ADC crisis deepens as court nullifies Atiku's ticket, Mark-led leadership

Matthew Okagha / Kelechi Ugwuadu

ABUJA

The political fortunes of the African Democratic Congress (ADC) suffered a major setback on Thursday following a Federal High Court judgment in Abuja nullifying the leadership of the party under former Senate President, Senator David Mark, and invalidating the emergence of former Vice-President Atiku Abubakar as its presidential candidate for the 2027 general elections.

The judgment, delivered by Justice Peter Lifu, has thrown the opposition party's political calculations into uncertainty, particularly its ambition to consolidate opposition forces into a formidable platform capable of challenging the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) in the forthcoming presidential election.

The court declared the Mark-led Caretaker Committee illegal, holding that its emergence and subsequent actions on behalf of the party violated the relevant provisions of the ADC constitution and the law.

Consequently, the court nullified decisions taken by the disputed leadership, including the presidential primary that produced Atiku as the party's flag bearer, as well as the emergence of former Osun State Governor, Rauf Aregbesola, as National Secretary and other national officers.

The court also directed the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) not to recognise decisions taken at the ADC's 99th National Executive Committee meeting of July 27, 2025.

The suit was instituted by Nafiu Bala Gombe, a former National Deputy Chairman of the ADC, who challenged the process through which Mark and other members of the caretaker leadership assumed control of the party following the resignation of its former

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Okpebholo launches Tinubu's 2027 re-election campaign in Edo

Richard Eweka

BENIN CITY

Says collaboration with FG transforming Edo roads

Tasks Edo residents on 2.5m votes for Tinubu

Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo, has tasked residents of Oredo Local Government Area with mobilising support for President Bola Ahmed Tinubu and other All Progressives Congress (APC) candidates in the 2027 general elections as part of efforts to realise his administration's target of 2.5 million votes for the President in Edo State.

The governor gave the charge at the Oredo APC campaign rally, where he expressed confidence that the people of Edo State were prepared to support Tinubu and other APC candidates at all levels in the forthcoming elections.

Okpebholo said his administration's achievements in security, road infrastructure, urban renewal and other sectors would form a major part of the party's campaign message, noting that the projects being executed across the state were visible evidence of the government's commitment to development.

He said criticisms on social media should not be mistaken for the general disposition of the people, recounting how one of his administration's fiercest critics recently acknowledged its achievements after visiting the state.

According to the governor, the individual told him that although he regularly criticised the administration online to attract followers, he had personally observed the developmental projects being executed in Edo.

Okpebholo said the experience reinforced his belief that the government's performance and commitment to delivering public infrastructure were more important than social media criticisms.

He cited improvements in security, the Sapele Road corridor, road construction, fly-

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TINUBU RE-ELECTION CAMPAIGN FLAG-OFF:
Gov. Monday Okpebholo (right) and the Chairman of the Edo State chapter of All Progressives Congress (APC), Jarrett Tenebe (left) and other leaders of the party at the Oredo APC Campaign Rally in Benin City yesterday.

Contractors return to Benin-Sapele Road as rains subside —Pg 2

Edo empowers children with autism, calls for greater inclusion —Pg 3

Vance walks Trump tightrope with scathing election critique blaming Iran war —Pg 14

Nigeria make history as Flamingos stun Brazil to reach first-ever U-17 World Cup final —Pg 22

NEWS

Contractors return to Benin-Sapele Road as rains subside

Richard Eweka

BENIN CITY

Contractors handling the rehabilitation of the Benin-Sapele Road have returned to site following a lull in heavy rainfall, bringing relief to motorists, traders and residents who had endured difficulties along the road.

Correspondents who visited the bypass section of the road in Benin City on Thursday observed workers and heavy-duty equipment back on site, with construction activities resuming on sections that had been abandoned temporarily due to persistent rainfall.

The development is in line with the earlier assurance by Governor Monday Okpebholo that contractors handling road projects across the three senatorial districts of the state would return to work as soon as the rains subsided.

Some road users who spoke with our correspondents expressed satisfaction with the contractors' return, describing it as a demonstration of the state government's commitment to road infrastructure development.

Mr Benjamin Danjuma, Foreman of the Earth Moving Section, explained that the heavy rainfall had made construction activities difficult, particularly at the preparatory stage.

"The rain made it hard for us to continue, especially at the preparatory stage. As soon as the weather improved, we came back," he said.

Danjuma disclosed that work had progressed to the first level of the stone-base stage, which forms an important part of the road's foundation.

"After this first level, we will move to the stabilisation stage, where we use stone base and cement. Then the final concrete layer will be laid," he explained.

A resident and regular road user, Mr Abdulmalik Usman, commended the state government for the rehabilitation project, noting that the road's previous condition had caused considerable hardship to commuters.

