of any individual as Ezeigbo, Eze Ndigbo, Igwe or any similar monarchical title within the state, declaring such actions a violation of an existing judicial pronouncement.

The group also cautioned against the use of Igbo traditional titles or the performance of duties associated with such offices without approval from established traditional institutions in Igbo land.

Speaking during a press conference in Benin City, the President of Ohanaeze Ndigbo, Edo State Chapter, Chief Benjamin Ezekwere, maintained that any attempt to install, coronate or confer such traditional titles on any person in Edo State remains prohibited.

Chief Ezekwere whose statement was read on his behalf by the Secretary, Engr. Emmanuel Ofoedu, stated that the only recognised traditional leadership structure for Ndigbo in Edo State is the Ohanaeze Ndigbo, Edo State Chapter, working in collaboration with Igbo community unions,

town unions and community leaders under the authority of Ohanaeze Ndigbo Worldwide.

According to Ezekwere, the directive followed a resolution adopted by the General Assembly of Ohanaeze Ndigbo Worldwide on April 9, 2026.

He explained that the move was not intended to undermine any individual but was aimed at preserving the sanctity of the Igbo traditional institution, preventing avoidable conflicts and ensuring unity among Ndigbo resident in Edo State under a recognised leadership structure.

The Ohanaeze president reaffirmed the organisation's loyalty to His Royal Majesty, Ewuare II, the Oba of Benin, and other traditional institutions across Edo Central and Edo North Senatorial Districts.

He further called on the Edo State Government, members of the public and security agencies to take note that the use of such monarchical titles by unauthorised persons had been proscribed by the South-East Council of Traditional Rulers and Ohanaeze Ndigbo Worldwide and declared illegal by the court.

"Any attempt to install, coronate or confer such a title on any person within Edo State is prohibited," he stated.

Chidoka cautions courts against unrealistic, humiliating bail conditions

AWKA

Chief Osita Chidoka, former Minister of Aviation, has raised concerns over what he considered as "unrealistic and prohibitive" demand for a condition for bail.

Chidoka made the observation while speaking on "Bail and the Dignity of the Law: A Call For Judicial Restraint" on Tuesday in Awka.

The former Corps Marshal of the Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC) said such demands were no longer meant to secure the appearances of the suspects but to punish them for lacking means.

He cited a recent case where a suspect was granted bail but on terms only a few honest Nigerians could ever meet.

"The sureties must be serving federal civil servants of Grade Level 16 or above, each must own Abuja property worth N500 million. One must furnish a bank guarantee of N15 billion.

"An officer who enters service at Grade Level 08 and climbs over some 28 years to Grade Level 16 may earn, across an entire career, between N80 million and N100 million.

"Out of that come housing, the education of children, healthcare, transport, and other living expenses.

"By the court's ruling, an officer must show assets worth five times his lifetime earnings and to stand behind a liability

ty of N15 billion, roughly 150 times everything an honest career could ever yield," he said.

Chidoka said it was practically impossible for an honest and lawful public servant to produce the wealth the court expected from a respectable citizen.

He said the implication was that only civil servants who were worthy to be trusted were those who had somehow acquired what their salary could never explain.

He said the passport condition also compounded the situation because senior officers often travel on national interest and stripping them of their passports interfered with the very duties the state employed them to perform.

He said a court which found no real risk of flight could not in the same breath impose conditions fit for a fugitive of vast and unexplained means.

He said the law could not have intended the weaponisation of wealth over character adding that conditions that could not be met were not conditions but denial of bail.

"It is keeping the presumed innocent in detention not because the law demanded it, but because their freedom was priced out of reach.

"The focus remains on bail application and not the innocence or otherwise of accused persons.

"Let the courts secure attendance at trial, that is their duty, and let them stop there.

**SIGNING OF MoU:**

Executive Secretary/CEO, National Agricultural Development Fund (NADF), Mohammed A. Ibrahim (5th r); Registrar/CEO, Equipment Leasing Registration Authority (ELRA), Donald Wokoma (m); with others after the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to expand Agricultural Equipment Leasing and support food security in Nigeria on Tuesday in Abuja.

Police rescue abducted victim, arrest 4 suspects in Ondo

AKURE

The Police Command in Ondo State says it has rescued a 26-year-old woman, who was allegedly abducted and arrested four suspects linked to the incident in Owo, Owo Local Government Area of the state.

DSP Abayomi Jimoh, the command's Spokesperson, who made this known in a statement on Tuesday in Akure, said the incident was reported on Monday.

Jimoh said the victim, Miss Ogechi John, was forcibly taken away by unidentified men at Gozako Filling Station along Emure-Akure Expressway.

He explained that the suspects reportedly arrived in an ash-coloured unregistered Toyota Camry before abducting the victim and fleeing towards an unknown destination.

The spokesperson said the

command immediately activated a coordinated response alongside Amotekun, local hunters and vigilantes, upon receipt of the distress report.

According to him, the strategic entry and exit points within Owo and adjoining communities were swiftly secured, while multiple patrol and tactical teams were deployed to comb nearby bushes.

"The prompt and coordinated response yielded immediate results as the suspected getaway vehicle was later discovered abandoned in a bush at Ojana, Owo.

"Acting on intelligence gathered during the operation, police operatives arrested three suspects found in possession of a lady's motorcycle believed to be connected to the ongoing investigation.

"The suspects were identified as Friday Shola, 27; Friday Monday, 21; Osho Joseph, 24,

and one other.

"During preliminary interrogation, one of the suspects disclosed that the abandoned Toyota Camry had earlier been handed over to a herbalist identified as Lawal Lucky of Idimepe Street, Owo, who is currently at large.

"Sustained operational pressure and intelligence-driven efforts by the police culminated in the successful rescue of the victim, John.

"She has been rescued safely and is currently receiving the necessary support while investigators continue to process relevant evidence," he said.

Jimoh explained that efforts were ongoing to apprehend the fleeing suspects and identify any other persons who may have played a role in the crime, and ensure the successful prosecution of all culpable persons.

The spokesperson said the Commissioner of Police in the

state, CP Felix Ohagwu, commended the professionalism, resilience and swift response of the officers involved in the operation.

Jimoh also said the CP reiterated the command's commitment to protecting lives and property across the state and assured residents that criminal elements would continue to find no safe haven within Ondo State.

He, therefore, urged members of the public to remain security conscious and continue to support law enforcement agencies by providing timely and credible information capable of preventing crime and aiding investigations.

According to him, the command remains steadfast in its resolve to rid the State of criminal elements and ensure that all persons involved in criminal activities are brought to justice.

NEWS**JUDICIARY**

Judiciary central to sustaining rule of law in a democratic society — Tinubu

ABUJA

The First Lady, Sen. Oluremi Tinubu, has said that the judiciary remains central in sustaining the rule of law in a democratic society, serving as the institution where justice and fairness are upheld, and the rights of citizens protected.

The First Lady made this known on Tuesday in her speech during the opening ceremony of the International Association of Women Judges African Regional Conference held in Abuja.

She urged the judges to continue to build a judicial system that is transparent, compas-

sionate and firmly anchored on rule of law.

The First Lady said that public confidence in democratic institutions relies on courts being fair, accessible, and deeply committed to the rule of law.

"I commend the National Association of Women Judges of Nigeria for hosting this regional conference. Your sustained commitment to promoting judicial excellence, gender equity, and access to justice continues to inspire both the legal community and the wider society.

"Therefore, the presence of women on the Bench adds value to the judicial system by broadening perspectives and

deepening understanding in the dispensation of justice.

"As you deliberate over the coming days, I urge you to continue building judicial systems that are transparent, compassionate, and firmly anchored in the rule of law.

"I wish you a successful conference with positive outcomes that will deepen public confidence in our courts. While you are here, do enjoy our Ni-

gerian cuisine, music, beautiful culture and safe travels to your respective destinations."

Also speaking, Mr Lateef Fagbemi, SAN, the Attorney General of the Federation and Minister of Justice, he described the conference with Theme: "Promoting Excellence in the Administration of Justice" as timely.

Represented by the Permanent Secretary and Solici-

tor-General of the Ministry of Justice, Mrs Beatrice Jedy-Agba, Fagbemi said the gathering stands as a vibrant testament to the unwavering commitment of women judges across the continent to the noble cause of justice and the strengthening of democratic institutions.