"People suffered on this road when it was in a bad state. Now motorists can move more freely than before," he said.

Similarly, a trader, Mrs Joy Obosheya, said the deplorable condition of the road had negatively affected commercial activities in the area by discouraging customers from visiting shops.

"I am happy the contractor is back. The condition of the road affected our business, but now it is easier for customers to reach our shops," she said.

Also speaking, a commercial driver, Mr John Kingsley, recalled the difficulties motorists and pedestrians experienced while using the affected section before the commencement of rehabilitation work.

He commended Governor Okpebholo for ensuring that the contractor returned to site after the rains.

"Okpebholo has done well by making sure the contractor returned to site," he said.



RECONSTRUCTION OF BENIN - SAFELY ROAD:
Earth-moving machines back on failed portions of Benin - Sapele Road as rains ease.

Okpebholo launches Tinubu's...

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overs, markets, schools and the development of the new Government Reserved Area (GRA) as some of the achievements of his administration.

The governor also questioned the intentions of politicians seeking public office, alleging that some were interested in using political power and the police to take over lands belonging to innocent residents.

Using a family analogy, he urged the people to sustain what he described as the progress being recorded in the state by supporting continuity at the federal level.

He consequently called on residents to mobilise their families, friends and associates to vote for Tinubu and other APC candidates in the 2027 elections.

Okpebholo reiterated his target of 2.5 million votes for Tinubu from Edo, stressing that every vote would count under the principle of one man, one vote.

Earlier, Deputy Governor, Rt. Hon. Dennis Idahosa, expressed confidence in the APC's prospects in the 2027 general elections, saying the quality of candidates presented by a political party was critical to its electoral success.

He assured the governor that Edo State would deliver the votes required for President Tinubu, while appreciating Okpebholo for providing infrastructure projects that the party could showcase during its campaign.

"Once you have good candidates for an election, the election is 100 per cent won. President Tinubu will get 100 per cent of what he needs from Edo State. Mr Governor, thank you for giving us projects to campaign with," Idahosa said.

Also speaking, the Director-General of the Edo State Presidential Campaign Council, Senator Matthew Urhoghide, described Oredo as a strategic political constituency in Edo South Senatorial District.

He urged APC members and supporters in the local government to work towards securing more than 100,000 votes for the party, noting that such an outcome would contribute to the governor's 2.5 million-vote target for President Tinubu.

The APC State Chairman, Jarrett Tenebe; Ogbeide Ihama; Paddy Iyamu; and other party leaders also addressed the rally, calling for unity, mobilisation and sustained grassroots engagement ahead of the 2027 general elections.

The rally brought together party leaders, elected officials, supporters and grassroots mobilisers in Oredo Local Government Area as the APC intensified its political mobilisation ahead of the next general elections.

Okpebholo hails Flamingos over historic World Cup final ticket

BENIN CITY

Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo, has congratulated Nigeria's U-17 women's national football team, the Flamingos, on their historic qualification for the final of the FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup.

The governor gave the commendation following the team's 3-1 victory over Brazil, describing the feat as remarkable and applauding the players for their determination, tactical discipline, teamwork and fighting spirit.

In a statement issued on Thursday by his Chief Press Secretary, Dr Patrick Akhere Ebojele, Okpebholo said the Flamingos had demonstrated the resilience and competitive spirit that Nigerians cherish, bringing joy and renewed hope to football fans across the country.

He particularly commended goal scorers Queen Joseph and Awawu Bashiru for their outstanding contributions, while acknowledging the efforts of the entire squad and technical crew.

The governor urged the players to remain focused, disciplined and determined as they prepare to face Japan in Saturday's final, expressing confidence in their ability to clinch the trophy.

He assured the team of the support of Nigerians, including the people of Edo State, as they pursue Nigeria's first-ever FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup title.

Okpebholo wished the Flamingos success in the final, urging them to seize the historic opportunity and make the country proud.



GOVERNOR, MONDAY OKPEBHOLO

Okpebholo promises modern market for Oluku fire victims

BENIN CITY

Distributes NEMA, EDOSEMA relief materials to affected traders

Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo, has promised to rebuild Oluku Market to modern standards following the fire disaster that destroyed shops and goods, assuring affected traders that his administration would not abandon them.

The governor gave the assurance on Wednesday while presenting relief materials donated by the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) and the Edo State Emergency Management Agency (EDOSEMA) to traders affected by the inferno.

He said the intervention demonstrated the government's concern for the victims, acknowledging the hardship and emotional trauma caused by the disaster.

"We love you, we feel your pain, and we have come with these little things to share among you. We know you are not happy, but no matter what you receive from us, we will always appreciate it. It is better to show little concern than not to show concern at all," he said.