"The theme of this conference, resonates with our collective African aspiration, as encapsulated in the African

Union's Agenda 2063, to build a continent rooted in the rule of law, human rights, and good governance.

"Attaining excellence in our courts is not merely a professional standard; it is the absolute bedrock of African democracy, the ultimate guardian of human rights, and the gateway to sustainable peace, integration, and development across our continent.

Lawyers warn child labour, trafficking offenders risk jail terms

LAGOS

Some legal practitioners have warned that individuals involved in child labour and trafficking risk prosecution, imprisonment and fines under Nigerian laws.

The lawyers spoke with our correspondent on Tuesday in Lagos, calling for stronger enforcement of child protection laws to curb the exploitation of children across the country.

Child labour involves engaging children in work that deprives them of their childhood, interferes with their education, or exposes them to physical, mental, social or moral harm.

Common forms of child labour include street hawking and domestic service, while the worst forms include child trafficking, forced labour, forced begging, commercial sexual exploitation and recruitment by armed groups in conflict situations.

Although child labour is a global challenge, it remains

prevalent in many low-income countries, including Nigeria.

Mrs Adeyinka Adeyefa, a legal practitioner with Hope Alive Educational Centre, attributed the persistence of child labour to poverty, economic hardship, lack of awareness, conflict and internal displacement.

"Struggling families rely on children to contribute financially, especially with the rising cost of living in the country.

"Some parents and employers may also not fully understand that certain forms of child labour are harmful or illegal," she said.

Adeyefa warned that trafficking children from rural communities into cities for hawking, domestic servitude or other forms of exploitation was punishable under the Lagos State Child Rights Law.

She commended law enforcement agencies for carrying out rescue operations involving children found in illegal factories, domestic servitude and trafficking networks.

Police arraign 3 over alleged N15m fraud

IBADAN

The police on Tuesday, charged three people before an Iyaganku Magistrates' Court, Ibadan, over alleged N15 million fraud.

The defendants are: Nathaniel Olanian, 45; Ayowale Olakanmi, 48; and Andrew Ojo, 40.

They are standing trial on charges bordering on conspiracy, obtaining money under false pretence, stealing and malicious damage.

They each, however pleaded not guilty to the charges.

The prosecutor, Insp. Adeshina Folaranmi, alleged that the defendants committed the offences on April 1, at about 9.00 a.m., at Moniya, Ibadan.

Folaranmi alleged that Olan-

yan and Olakanmi obtained the sum of N15 million from one Kemsan Acres Global company, under a false pretence of selling 20 acres of land to them.

He also alleged that the defendants conspired to wilfully damaged a fence, corner piece and pillars worth N50 million, belonging to the company.

The offences contravene the provisions of Sections 390(9), 419, 455 and 516 of the Criminal Law of Oyo State, 2000.

The Magistrate, Mrs Oluwabusayo Osho granted Olanian and Olakanmi bail in the sum of N10 million each with two sureties each in like sum.

She granted the third defendant, Ojo bail in the sum of five million Naira with two sureties in like sum.

The court adjourned the case until Dec.7, for hearing.

**COURTESY CALL:**

Speaker, House of Representatives, Abbas Tajudeen, (right) presents a gift to the Resident Representative of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS) to Nigeria, Mr. Moritz Sprenker, during a courtesy call on the Speaker in Abuja.

PHOTO: OMOYE AMINU

INEC appeals conflicting court judgments over 2027 elections timetable

ABUJA

Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) says it has approached the Court of Appeal to challenge the recent conflicting Federal High Court judgments regarding its powers to set timelines for the 2027 general elections.

INEC Chairman, Prof. Joash Amupitan (SAN), disclosed this at the commission's second quarterly consultative meeting with leaders of political parties at its headquarters in Abuja on Tuesday.

Amupitan noted that the legal action had become imperative to ensure certainty, stability and administrative efficiency ahead of the 2027

general elections.

He cited two differing judgments delivered in May in Suit No. FHC/ABJ/CS/517/2026 (Youth Party v. INEC) which questioned certain timelines in the 2027 election timetable.

The second litigation, according to him, is the Suit No. FHC/ABJ/CS/720/2026 (SDP v. INEC) which affirmed INEC's authority but nullified certain timelines relating to the nomination and substitution of candidates.

"While the commission remains fully respectful of the decisions of the courts, these judgments raise important legal questions concerning the extent of the commission's constitutional and statutory powers in coordinating and

regulating electoral activities.

"In view of the differing conclusions reached in the judgments and in order to ensure certainty and stability in preparations for the 2027 general elections, the commission has filed appeals against the decisions," he stated.

The INEC chairman noted that electoral activities were interrelated operational processes rather than isolated events.

According to him, while the Electoral Act prescribes timelines for some activities, many critical processes have no express statutory timelines but must be harmonised to avoid chaos.

Amupitan listed the activities to include verifying party registers, monitoring primaries, configuring Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) machines and printing

sensitive materials.

He assured the public that in spite of the pending appeals, the commission remained committed to conducting the 2027 general elections in strict compliance with the law.

"The commission, therefore, considers it imperative that all electoral activities be harmonised within a coherent and workable framework that promotes certainty, transparency, administrative efficiency and equal treatment of all political parties.

"I wish to assure political parties and the Nigerian public that notwithstanding the pending appeals, the commission remains firmly committed to conducting the 2027 general elections in strict compliance with the Constitution, the Electoral Act and all lawful judicial pronouncements," he said.

Travel agent in court over alleged N6.5m fraud

IBADAN

A 50-year-old travel agent, Olaitan Olabiya, was on Tuesday arraigned before an Iyaganku Magistrates' Court, Ibadan, for allegedly defrauding a client of N6.5 million.

Olabiya, whose address was not provided, is facing a three-count charge of conspiracy,

obtaining money under false pretences and stealing.

She, however, pleaded not guilty to the charge.

The Prosecutor, Insp. Kehinde Olarotimi, told the court that the defendant committed the offences with some others still at large between September 2024 and June 2025, at Akano area of Ibadan.

Olarotimi alleged that the

defendant obtained the N6.5 million from the complainant, Alhaja Atoke Akinwale to enlist him for 2024 Hajj pilgrimage, but failed to do so.

He said the defendant converted the money to her personal use.

Olarotimi said that the offences contravened Sections 390(9), 419 and 516 of the Criminal Law of Oyo State, 2000.

The Magistrate, Mrs Adebola Adeola, granted the defendant bail in the sum of N5 million with two sureties in like sum.

Adeola ordered that one of the sureties must be a blood relation of the defendant, while the other surety an Imam of a reputable mosque.

She adjourned the case until July 14 for mention.

Foreign**NEWS**

Israeli air strikes hit Lebanese city of Tyre despite Iranian warning to stop attacks

Israel has carried out strikes across southern Lebanon, despite a warning from Iran not to continue attacks in the country.

The Lebanese health ministry said eight people were killed in Tyre, where the Israeli military issued a new order for residents to leave the southern city, including its Christian quarter for the first time.

Israel and Iran paused hostilities on Monday, after an Israeli strike on Beirut targeting the Iranian-backed armed group Hezbollah triggered their first exchange of fire since a truce in April.

Iran warned that it could hit Israel again if it did not stop attacks in Lebanon. But Israel vowed to continue its campaign against Hezbollah.

The conflict is complicating President Donald Trump's efforts to strike a deal to end the war between the US, Israel and Iran.

Lebanese media reported that Israeli air and artillery strikes across southern Lebanon killed at least 13 people on Tuesday.

Two people were killed in a pre-dawn drone attack in Kfar Roumane, next to the major town of Nabatieh, according to report.

Later, the Israeli military again told residents of Tyre and its surrounding area to leave their homes immediately and move beyond the Zahrani river, about 30km (20 miles) to the north.

But for the first time, the evacuation order included the Christian quarter, in the city's north-west, where the military alleged that Hezbollah fighters

were operating last week.

Many residents of the Christian quarter and other areas of Tyre fled in response to the warning, causing heavy traffic on the main roads heading north.