Okpebholo assured the traders that the state government would construct a modern market with concrete structures to provide a safer environment for businesses and reduce the risk of future fire disasters.

"The day we finish this market, you will know that you have a market. We are going to build a standard market for you. When you go to the market, you will be proud of your place of business," he said.

He noted that a standard market structure could have reduced the extent of damage caused by the fire, adding that the proposed reconstruction would provide better protection for traders' goods.

The governor disclosed that he had briefed President Bola Tinubu on the incident and that the President had directed that the affected shops be rebuilt.

He further promised additional assistance to the victims, although he urged them to moderate their expectations, noting that the support might not fully compensate for their losses.

"We will not leave you to suffer. We will give you some form of assistance, and it may not be bigger than what you lost," he assured.

Okpebholo also urged residents to continue praying for President Tinubu, attributing some of the development initiatives currently being implemented in Edo State to the President's directives.

Earlier, the Executive Secretary of EDOSEMA, Mr Jerry Idahosa, said the agency would collaborate with NEMA and other stakeholders to monitor the recovery process and support the affected traders.

He urged beneficiaries to make judicious use of the relief materials provided to cushion the effects of the disaster.

Idahosa also cautioned members of the public against scooping fuel from fallen or leaking tankers, warning that the practice could result in devastating fires and loss of lives.

Some of the beneficiaries expressed appreciation to the governor and the agencies for the intervention, saying the relief materials would provide some succour and restore hope following their losses.

NEWS

Edo empowers children with autism, calls for greater inclusion

Ewere Emmanuela/
Aghedo Iyobor

BENIN CITY

The Edo State Government has reaffirmed its commitment to promoting the rights, dignity and inclusion of persons living with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and other special needs, with a call for greater public awareness, acceptance and support for affected children and their families.

The call was made at the 2026 Edo State Autism Awareness and Special Needs Schools Empowerment Programme, organised by the State Ministry of Health at the Victor Uwaifo Creative Hub, Benin City, on Thursday, November 5, under the theme, "Autism and Humanity – Every Life Has Value."

The programme brought together parents, teachers, caregivers, health professionals, special educators and other stakeholders to deepen understanding of autism, dispel misconceptions about developmental conditions and promote a more inclusive environment for children living with special needs.



PRESENTING GIFTS:
Edo State Commissioner for Health, Dr Cyril Oshiomhole (left) presenting gifts to some autistic children at the event PHOTO: EMMANUEL IJEGBAI

A major highlight of the event was the empowerment of children with autism, alongside presentations and performances by autistic children and pupils from different schools, showcasing their abilities, talents and potential.

The activities reinforced the message that developmental differences should not be barriers to self-expression, education, social participation or meaningful contributions to society.

In his welcome address, the Edo State Commissioner for Health, Dr Cyril Oshiomhole emphasised the need to move beyond mere awareness to genuine acceptance and inclusion of persons living with autism.

He noted that autistic individuals and their families continued to face challenges arising from discrimination, stigmatisation, misconceptions and limited access to essential healthcare and educational services.

The Commissioner stressed that building an autism-inclusive society required collective responsibility, involving government institutions, families, schools, healthcare professionals and communities.

He also underscored the importance of inclusive education and accessible healthcare, insisting that children with autism deserved opportunities to learn, develop their abilities and participate fully in society without discrimination.

During an interactive session, facilitators addressed several questions and misconceptions surrounding autism, epilepsy, seizures and other developmental conditions.

On epilepsy and seizure management, experts explained that certain medications could effectively control seizures when taken consistently and strictly as prescribed by qualified medical practitioners. They noted that some patients could remain seizure-free for extended periods with appropriate treatment and follow-up.

Parents and caregivers were consequently cautioned against self-medication and advised to seek proper medical diagnosis and professional guidance.

ADC crisis deepens as court nullifies Atiku's ticket, Mark-led leadership...

«CONTINUED FROM PG 1

National Chairman, Chief Ralph Nwosu.

Gombe had argued that he was constitutionally entitled to assume the party's leadership following Nwosu's resignation and consequently sought judicial intervention to invalidate decisions taken by the Mark-led leadership.

The judgment, which came barely 24 hours after Atiku's presidential campaign rally in Sokoto State, has introduced fresh uncertainty into the opposition's preparations for the 2027 elections.

Atiku had earlier been listed by INEC as the ADC presidential candidate and subsequently announced former Rivers State Governor, Rotimi Amaechi, as his running mate.

The development is particularly significant because the ADC had increasingly become a rallying platform for opposition figures seeking to build a common political front against President Bola Tinubu and the APC.

With the latest ruling, the party's leadership structure, presidential ticket and other nominations have been placed in serious legal jeopardy, pending the outcome of the anticipated appeal.

Reacting to the judgment, the ADC accused the ruling APC of attempting to set Nigeria on fire through what it described as politically motivated judicial interventions aimed at weakening opposition parties ahead of the 2027 general elections.

In a strongly worded statement issued on Thursday by its National Publicity Secretary, Mallam Bolaji Abdullahi, the party described the judgment as a grave threat not only to its political existence but also to Nigeria's democratic stability and the constitutional rights of citizens to freely choose their leaders.

The party alleged that the timing of the judgment was suspicious, linking it to the massive turnout recorded at Atiku's campaign rally in Sokoto State on Wednesday.

According to the ADC, the ruling appeared to be part of a calculated attempt to frustrate the growing political momentum of the opposition coalition.

The statement declared: "We have reasons to believe that the judgment had long been written on this case. The Sokoto rally was simply a trigger that stampeded its delivery."

The party further recalled that Nigerians had turned out in large numbers at the Sokoto rally to demonstrate support for its promise of making life more affordable, only for the party and its candidates to be confronted with a court decision capable of invalidating their political participation.

It questioned the implications of the judgment for thousands of its candidates seeking elective offices across the country, insisting that the controversy transcended the political ambitions of Atiku and Mark.

"This is not about Atiku Abubakar or David Mark. It is about the democratic rights of Nigerians to freely choose their own leaders. It is about the rights of thousands of candidates to participate in a democratic process," the party stated.

The ADC also challenged the legal foundation of the judgment, arguing that it appeared to contradict an earlier decision delivered by Justice Musa Liman of the Federal High Court on July 2, 2026, in Suit No. FHC/ABJ/CS/1637/2025.

According to the party, the earlier judgment affirmed the legitimacy of the David Mark-led National Working Committee and directed INEC to recognise the leadership.

It therefore questioned the propriety of a court of coordinate jurisdiction making a decision that appeared to undermine an earlier judgment of a court of equal status.

The party said it was awaiting the Certified True Copy of Thursday's judgment to ascertain its precise terms, scope and consequential orders.

It nevertheless rejected what it described as consequential orders founded on a determination that disregarded fundamental legal principles.

The opposition party has vowed to challenge the judgment at the Court of Appeal and also petition the National Judicial Council (NJC) over the conduct of the case.

It accused the APC-led administration of exploiting judicial processes to weaken political opponents whenever the opposition appeared to be gaining momentum.

Warning against what it described as a dangerous attempt to eliminate political competition, the ADC said the consequences could threaten national peace and stability.

"We warn the APC: do not play with fires you cannot control. The peace and stability of Nigeria are bigger than the ambition of any president or political party.

"Nobody should be so desperate to retain power that they are prepared to put the entire country at risk. This is not the time to play silly games with the stability of this country," the statement added.

The party also challenged the ruling APC to subject itself to a genuinely competitive electoral process if it was confident that its policies and candidates enjoyed widespread public acceptance.

It maintained that Nigeria's presidency was not an inheritance and that no political party should assume exclusive ownership of the country's democratic space.

The ADC subsequently appealed to its members and supporters across the country to remain calm, united and law-abiding while the party pursues available legal options.

The judgment represents a significant development in the unfolding political realignments ahead of the 2027 general elections.

The ADC had emerged as an important destination for opposition politicians seeking a common platform to challenge the APC, particularly amid efforts to consolidate political structures, personalities and supporters across different regions.

Atiku's emergence as the party's presidential candidate was widely regarded as a major step in that direction, especially with the choice of Amaechi as running mate.

However, the court's decision has raised fresh questions about the survival of the political arrangement and the future of the opposition coalition.

Beyond the presidential ticket, the invalidation of the Mark-led leadership and the decisions taken under it could affect the party's preparations for governorship, senatorial, House of Representatives and state assembly elections.

If the judgment survives appellate scrutiny, the ADC could face the difficult task of resolving its leadership crisis and establishing a legally recognised structure before the electoral timetable gathers momentum.

It could also trigger fresh political calculations among opposition figures, some of whom may begin to reconsider their positions or explore alternative platforms.

Nevertheless, the ruling is not necessarily the end of the ADC's political journey, as the party has indicated its determination to pursue an appeal.

The eventual outcome of the legal battle will therefore be crucial in determining whether the party can retain its present political configuration or be compelled to undertake a major restructuring ahead of 2027.

For the APC, the development may offer temporary political relief by introducing uncertainty into the opposition's consolidation efforts. However, the ruling party will also have to contend with the political implications of allegations that the judiciary is being used to undermine opposition politics.

Such allegations, whether established or not, could become a major subject of political debate as the country approaches another general election.