The Israeli military posted its order on social media minutes after reports emerged of air strikes on several buildings in Tyre's eastern al-Massaken al-Shaabiyah area.

The Lebanese health ministry said at least eight people were killed and 32 were injured, but added that the figures were provisional because rescuers were still searching through rubble.

Another five people were reportedly injured in a later strike in the central al-Raml area.

There was no immediate comment from the Israeli mil-

itary. However, its evacuation order said Israeli forces had been "compelled to act forcefully" in Tyre because of Hezbollah's violations of a ceasefire agreement and the group's attacks on northern Israel.

The military also said in a separate statement that troops operating in the Ramim Ridge area of northern Israel's Galilee region had shot dead a "terrorist" who crossed the border from Lebanon and opened fire towards them.

Hezbollah said on Tuesday that its fighters had launched rockets at a new Israeli military site in the southern border town of Maroun al-Ras, and targeted Israeli troops and military vehicles further north in Qantara and Zawtar al-Sharqiyyeh with attack drones.

Sea drone rescues US army helicopter crew near Strait of Hormuz

Two crew members of a US army helicopter that crashed near the Strait of Hormuz on Monday were rescued by an American sea drone, US officials have told CBS News, the BBC's media partner.

It was the first such operation carried out by US forces, the officials added.

US Central Command (Centcom) earlier said the two "soldiers were safely rescued within approximately two hours and are in stable condition" after their AH-64 Apache helicopter went down "near the coast of Oman while patrolling regional waters".

It was not immediately clear whether the aircraft had developed a mechanical or any other technical problem, or had been downed by Iranian fire. The incident is being investigated.

In its statement on Tuesday, Centcom said the two crew members had been rescued at 19:33 EDT (23:33 GMT) on Monday.

"Rescue efforts were led by US Naval Forces Central Command and the 82nd Airborne Division, with support from US Air Force and Navy units including US 5th Fleet's Task Force 59," the statement added.

The military officials who spoke to CBS News said the pair had been rescued by an uncrewed surface drone that was operated by Task Force 59.

In 2024, Task Force 59 launched a new unit focusing on "the operational deployment of unmanned systems teamed with manned operators to bolster maritime security across the Middle East region".

It was not immediately clear what type of drone was used in the rescue operation, but a US official told ABC News that it had a speed boat-like design.

The BBC has approached Centcom for comment.

US President Donald Trump earlier told reporters the two crew members were "fine", and that a report into the incident would be issued later.



ISRAELI AIR STRIKES:

Plumes of smoke billowed over the coastal city of Tyre following Israeli air strikes

300 migrants bound for UK kidnapped and threatened with kidney removal

More than 300 migrants heading to the UK last summer were kidnapped, tortured and threatened with forced organ removal, the BBC has learned.

The young men, all from Iraqi Kurdistan, were captured in Libya by a militia who demanded a ransom of \$5,000 (£3,700) from each of their families, and threatened to harvest the captives' kidneys if payment was not made promptly.

We have spoken to some hostages who have since been released, and seen photo evidence suggesting that forced operations did take place.

The former captives showed us evidence of torture, and said they had been kept in cramped conditions, with nearly 180 people sharing a cell.

At least one hostage is known to have died, and it is unclear how many remain captive.

The militia was supposed to be guiding the migrants through Libya to the Mediterranean coast. However, a dispute over payment had broken out with the Iraqi Kurd people-smuggler, Noah Aaron, who had organised the migrants' journey.

Aaron is now serving a 10-year prison sentence in France for separate money laundering and smuggling offences.

Details of the kidnappings emerged during a recent BBC investigation into another smuggler, Kardo Jaf, which led to his arrest last month.

The two smugglers are believed to have worked together in the past. Both are from the town of Ranya in Iraqi Kurdistan - a region "riddled with active smuggling networks", according to a report by the UK think tank, Chatham House.

In February, a BBC investigative team was making in-

quiries about Jaf in Ranya, when they were approached by a local man who said his son had been one of the men held.

The man told the BBC that Aaron's smuggling gang had charged his family thousands of dollars for organising the journey to the UK, which would involve travelling through northern Africa, then across the Mediterranean into Europe.

The route would pass through Libya, a country with a "huge vacuum of government", according to Anthony Dunkerley, a UN adviser who has investigated human trafficking there.

Much of Libya is controlled by rival militias, and smuggling networks rely on their co-operation.

We learned that, during the summer of 2025, successive groups of migrants who had flown into Libya from Iraqi Kurdistan were taken to a

guarded compound and imprisoned.

The militia then demanded \$5,000 for each hostage, claiming Aaron had failed to pay it for a previous deal. If the money was not delivered quickly, families were warned, payment would be taken "with a kidney".

The Libyans also sent photos and videos of the hostages, many of which were distressing or violent. In one, a young man was filmed while being told he was being taken to a doctor to have his kidney removed.

The local man who approached us in Ranya said he had paid the ransom. His son was among 110 hostages flown home in January, on a plane organised by the Iraqi government. However, he showed a photo he said his son had sent while in captivity, displaying a raw scar they feared was from a forced organ removal.

Hundreds of aftershocks jolt Philippines as officials say death toll could rise

Hundreds of aftershocks have jolted southern Philippines after a magnitude 7.8 earthquake left dozens of people dead and hundreds more injured.

The scale of devastation on Mindanao island is becoming clear as emergency responders reach coastal cities and towns. Officials fear the death toll, which currently stands at 37 dead and 487 injured, could rise.

Buildings have collapsed and roads are either cracked or buried in landslides. Large swathes of the island still have no electricity or telephone connectivity.

The earthquake, which struck on Monday morning, triggered tsunami warnings in Indonesia, south of Mindanao and across Japan's Pacific coast, displacing tens of thousands of people.

"We hope the death toll does not increase further, but we are expecting it to move. Our priority today is search and rescue," Bernardo Alejandro, assistant secretary of the agency supervising disaster response, told DZMM radio.

Close to 2,000 homes and 6,000 public schools have been damaged by their estimate so far, he added.

The Philippines is routinely struck by earthquakes and volcanic eruptions because it lies on the so-called Pacific Ring of Fire, where there is increased seismic activity.

Monday's quake was caused by a movement on the Cotabato Trench, off the country's southern tip.

The trench, which is a source of huge quakes, generated a

magnitude 7.9 earthquake in 1976, triggering a tsunami that killed about 5,000 people.

Monday's quake sowed panic in otherwise sleepy parts of Mindanao. Mobile phone and CCTV cameras captured scenes of buildings crumbling to the ground and children screaming as the ground shook.

Construction worker Ramel Pato was bringing his three children - aged nine, 12 and 13 - to school in Polomolok town when the earthquake struck.

"When I was about to leave their school, I felt powerful shaking," Pato told the BBC.

"Children started running and crying."

Pato recalled surviving a less powerful earthquake in 1998, when he was seven years old. "It's not the first time I experienced something like this... I know I should not panic so I can think clearly."

Public school teacher Cesar Sundo, who lives in Lebak town, said the earthquake felt like he was "being vigorously rocked on a hammock for more than two minutes. ... and the shaking was getting stronger by the second."

"Everyone felt dizzy. Our students were shouting and crying while and we needed to calm them down. And it was thousands of students."

Sundo said the students, who were mostly 13-year-olds, stayed on school grounds until they were advised to go home.

"We were literally saved by our flag ceremony," he said, explaining that they were outside when the quake struck

NEWS

Foreign

Two reportedly killed as women take part in rare protest in Afghanistan

Taliban police used live fire to disperse a rare protest against the detention of women accused of violating strict Islamic dress codes in the western Afghan city of Herat, witnesses and protesters said.

Medics told the BBC two people died, but did not specify how. A number of others at the protest were injured.

Both men and women had taken to the streets days after local Taliban government officials reportedly began arresting women perceived to be "improperly wearing the hijab".

Police in Herat denied there had been any deaths, but have acknowledged they responded to the protest, telling the BBC that officers had "taken action to ensure security and maintain public order".

It is unclear what methods police used to break up the protest. Witnesses say the police opened fire, but the police did not confirm this when asked directly by the BBC.

One protester told AFP that the security forces "used sticks, whips and firearms to disperse the crowd. They even fired shots into the air".