Ultimately, the ADC crisis has moved beyond an internal leadership disagreement. It has become a significant test of political party administration, judicial authority, opposition resilience and the strength of Nigeria's democratic institutions.

With the ADC insisting that it will appeal the judgment and the 2027 electoral contest drawing closer, the unfolding legal and political battle is likely to remain a major feature of Nigeria's political landscape in the months ahead.

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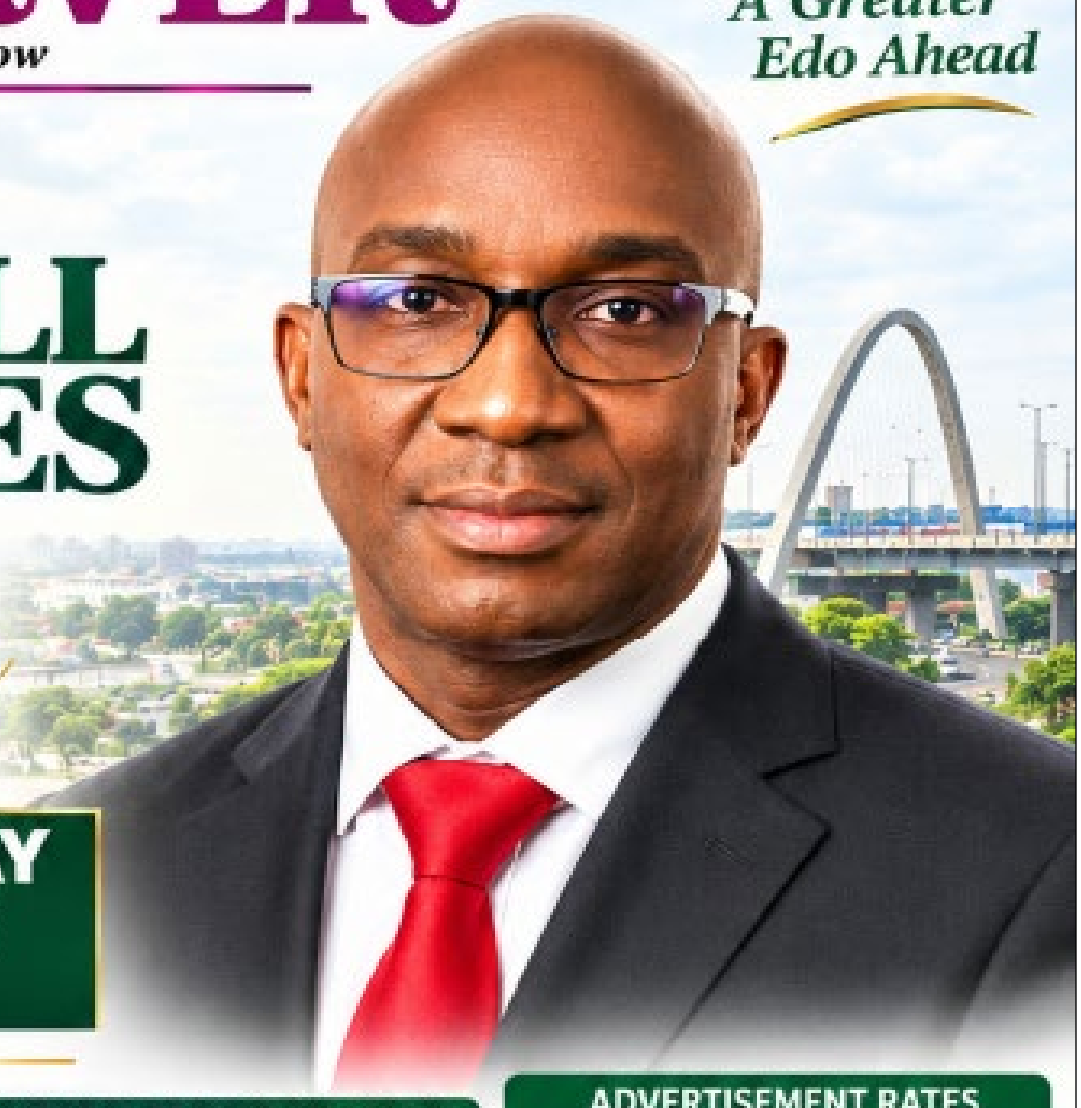
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NEWS

Wike dismisses UniAbuja ASUU strike threat over land allocation

ABUJA

The Minister of the Federal Capital Territory, Nyesom Wike, has dismissed the threat by the University of Abuja chapter of the Academic Staff Union of Universities to embark on a strike over the reallocation of portions of the institution's land to private developers and government agencies.