He told the news agency he saw people wounded. "People are extremely frightened," he said. AFP also quoted a photographer who said he had seen security forces "striking protesters and firing weapons in the direction of the crowd".

"Based on what I personally witnessed, a significant number of people were injured," the photographer said.

The BBC could not independently verify the accounts.

Gunfire can be clearly heard in videos circulating online, while women can be heard screaming "don't beat [them]".

Sayed Masoud Hosseini, spokesperson for the Herat Police Command, said the protesters "acted in a manner that disturbed public order".

He added they were trying

to "create tension under the pretext of protesting issues related to the observance of hijab and opposing Islamic hijab, which is considered a divine obligation".

In one clip, some protesters can be heard chanting "education, work, freedom", the BBC's Afghan service reported.

Richard Bennett, the United Nations' special rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan, said on social media site X he was "alarmed by excessive use of force against seemingly peaceful protesters in Herat today", calling on those responsible to be "held accountable".

Wearing a hijab has been compulsory for women since May 2022

Protests against the Taliban, especially for women, have been rare in Afghanistan since they retook power in August 2021.

Initial attempts by women to defy the strict new rules brought in to control everything from their clothes to their education petered out, with women telling the BBC they were cowed by officials' response to their protests - including being beaten, abused, jailed and even threatened with death by stoning.

The wearing of a hijab is one of many rules brought in by the Taliban, who made it mandatory in May 2022.

However, this latest crackdown in Herat was reportedly only announced on Friday.

A number of eyewitnesses told BBC Afghan that since Saturday they had "seen with their own eyes women being arrested for not wearing the hijab".

One woman said the markets had since been "deserted", while another told BBC Afghan that officers from the Ministry for Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice, the so-called morality police, were checking cars and rickshaws for women wearing the hijab improperly.



PATIENT SUFFERING FROM CHOLERA:

Doctors carry a patient suffering from cholera for treatment at the MSF treatment centre in Maiduguri, Nigeria, Monday, June 8, 2026. (AP Photo)

Trump says Iran shot down US helicopter and vows to respond

President Donald Trump has accused Iran of shooting down a US helicopter over the Strait of Hormuz and vowed to respond to the attack out of "necessity".

Two crew members of the Apache helicopter that crashed following the attack were rescued by an American sea drone, the Pentagon said in a statement.

"There were two pilots involved, both are safe and uninjured," Trump wrote on Truth Social. "Nevertheless, the United States must, of necessity, respond to this attack."

It was not immediately clear what the US response would be, but any military action risks inflaming the shaky ceasefire with Iran once again. There has been no immediate response from Tehran on the US president's comments.

Iranian media appeared to acknowledge the incident, with the semi-official Mehr News Agency reporting that Iran had not claimed responsibility.

The prospect of US military action against Iran emerged as Israeli forces carried out strikes across southern Lebanon on Tuesday.

Tehran had warned that Israeli attacks on southern Lebanon would trigger another wave of retaliatory strikes.

Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi said on Tuesday that foreign forces near Iran's territory were at "constant risk on account of their own human errors, plain accidents or potentially being caught in crossfire".

"To reduce risk, best solution is for them [foreign forces] to leave," he said in a post on X.

On Tuesday, minutes before Trump's comments on the downed American Apache helicopter, Iran's top negotiator in peace talks with Washington, Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf, took to social media to signal retaliation.

"We prefer the language of diplomacy, but we speak other languages far more fluently.

Break your commitments, and we'll switch to what we speak best."

"You ride the horse you saddled!" he wrote.

Iran and Israel say they will pause strikes but warn of retaliation if ceasefire breached again

Israel and Iran halted attacks on each other after exchanging fire over the weekend for the first time since April's truce.

Trump publicly told both countries to "immediately stop 'shooting'" because they were jeopardising negotiations between Washington and Tehran on a deal to end the regional war.

He said on Truth Social that Israel and Iran are looking to do "an immediate ceasefire" but peace is "subject to ignorance or stupidity getting in its way".

On Tuesday he also told journalists: "We're in the final throes of what will be a very, very good deal," adding that it could take "two or three days" and the Strait of Hormuz would open immediately after.

But now that the US believes the Iranians were responsible for the downing of its helicopter, domestic concerns will demand some kind of reaction.

Earlier, in its statement on Tuesday, US Central Command said the two crew members from the downed Apache had been rescued at 19:33 EDT (23:33 GMT) on Monday.

"Rescue efforts were led by US Naval Forces Central Command and the 82nd Airborne Division, with support from US Air Force and Navy units including US 5th Fleet's Task Force 59," the statement added.

A spokesman for Centcom told the BBC that the crew members were rescued by an unmanned surface drone that was operated by Task Force 59, a Bahrain-based unit launched in 2024.

The unit looks after "the operational deployment of unmanned systems teamed with manned operators to bolster maritime security across the Middle East region".

Cholera outbreak overwhelms health facilities in Northeast Nigeria

A rapidly spreading cholera outbreak in northeastern Nigeria has killed at least 74 people and infected more than 7,800, according to Médecins Sans Frontières.

The outbreak, which began in early May in Borno State, is overwhelming health facilities as new cases continue to rise daily.

Health officials have recorded nearly 8,000 suspected infections across 14 local government areas, placing additional pressure on a healthcare system already strained by years of conflict, displacement and

poor access to clean water.

MSF says hundreds of patients are arriving at treatment centres every day, many suffering from severe dehydration after travelling long distances to seek care.

More than 500 cases were admitted in a single day last week, the highest daily figure since the response began.

Authorities are now preparing a vaccination campaign while aid workers expand treatment, hygiene and disease surveillance efforts to prevent the outbreak from spreading further across the region.

Man reportedly shot at Kenya protest against US Ebola quarantine centre

Protesters are angry that Kenya has agreed to host the US treatment centre

A demonstrator has been shot during a protest in the Kenyan town of Nanyuki against the construction of an Ebola quarantine centre for US citizens, witnesses have told journalists.

A protest leader told the Reuters news agency that police shot dead the demonstrator. The police have not yet commented.

Groups of protesters, who were waving Kenyan flags, carrying placards and holding a coffin with the word "Ebola" written on the side, had

been demanding that the US plan to build the health facility at a nearby military base be reversed. The police had fired tear gas to break up the demonstration.

Last week, two people died after being shot as police dispersed similar protests.

The AFP news agency reports that on Tuesday there were running battles in Nanyuki - about 200km (125 miles) north of the capital, Nairobi - as protesters clashed with police.

Its journalists heard gunshots and saw a man who had been shot in the head lying

motionless, AFP says.

Reuters reports that two of its journalists saw the body of the man in the back of a police vehicle, but they did not witness the shooting themselves.

The US plan has sparked public concern in Kenya about cross-border infection risks and the lack of transparency from the government about the treatment centre.

Last month, the High Court said the opening of the facility should be halted after a rights group opened a case alleging it posed "grave and imminent risks" to public health.

Protester Priscilla Imani told

Reuters that the US plan has affected Nanyuki and the wider Laikipia county with people being afraid to visit.

"My message is this, Laikipia is not a dumping site and our voices must be heard," she said.

The proposed 50-bed isolation centre is to be staffed by US medics and is intended to treat Americans affected by the current Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

A US official told the BBC that Kenya was selected due to "proximity, airports in the region having limited capability, and to ensure Americans can be treated in a timely manner".

FEATURES

Beyond the Headlines: Real stories, real fixes for UK knife crime

AISHA MOMOH

Knife crime remains one of the UK's most painful public safety challenges. For Nigerian communities in Britain, the grief cuts deeper when victims are sons, daughters, students, and workers who traveled abroad seeking safety and opportunity. Behind every statistic is a name, a family, and a future cut short.

This article uses verified cases to show the reality, then focuses on practical ways to curb it.

✓ Talay Riley — Mark Yinka Orabiyi, a 35-year-old British-Nigerian singer and songwriter, who was also a Grammy-winning singer. He was stabbed to death in East London on Friday, June 5, 2026, at about 9 a.m. on Pankhurst Avenue, Silverton. Emergency services responded but could not save him. His family described the loss as “overwhelming sadness,” calling him a Grammy Award-winning, multi-platinum artist whose humor and generosity would be deeply missed. His brother, producer Scribz Riley, said his heart was “shattered” after their last conversation about the future. A murder investigation by homicide detectives is still ongoing.

✓ Khaleed Oladipo, aged 20, a De Montfort University student and a second-year cybersecurity student from South London, was stabbed to death on a Tuesday evening near De Montfort University in Leicester. He was found with knife wounds feet away from the university's Journalism building, just after 17:00 GMT. His family said he was on his way home to watch Arsenal in a Carabao Cup semi-final. They described him as “a good boy who loved his family” and thanked those who tried to help him. Leicestershire Police arrested an 18-year-old man on suspicion of murder.

✓ John Temitope Onetufo, 23, from Deptford, was stabbed to death on New Year's Eve, Dec 31, 2025, in Grove Street, Lewisham, London. Police and paramedics treated him for a chest stab wound, but he was pronounced dead at the scene. A 17-year-old boy was later charged with murder, and two other suspects were arrested and bailed. Detective Chief Inspector Samantha Townsend said the investigation remained ongoing to establish the full circumstances.

✓ Fola Orebiyi, 17, an A-level student, was stabbed to death on a Sunday, some time ago, in Notting Hill, London, after a street clash with a gang of youths. He was chased into a busy road and stabbed in the neck in front of passers-by. He had just completed his GCSEs at Holland Park and was studying for A-levels at Chelsea Academy. Abike Dabiri-Erewa, the then SSA to the President on Diaspora, condemned the killing as “unacceptable” and called for a full investigation.

✓ Damilola Taylor, 10 — this is a case that changed UK law. Though it



happened in 2000, Damilola Taylor's death in Peckham, London, remains a reference point. The Nigerian schoolboy died from excessive blood loss after his femoral artery was severed. His case led to national campaigns and a renewed focus on youth knife crime and community support.

Each name represents more than a headline. They were students, artists, fathers, and brothers. Families are left with GoFundMe appeals for funerals and unanswered questions:

PATTERNS BEHIND THE PAIN

From these cases and police data, several patterns emerge, such as:

1. Location & timing: Many incidents happen in London boroughs — Lewisham, New Cross, Notting Hill, Silverton — and often in late afternoon/evening or early morning.
2. Youth vulnerability: victims include students aged 17-20 years and young workers. Some were not gang-involved but were in the wrong place.
3. Gang/territorial clashes: Fola Orebiyi's case involved a chase by a gang. County lines drug networks also exploit youth, increasing risk.
4. Robbery and disputes: Daniel Manuel, 32, was fatally stabbed in

Vauxhall after a dispute in a flat. Emmanuel Odunlami was stabbed for a watch after leaving a restaurant.

SUGGESTED WAYS TO CURB IT: WHAT WORKS

FOR PARENTS & GUARDIANS

1. Start conversations early: Talk to your children from age 10 about peer pressure, “county lines” grooming, and why carrying a knife increases risk. Walking away is strength, not weakness.
2. Know their world: Know your children's friends, social media, and routes home. Hotspots change — the Met Police publishes knife crime data by borough.
3. Leverage community: Nigerian churches, mosques, and associations like NiDCOM run mentorship and sports programs that give youth identity outside street culture.

FOR YOUNG NIGERIANS IN THE UK

1. Exit strategies: If friends carry knives or talk “postcode wars,” distance yourself. Real loyalty doesn't require violence.
2. De-escalate: Most stabbings start as arguments. Apologize, walk away, or call 999.
3. Report safely: Use Crimestop-

pers at 0800 555 111 anonymously. <http://Fearless.org> is for under-18s.

4. Seek help: Stress, trauma, and anger are real. GPs, <http://Kooth.com>, and Shout at 85258 offer free support.

The Nigerian diaspora is known for resilience and unity. After each tragedy, churches hold vigils, and communities raise funds.

However, resilience must mean prevention, not just reaction. Every funeral fundraiser is a reminder that we need more mentorship, more safe spaces, and more honest conversations at home.

To parents, your child's safety is worth awkward talks. To the youth, your life is worth more than a street name or a moment of anger, and to all of us, when one Nigerian bleeds, the whole community feels it. Let's protect each other.

If you or someone you know is being pressured to carry a knife, speak to a trusted adult, teacher, or call Childline in the UK. In an emergency, call 999.

May the souls of Talay Riley, Khaleed Oladipo, John Onetufo, Ayowale Aladejana, Fola Orebiyi, Damilola Taylor, and all victims rest in peace.



If friends carry knives or talk “postcode wars,” distance yourself. Real loyalty doesn't require violence.

Karma came visiting

YUSHAB ABOLORE AYOMIDE

Yesterday, I came across a bandit's TikTok post. What I saw in the comment section left me heartbroken.

Hundreds of Nigerians had flooded the comments with all sorts of insensitive remarks. Some were asking to join them. Some were inviting them to come to their states. Some were openly begging them for money... blood money obtained from ransom payments made by fellow Nigerians through tears, fear, pain, and broken hearts.

Some people even joined their live sessions and dropped their account details for giveaways.

What hurt me the most was seeing others defend such behaviour as cruise.

If you decide to caution them, they will say you're taking things too seriously. Some people were even saying things like;

"It's just for fun na."

"E no really mean anything."

"Let's enjoy the cruise and move on."

Hmmm...

Maybe that's true. Maybe it's all cruise.

But I want to share a true-life story. Perhaps someone will understand that every action, no matter how small it seems today, can leave consequences that last for generations.

During the Obasanjo administration, a police officer was posted to a station in Itokin. Due to the security challenges in the area at the time, he and his colleagues were often stationed around Itokin Bridge.

One night, on May 6, 2001, a woman who had just returned from the United States was travelling back to Ijebu-Ode. It was already late.

As she approached Itokin Bridge, armed robbers attacked her. Her vehicle was badly damaged during the attack. Fortunately, the sound of gunshots alerted nearby police officers, who quickly rushed to the scene.

On sighting the police, the robbers fled without taking anything.

When the police officer leading the patrol team approached the woman, she was still alive. She was badly injured, but she could still have survived if she had been rushed to the hospital immediately.

As the officer got closer, the woman pointed weakly towards a nearby bush. Inside it was a bag containing money the robbers had been unable to steal.

The officer checked the bag.

It was filled with dollars.

At that moment, everything changed. The desire to save a dying woman suddenly gave way to greed.

He deliberately sent the other officers after the fleeing robbers so they would not discover the money.

The same police vehicle that should have been used to rush the woman to the hospital was instead used to chase criminals who had already escaped.

And just like that, the woman died.

Years passed. The police officer retired and relocated to Ijebu-Ode.