Wike said ASUU had no authority to determine land ownership or allocation in the FCT, insisting that such matters fell within the jurisdiction of the Federal Capital Territory Administration.

The minister spoke during his monthly media chat on Thursday, where he questioned the union's involvement in the dispute and rejected its allegations of land grabbing.

"What is the business of ASUU on our land? How is ASUU the owner of land? Is ASUU the owner of the union in Nigeria now? Is it the union's right?" he asked.

The minister also questioned the justification for allowing the university to retain thousands of hectares of land without adequate development, arguing that government had a responsibility to ensure proper land use and adherence to the FCT master plan.

He maintained that the administration's decision to reallocate portions of the university's land was part of its efforts to enforce urban planning regulations and promote development.

Wike also dismissed the union's threat to challenge the decision in court, saying the FCTA was prepared to defend its actions if legal proceedings were instituted.

He faulted the use of strike threats as a means of pressuring the government, insisting that the administration would not succumb to what he described as blackmail.

The dispute followed a recent press conference by the Chairman of ASUU, University of Abuja chapter, Dr Sylvanus Ugoh, who warned that the union could no longer guarantee industrial harmony on the campus if the minister failed to reverse the land allocations.

Ugoh said the university was originally allocated 11,824 hectares of land in the Guri District of the FCT, describing the area as essential for its long-term expansion, agricultural research and infrastructure development.

The union expressed concern over the allocation of portions of the land to private developers and government agencies, insisting that the university's land should be protected from encroachment.

However, Wike maintained that land administration in the FCT remained the responsibility of the FCTA and that government would continue to take decisions on the recovery and allocation of land in line with its statutory responsibilities.



CONFERENCE:
From left: Clerk, Senate Committee on Youth Development and Community Engagement, National Assembly, Dr Ijeoma Chikwem; Permanent Secretary, Federal Ministry of Youth Development, Dr Maryam Keshinro; and the Minister of Youth Development, Comrade Ayodele Olawande during the opening ceremony and proceedings of the Physical Phase of the National Youth Confab 2026 in Abuja on Wednesday

Two feared killed, 20 abducted in fresh Kaduna community attack

KADUNA

Two people were reportedly killed and 20 others allegedly abducted after suspected terrorists attacked Akwando community in Kachia Local Government Area of Kaduna State on Wednesday.

The attack, which the police have yet to confirm, reportedly occurred around noon. It was disclosed on Thursday by the President of the Kuturmi Unity Development Association, Dr Joseph Ariko, and its Publicity Secretary, Manasseh Samuel Akwando.

The association expressed concern over recurring killings and abductions in Kuturmi communities, saying the latest incident happened while residents were still struggling with the aftermath of an Easter Sunday attack on Ariko community.

It described the incident as "another deeply troubling development in the persistent security challenges confronting our communities".

"It is particularly distressing that the attack occurred while our people are still grappling with the consequences of the Easter Sunday attack on Ariko," the statement said.

KUDA released the names of the 20 people reportedly abducted during Wednesday's attack.

They include Usman Galadima, La'a'zarus Genesis, Madalin Markus, Happy Stephen, Lovet Ishaya, Afiniki Irimeya, Amina Ahmadu, Miracle Genesis, Hellen Irimeya and Musa Genesis.

Others are Janet Irimeya, Gloria Markus, Zila Stephen, Alis Ahmadu, Haske Ahmadu, Great Isiac, Hanatu Irimeya, Desmon Ishaya, Siam Shagari and Nansy Genesis.

The association recalled that an Easter Sunday attack on Ariko reportedly killed five people at the scene, while another 17 victims later died in captivity.

It also raised concerns over an attack on Awon community, in which two people were reportedly killed and 11 others abducted.

According to the association, five of those abducted in Awon regained their freedom on November 3, 2026, but one died a day later. Another victim reportedly escaped, while five others died in captivity.

KUDA said the repeated attacks had caused fear and displacement, disrupted livelihoods and forced residents to abandon their farmlands.

Ogun poly lecturers threaten strike over allowances, demand N100m subvention

ABEOKUTA

The Academic Staff Union of Polytechnics in Ogun State has called on Governor Dapo Abiodun to urgently address its outstanding demands, warning that the state-owned polytechnics could face an industrial crisis as the six remaining days of a 15-day ultimatum issued by the union's national leadership tick away.

The union also lamented the inadequate funding of polytechnic education, saying the government had refused to review the N5m monthly subvention given to some of the state-owned polytechnics for more than a decade.

The union, which raised the alarm at a joint press briefing held at the ASUP Secretariat, Moshood Abiola Polytechnic, Abeokuta, on Thursday, expressed displeasure over the state government's failure to implement the Consolidated Academic Tools Allowance and Earned Academic Allowance in the affected institutions.