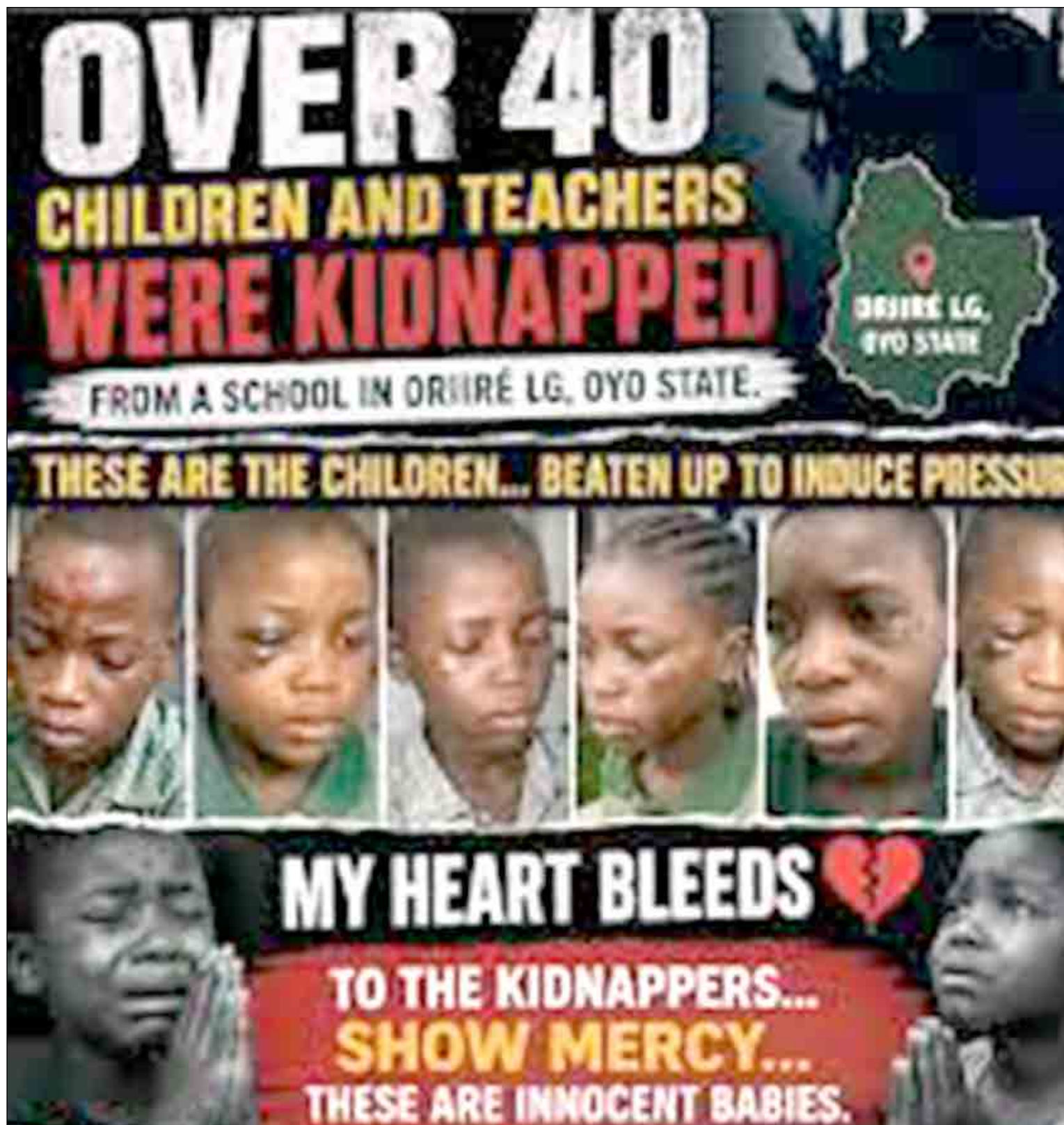
In April, 2019, there was a high-profile kid^napping incident around Itokin Bridge. The officer escaped unharmed.

Grateful to be alive, he called his children abroad and told them he wanted to celebrate both his survival and his birthday together.

A double celebration.

But life had something else waiting for him.

A few weeks later, on May 6, 2019,



his two children were involved in a fatal accident close to Itokin Bridge while going to Ijebu-Ode immediately after they arrived in Nigeria.

They died instantly.

When he arrived at the scene and saw where it happened, he froze.

It was the exact same spot where he had abandoned that woman to die on May 6, 2001.

Seventeen years earlier.

The officer later shared the story himself.

He said he deserved what happened.

According to him, that was only one of many atrocities he committed during his years in service. Yet somehow, that particular incident never left him.

He confessed that the money he stole that day was the same money he used to send his children abroad and support them for years.

For seventeen years, life moved on.

He forgot.

He convinced himself it was in the past.

Even after escaping the kidnapping incident weeks earlier, he never once

remembered the woman.

But the moment he stood over the lifeless bodies of his children, every detail came rushing back.

Every choice.

Every moment.

Every act of greed.

Every second he chose money over a human life.

I do not know whether that is how karma works.

But I know this:

Every action has consequences.

Maybe not today.

Maybe not tomorrow.

Maybe not even in ten years.

But nothing truly disappears.

Especially when it is built on another person's tears.

If you choose to celebrate bandits, glorify kid^nappers, support criminals, or benefit from the suffering of innocent people because there is money involved, I will not stop you.

I only want to remind you that consequences do not always arrive immediately.

Sometimes they wait.

Sometimes they grow quietly in the shadows.

Sometimes they come when life is finally good and you think you've gotten away with everything.

And sometimes, they arrive through the people you love most.

The frightening thing about evil is not that it pays today.

The frightening thing is that the bill often comes years later, when you have forgotten the debt ever existed.

Somewhere tonight, a father is still crying because he sold everything he owned to pay a ransom.

Somewhere, a mother is staring at an empty chair because her child never came home.

Somewhere, a family is trying to learn how to breathe again after burying someone they loved.

And while they mourn, others are online laughing, joking, begging criminals for giveaways, and calling it cruise.

Maybe it is cruise to you.

But for somebody else, it is a lifetime of pain.

One day, the comments will disap-

pear.

The livestreams will end.

The jokes will stop trending.

But the tears of victims will remain. And if there is one thing life has taught us, it is this:

Money stained with another person's pain never truly brings peace.

Before you celebrate evil because it looks profitable, remember that every ransom payment carries someone's tears.

Every stolen fortune carries someone's sorrow.

And every act of wickedness leaves a footprint that time can never completely erase.

May we never become so entertained by evil that we forget the humanity of its victims.

Because the saddest tragedy is not that criminals exist.

It is that ordinary people can gradually learn to laugh alongside them.

And when a society begins to laugh at the pain of its own people, it is already bleeding from wounds deeper than it realizes.



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FP 4X2	73,000	78,475	80,700	86,753	4 X 2	45,260	48,655	34,400	36,980
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Bendel Insurance FC embark three weeks end of season break

KEHINDE OSAGIEDÉ

Management of Bendel Insurance Football Club has approved a 3-week break for players and officials with effect from June 10, 2026.

The players and coaches including the backroom staff are expected to return to work on



BENDEL INSURANCE FC

the 4th of July while training is scheduled to commence the following day.

The General Manager, Bendel Insurance FC Charles Ohimekpen in a meeting with the players, coaches and the backroom staff at the Samuel Ogbemudia stadium today, delivered the goodwill message

of Insurance FC management to the team, urging them to remain disciplined and always be conscious of their status as professional football players as they enjoy their holidays.

According to Mr Ihimekpen, "despite the heartbreaking and embarrassing result we posted against El-Kanemi Warriors leading to the dramatic exit from the President Federation Cup on Saturday, June 6, 2026, management still remains grateful to God and expressed appreciation for the good fight and the sacrifices the players made to finish fifth on the premier league table."

"We could not achieve what we planned to get, but when you look back to where we are coming from, there is need to thank God and still appreciate you guys".

Management is not happy about how we threw away first half 3-0 lead in the second half

and went into shootouts and lost to El-Kanemi Warriors. We hope all of us have learnt a lesson so that next season we do not allow such a disaster.

The management of Bendel Insurance FC wishes the players and coaches a happy end of season break and advised them to keep themselves healthy with their beloved families.

Also speaking at the general meeting, the technical manager of the Benin Arsenal Kennedy Boboye who could not hide his disappointment with the performance of his team against El-Kanemi Warriors advised the players that are going to remain with Insurance in the 2027 season to be ready to clean up the mess with more dedication and patriotism and work harder to erase the painful memories of the Federation Cup round of 16 dramatic loss, when they return.

Kogi Govt reaffirms support for Kogi United Football Club

The Kogi Government has reiterated its continued support for Kogi United Football Club.

Mr Aridaajo Anyebe, the Commissioner for Youth and Sports Development, gave the assurance while receiving a commendation award from the management and players of the club on Tuesday in Lokoja.

Anyebe said both Kogi United Football Club and Confluence Queens Football Club will continue to enjoy the present administration's patronage to uplift them and Kogi sports generally.

The commissioner said that Gov. Ahmed Ododo's government remains committed to

youth and sports development in the state.

He thanked the club's management and players for recognising his contributions to Kogi United's growth.

Anyebe promised not to relent, saying with the Governor's backing, the club will reach greater heights.

Earlier, the Team Manager of Kogi United, Mr Michael Olachene, said the award was in recognition of the commissioner's zeal and passion for the club's growth.

Olachene described Anyebe's performance as impressive, stressing that the club management is happy with his leadership.



Mr. Aridaajo Anyebe (middle), the Commissioner for Youth and Sports Development.

2026 World Cup: Gara-Gombe absolves Gusau of Eagles' qualification failure

A football stakeholder, Ahmed Gara-Gombe, has absolved Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) President, Ibrahim Musa Gusau, of blame for the Super Eagles' failure to qualify for the 2026 FIFA World Cup.

The Super Eagles will miss the 2026 FIFA World Cup after losing to the Democratic Republic of Congo on penalties in the African qualifying playoffs.

The setback marks Nigeria's second consecutive absence from football's biggest tournament, having also failed to qualify for the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar.

Gara-Gombe said that the qualification setback resulted from collective failures, internal sabotage, and longstanding structural problems inherited by the current NFF administration.

With the 2026 FIFA World Cup approaching, participating countries have submitted their final squads to FIFA ahead of the tournament in the U.S., Canada, and Mexico.

For many Nigerians, however, excitement over football's biggest event is overshadowed by disappointment following the Super Eagles' absence from the competition.

The failure has revived painful memories and concerns over missed sporting, economic, and developmental opportunities for the country.

Many supporters had hoped to see Nigeria compete among

the world's football powers and challenge for honours on the global stage.

Others anticipated seeing leading striker Victor Osimhen and other stars showcase their talents before a worldwide audience.

Stakeholders also expected emerging players to announce themselves and contribute significantly to the team's campaign.

Many believed the Super Ea-



SUPER EAGLES AND IBRAHIM MUSA GUSAU

FCT FA sets June 19 deadline for Division One league registration

The Federal Capital Territory Football Association (FCT FA) has announced June 19 as the final deadline for the registration of clubs participating in the 2025/2026 season of the FCT FA Division One League in Abuja.

The Secretary of the FCT FA, Haruna Ilerika, said on Tuesday in a statement in Abuja that the registration commenced on April 8 and to close May 30 but has been extended to June 19.

"This is to give clubs adequate time to complete their

payments," he said.

According to the Ilerika, the registration fees have been fixed at N150,000 for Division One clubs and N120,000 for Division Two clubs.

"Clubs are directed to make payments into the FCT FA account and evidence of payment forwarded, clearly indicating the name of their team.

"The Division One League will kick off on June 29, as no further extension will be granted for registration.

"The association warns that any Division One club that fails to meet the registration deadline will be automatically replaced.

"The FCT FA urges all affected clubs to comply with the registration requirements to ensure a smooth commencement of the 2025/2026 league season," he said.



NASCO/ITF J30: Agunbiade suffers second defeat

Olorun-Damilola Agunbiade recorded his second consecutive defeat in the boys singles event at the ongoing 2026 NASCO/ITF J30 World Tennis Tour Junior Championship yesterday in Abuja.

The second week of the championship began on Monday and is expected to end on Saturday at the Tennis Complex of the Moshood Abiola National Stadium, in Abuja.

Youngster, Agunbiade lost 3-6, 3-6 to Amir Mohammed in a

Group D encounter leaving him without a win after two matches.

Agunbiade is competing in Group D alongside Amir Mohammed, Jinxuan Cheng of China, and Nathaniel Aluko.

He had earlier suffered a 1-6, 0-6 defeat to China's Jinxuan Cheng in his opening group match on Monday. While Mohammed strengthened his qualification hopes with the victory, having opened his campaign with a 7-6(3), 6-1 win over Nathaniel Aluko.



OLORUN-DAMILOLA AGUNBIADE

NWFL Super Six MD3: Edo Queens tackle Abia Angels in make or mar battle ● as Enabulele charges team to go for glory



EDO QUEENS FC WITH THE EDO SPORTS COMMISSIONER

KEHINDE OSAGIEDE

Edo Queens FC will on Wednesday June 10th, 2026, at the Adokiye Amiesimaka Stadium in Port Harcourt face Abia Angels of Aba in match day 3 of the ongoing Nigeria Women Football League (NWFL) Super 6 campaign. Kick-off time is 9:00AM prompt.

The former league and WAFU champions must beat Abia Angels tomorrow morning to remain in contention for the league title and hope for CAF tournament.

The Benin City Queens gave

good account of themselves in yesterday's crucial match against the athletic FC Robo Queens of Lagos. Despite Robo Queens resistance, Edo Queens overpowered them and recorded an emphatic 4-1 win to secure their first three points in the competition.

Edo Queens suffered a 1-0 defeat to Nasarawa Amazon in the opening match of the NWFL super six, putting the girls under pressure.

Abia Angels on the other hand have caused some upset in the tournament holding in Port Harcourt as they shockingly beat former Champions Rivers Angels 1-0

in their second match after holding another former champions Bayelsa Queens to a 1-1 draw on day one encounter. They have been the giant killers in the tournament.

Speaking ahead of the clash tomorrow, the captain of Edo Queens Deborah Odiagbe expressed the confidence that Abia Angels cannot be any strong huddle capable of hindering the progress of the former WAFU- B champions.

According to her, "Abia Angels shouldn't be a team to give Edo Queens sleepless night. However, there will be no complacency, we are going to take

them on fire for fire, strength for strength and speed for speed. Victory is the only thing we need tomorrow". she enthused.

Nasarawa Amazons are the only team that have won their two games. They are currently topping the Super 6 table with 6 points from two matches, Abia Angels are 2nd with 4 points from two games, Edo Queens are third with 3 points from two matches while Rivers Angels sit 4th with 3 points and defending champions Bayelsa Queens occupy 5th position with 3 points. FC Robo Queens are last with no point so far.

Fencing: Suru earns recognition at FIE women's coaching seminar

Fencing coach, Bola Suru, has strengthened her international profile after being selected among 13 female coaches worldwide for the International Fencing Federation (FIE) Women's Coaching Seminar in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

The seven-day programme was held alongside the Junior and Cadet Fencing World Championships and brought together coaches from 13 countries on the FIE development pathway.

The second edition of the seminar focused on developing technical expertise, leadership capacity and career advancement opportunities for women in fencing coaching.

Participants underwent intensive theoretical and practical training designed to improve coaching standards across the three fencing weapons: epee, foil and sabre.

Suru, who previously guided Nigeria's junior fencing team to the FIE-sanctioned World Cup in Cairo, Egypt, described the programme as a transformative experience.

"The programme offered a rich and diverse learning journey, covering career development, leadership, athlete management, and technical coaching skills.

"Each session provided practical insights and strategies I can apply to enhance my effectiveness as a coach," Suru said.

She noted that the seminar created opportunities to learn from experienced professionals and exchange ideas with

coaches from different parts of the world.

"I had the opportunity to learn from highly experienced professionals and interact with coaches from different countries.

"The discussions encouraged us to explore new approaches to training, communication, and athlete development, pushing us beyond our current methods and limitations," she said.

The programme highlighted the importance of continuous professional growth and creating supportive environments for athletes and coaches.

"The sessions on career growth and leadership empha-



NIGERIA FENCING TEAM

sised the importance of continuous learning, mentoring, and building a supportive environment for athletes and fellow coaches.

"The technical sessions strengthened my knowledge and gave me hands-on strategies to implement in my coaching practice," the coach said.

International friendly: Ronaldo, Iwobi set to be cynosure as Nigeria confront Portugal in Leiria



ERIC CHELLE

Nigeria's Super Eagles and Portugal's Seleção das Quinas will trade tackles in the central Portuguese town of Leiria on Wednesday in what promises to be a fierce encounter in all ramifications,

despite its tag of a friendly.

Coaches Éric Chelle and Roberto Martinez have their different reasons for not wanting to lose, with the latter aiming to extend an unbeaten run

that will instil a winning mentality in his squad ahead of the FIFA World Cup finals, and the former unwilling to surrender a brilliant record with Nigeria since taking over the Eagles' dugout 15 months ago.

In that period, Franco-Malian Chelle has overseen 24 matches, losing only once in regulation time – a pre-Africa Cup of Nations friendly in Cairo in December 2025 that he executed with an under strength squad.

Martinez, a wise old cock in the game, has taken his team through a four-match unbeaten streak during which they defeated USA and Chile, and drew with Mexico. Their last defeat was a two-goal reverse against the Republic of Ireland seven months ago.

Barau vs Ikorodu: Anambra FA hails NFF for approving Awka Stadium

The Chairman, Anambra Football Association, Chikelue Iloenyosi, has lauded the Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) for approving the Awka Township Stadium for one of the quarter-final matches of the President's Federation Cup.