The briefing was attended by ASUP representatives from various state-owned polytechnics, including Comrade Sogbesan Adebiyi of D.S. Adegbenro ICT Polytechnic, Itori; Adepero Ogunkoya of Ogun State Institute of Technology, Igbesa; and Comrade Abraham Ogunsanya of Gateway ICT Polytechnic, Saapade.

Others at the briefing were Comrade Samuel Okunubi of Abraham Adesanya Polytechnic, Ijebu-Igbo; Comrade Kolawole Adeyemi of Ogun State Polytechnic of Health and Allied Sciences, Ilese-Ijebu; as well as Adebayo Adeleke, ASUP Chairman, Moshood Abiola Polytechnic, Abeokuta.

Reading the union's position, Adeyemi said the ultimatum, which began on October 27, followed a resolution reached at the 118th National Executive Council meeting of ASUP held in Abuja on October 22.

Adeyemi explained that the national leadership had formally communicated its demands to the state government, urging it to implement the CATA/EAA component of the 2026 Federal Government-ASUP agreement.

Kwara seeks private-sector collaboration to boost livestock production

ILORIN

The Kwara State Government has expressed its readiness to partner with private-sector investors to strengthen livestock production, develop the dairy value chain and improve the livelihoods of farmers across the state.

The Commissioner for Livestock Development, Oloruntoyosi Thomas, disclosed this on Thursday after a meeting with representatives of Friesland-Campina WAMCO, a major player in Nigeria's dairy and food industry.

During the meeting, both parties explored areas of possible collaboration in the livestock and agricultural sectors.

Thomas said the engagement was aimed at identifying opportunities for private-sector investment, improving local production and strengthening the livestock and dairy value chains through partnerships that would benefit farmers and other stakeholders.

She added that collaboration with the company could provide opportunities for local livestock farmers to access modern agricultural practices, improve productivity and expand their participation in the dairy industry.

According to the commissioner, the proposed partnership could also support the development of small and medium-scale businesses, generate employment and improve farmers' livelihoods through stronger connections with private-sector operators.

She noted that closer engagement with local farmers and other stakeholders would be essential to ensuring that the benefits of agricultural investments extended to communities at the grassroots.

Thomas said, "One of the key areas of interest was the potential for stronger collaboration with local farmers and other stakeholders in the livestock sector."

She added that such partnerships would help improve farmers' livelihoods, create employment opportunities and encourage the growth of small and medium-scale enterprises.

The commissioner stressed that the government alone could not achieve meaningful economic growth without the involvement of private-sector organisations capable of bringing investment, expertise and innovative approaches to agricultural development.

"As a government, we recognise that meaningful economic growth cannot be achieved by government efforts alone. It requires deliberate partnerships with credible private-sector organisations that share our vision for development," she said.

Thomas said the meeting also provided an opportunity to examine practical ways of addressing challenges in the agricultural sector while creating an enabling environment for businesses to operate and expand their investments in the state.

She maintained that Kwara had considerable potential in livestock production and agriculture, adding that appropriate policies, investments and strategic partnerships could help strengthen the state's productive capacity.

The commissioner expressed optimism that the engagement with FrieslandCampina WAMCO would lead to mutually beneficial opportunities capable of advancing the livestock sector and contributing to the state's economic development.

She, however, acknowledged that further work would be required to translate the discussions into concrete areas of collaboration.

"Our commitment remains clear: to build a stronger livestock sector, empower our farmers, attract meaningful investment and create a more prosperous Kwara State for all," Thomas said.

NEWS

Army denies extortion allegations over Delta checkpoint incident

ASABA

The Headquarters 63 Brigade, Sector 1 Joint Task Force (South South), Operation DELTA SAFE, has denied allegations of extortion and assault against its personnel following a checkpoint incident in Ibusa, Oshimili North Local Government Area of Delta State.

The Brigade described a viral video circulating on social media about the incident as misleading, insisting that its troops acted professionally while responding to a security situation in the community.

In a statement issued on Wednesday, and signed by the Acting Assistant Director of Army Public Relations, 63 Brigade, Asaba, Iliyasu Rijau, the military said the incident occurred at about 10 pm on November 3, following reports of cult-related violence in the area.

According to the statement, troops had established a snap checkpoint as part of efforts to address security concerns in Ibusa, where residents had reportedly experienced recurring cult clashes, armed robbery and communal unrest.

The Brigade explained that three men approached the checkpoint but allegedly refused to stop for identification and routine security checks.

It further alleged that one of the men attempted to snatch a soldier's rifle during the encounter but only succeeded in pulling out its magazine, sustaining a hand injury from its sharp edges.