Iloenyosi made the commendation during an interactive session with newsmen in Awka on Monday.

The quarter-final match between Barau FC and Ikorodu City FC, slated for Thursday, June 11, will be played in Awka.

He said the Round of 16 game between Nasarawa Utd FC and Rivers Utd FC, played in Awka on June 6, was a proof of the growing confidence in Anambra "as a viable venue for top national football matches".

He called on football enthusiasts and lovers of sports in Awka and Anambra in general to "come out en masse on Thursday to enjoy the best of professional football.

"More of these games will definitely do the state some good by keeping the youths busy positively, reducing insecurity and social vices and also help grow the tourism sector.

"I thank Gov. Chukwuma Soludo for providing the political leadership, and the Commissioner for Sports, who has shown huge commitment to the development of football and sports generally in Anambra.

"We are ready to collaborate with the ministry for the growth of the sector and discovery of budding talents at the grassroots," Iloenyosi said.



AWKA STADIUM

Abuja 2027: ANOCA Vice President expresses satisfaction with Nigeria's preparations for Africa School Games



African School Games Coordination Commission and the Local Organizing Committee for the Games, led by its chairman, Mr. Lekan Abari.

Nigeria's readiness to host the 2027 African School Games got another strong endorsement from the Association of National Olympic Committees of Africa (ANOCA) on Tuesday, after a strategic working session in Abuja.

Nigeria's 2027 African School Games hosting journey entered its next gear, after a

collaborative meeting between the ANOCA African School Games Coordination Commission and the Local Organizing Committee for the Games, led by its chairman, Mr. Lekan Abari. The session, which took place at the ANOCA Secretariat in Abuja, marked the first major technical review since Nigeria was awarded the hosting rights in 2025.

Abari delivered a detailed 46-slide hosting overview that covered governance, venues, logistics, and legacy plans. He outlined the structure of the LOC and its subcommittees, each tasked with specific aspects of the Games' delivery.

The presentation mapped out key competition and non-competition venues across Abuja. The Moshood Abiola

National Stadium is designated as the main stadium for ceremonies, athletics and other sports events.

Transcorp Hilton Abuja will be utilized for accommodation of officials and stakeholders. Jabi Lake is the proposed venue for canoeing events. Games Village and University of Abuja will serve as athletes' camp and accommodation.



Football politics top African referee Omar Artan speaks out after FIFA World Cup exclusion



OMAR ABDULKADIR ARTAN

Award-winning Somali referee Omar Abdulkadir Artan has broken his silence after being ruled out of officiating at the FIFA World Cup 2026 following his denial of entry into the United States.

FIFA confirmed on Monday that Artan would no longer participate in the tournament after U.S. immigration authorities refused him entry upon his arrival at Miami International Airport on Saturday.

The decision ends what

would have been a historic milestone for Somali football, as Artan was set to become the first Somali referee to officiate at a FIFA World Cup.

In a statement to AFP, a FIFA spokesperson confirmed the development, stressing that the governing body had no authority over immigration decisions made by host nations.

"FIFA can confirm that match official Omar Abdulkadir Artan will be unable to train and officiate at the FIFA World Cup 2026 after he

was denied entry into the United States," the spokesperson said. Soccer

FIFA added that visa approvals and border admissions remain the responsibility of the host country and are outside the organization's control.

"FIFA is not involved in host country immigration processes, including visa adjudications, and has been informed by authorities that Mr Artan's status will not be changed at present," the statement read.

"In line with previous FIFA events, a host government ultimately determines who receives a visa and who is admitted into their country."

According to a spokesperson for U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), Artan was subjected to additional screening after arriving in the country.

"During processing, the traveler underwent additional inspection, a routine part of CBP's inspection process when officers need to verify information or determine admissibility," the spokesperson said.

"Following inspection, the traveler, a referee for the FIFA World Cup, was determined to be inadmissible due to vetting

concerns and was denied entry." Soccer

The incident comes amid ongoing immigration restrictions affecting several countries, including Somalia, which remains on a travel ban list introduced by the administration of U.S. President Donald Trump as part of broader immigration measures.

Despite the setback, Artan remained optimistic about his future in football officiating.

"Despite the circumstances, I am in a positive mood and I am focused on the next challenges in my refereeing career," he told AFP.

"I want to thank the football family for their messages and wish my colleagues all the best success during the World Cup. I look forward to joining them again in future competitions." - Women's football news

Artan's exclusion has drawn attention across the football community, with many expressing disappointment that a referee widely regarded as one of Africa's rising officials will miss the sport's biggest stage. Nevertheless, the Somali official has vowed to remain focused on his career and future international assignments



Association of National Olympic Committees of Africa (ANOCA) meeting on Tuesday.

Africa School Games gain momentum as LOC, ANOCA, VP signal hosting readiness

Nigeria's readiness to host the 2027 African School Games got another strong endorsement from the Association of National Olympic Committees of Africa (ANOCA) on Tuesday, after a strategic working session in Abuja.

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Abari also announced the proposed dates for the Games: 22nd August to 4th September 2027. The 14-day window was

selected after weighing factors including Nigeria's political calendar, weather patterns, and the global school calendar to maximize athlete and spectator turnout.

ANOCA African School Games Coordination Commission Chairman, Joao Da Costa Manuel, responded positively after reviewing the presentation.

"I am satisfied and okay with the level of preparation the Local Organizing Committee are putting in place," Da Costa Manuel said. He urged the LOC to maintain close monitoring of all preparations to ensure Abuja delivers a successful Games that sets the standard for future editions.

The African School Games is ANOCA's flagship youth event, first held in Algeria in 2025 with 30+ African nations. Abuja 2027 will be the second edition and another chapter in Nigeria's continuous success stories of hosting a continental multi-sport Games. Over 3,000 student-athletes aged 14-16 are expected across 20+ sports.

The ANOCA Coordination Commission will continue its working visit on Wednesday, 9th June 2026, with on-site inspections of the proposed venues. The team will assess the Moshood Abiola National Stadium, Package A and B, Jabi Lake, accommodation facilities, and the University of Abuja campus.

As ANOCA expresses confidence in the nation's preparations, Nigeria moves closer to delivering Africa's biggest school sports festival. The LOC stated it will continue work relentlessly to translate its blueprint into reality in the next 15 months

AFRICA TEAMS QUALIFIED FOR THE 2026 WORLD CUP
9 NATIONS. 1 CONTINENT. BILLIONS OF DREAMS.

1 ALGERIA 5th World Cup Appearance TOP PLAYERS: RYAD MAHREZ, ISMAEL BENHACER, RAMY BENSEBANI	2 CAPE VERDE FIRST-EVER APPEARANCE TOP PLAYERS: RYAN MENDES, GARRY RODRIGUES, JAMIRO MONTEIRO	3 DR CONGO VIA INTERCONTINENTAL PLAYOFFS TOP PLAYERS: CHANGEL MBEMBA, YOANE WISSA, CEDRIC BAKAMBU
4 EGYPT 4th Consecutive Appearance TOP PLAYERS: MOHAMED SALAH, OMAR MARMOUSH, AHMED HEGAZI	5 GHANA 5th World Cup Appearance TOP PLAYERS: MOHAMMED KUDUS, JORDAN AYEW, THOMAS PARTHEY	6 IVORY COAST 4th Consecutive Appearance TOP PLAYERS: SEBASTIEN HALLER, FRANCK KESSIE, JEREMIE BOGA
7 MOROCCO FIRST AFRICAN NATION TO QUALIFY FOR 2026 TOP PLAYERS: ACHRAF HAKIMI, HAKIM ZIYECHE, YASSINE BOUNOU	8 SENEGAL 3rd Consecutive Appearance TOP PLAYERS: SADIO MANE, KALIDOU KOULIBALY, EDUARDO MENDY	9 SOUTH AFRICA 4th World Cup Appearance Since 2010 TOP PLAYERS: PERCY TAU, RONWEN WILLIAMS, THEMBA ZWANE

THE JOURNEY CONTINUES. AFRICA IS READY! SEE YOU IN NORTH AMERICA CANADA • USA • MEXICO