"The troops promptly evacuated the injured individual and his two companions to a nearby pharmacy for first aid before taking them to Headquarters 63 Brigade for further medical attention and investigation," the statement said.

The Brigade added that preliminary investigations indicated that the three men had confessed to involvement in cult-related activities and internet fraud.

It, however, dismissed allegations that its personnel demanded money from the individuals, stressing that extortion was contrary to the professional standards of the Nigerian Army.

"Extortion or demanding money from members of the public is against the professional standards and values of the Nigerian Army," the statement maintained.

The military also questioned the credibility of the individual who circulated the video, alleging that he was an IPOB fugitive residing in Ghana and was not present at the scene of the incident.

It further accused the individual of repeatedly publishing materials intended to discredit security agencies.

The Commander of 63 Brigade urged residents of Ibusa and the general public to remain calm, disregard unverified reports and continue providing credible information to security agencies.

He reaffirmed the Brigade's commitment to protecting lives and property in the area in accordance with the law, while warning cultists and other criminal elements to abandon their activities or face the full weight of the law.

The Brigade said its troops would continue working with other security agencies and civil authorities to maintain peace and security in Ibusa and its environs.



NAWOJ 60TH ANNIVERSARY:
From left: Secretary, Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ), Oyo State Council, Temidayo Adu; former Chairperson of Nigeria Association of Women Journalists, (NAWOJ), Oyo State Chapter, Mrs Bisi Yomi-Layinka; former President, NUJ, Mr Lanre Ogundipe; former Zonal Director, Radio Nigeria, Mrs Bolatito Joseph; Chairperson, NAWOJ, Oyo State Council, Mrs Omolola Alamu, and Chairman NUJ, Oyo State Council, Akeem Abas, during NAWOJ 60th Anniversary and Press week of NUJ, Oyo State Council in Ibadan on Thursday.

Plateau LG chairmen to establish security outfits in 17 councils

JOS

Chairmen of the 17 local government councils in Plateau State have agreed to establish formally registered security outfits to complement conventional security agencies in tackling killings and other security challenges across the state.

The Commissioner for Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs, Ephraim Usman Gar, disclosed this on Thursday during a press conference in Jos, where he presented a report on the ministry's inspection tour of projects across the state.

Gar, who was flanked by the 17 council chairmen, said they had agreed to adopt the security initiative in Wase Local Government Area as a model for strengthening community-level security.

He said, "Right now, we have Wase LGA that has trained its own personnel. But it is just a matter of time before other LGAs follow suit, and they have all agreed that they are going to take a cue to have a formal security outfit that will help our conventional security agencies combat crimes within our society."

He explained that the Wase security personnel underwent three months of training conducted by the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps.

"Formal registration of the outfits would facilitate information dissemination and improve collaboration between local security personnel and conventional security agencies," he added.

He cited the Wase Rock Security Network Limited, whose 140 officers recently completed training and participated in a passing-out parade organised by the council chairman, Hamisu Mohammed Anani.

The ceremony also featured the donation of 25 patrol motorcycles and two Toyota Hilux vehicles to improve the officers' mobility and response to security incidents.

"The outfit was formally inaugurated by the Plateau State Command of the NSCDC following a training programme," he stated.

The security plan comes amid persistent security concerns in parts of Plateau State, where attacks and killings have repeatedly affected communities.

Meanwhile, Gar said the ministry's inspection tour was aimed at assessing completed and ongoing projects executed by the 17 local government councils, checking the quality of the projects and ensuring that public funds were judiciously utilised.

He said the tour covered the state's three senatorial zones and that the ministry was satisfied with the projects inspected.

"Providing dividends of democracy at the grassroots remains the top priority of this administration. From what we have seen, governance has truly been taken closer to the people.

"The Chairmen have no option but to key into the vision of Governor Mutfwang, and they have justified the confidence reposed in them," he said.

Among the projects inspected in the Southern Zone were the remodelling of a youth centre, a mini stadium, computer-based test centres, primary healthcare facilities, motorised boreholes and solar-powered streetlights.

The team also inspected the Wase Rock Radio and Television Station and facilities at the temporary headquarters of the Nigerian Army's 175 Infantry Motorcycle Battalion.

Zamfara, REA to power 125,000 homes with solar mini-grids

GUSAU

The Rural Electrification Agency has commenced the development of 37 solar mini-grids in Zamfara State, targeting 125,106 household connections across seven local government areas as the state moves to establish its own electricity market and attract private investment.

The projects, comprising two interconnected and 35 isolated mini-grids, will provide approximately 18.8 megawatts-peak of solar generation capacity in Gummi, Gusau, Kaura Namoda, Maradun, Shinkafi, Tsafe and Zurmi Local Government Areas.

The agency disclosed this in a statement issued on Thursday following the groundbreaking ceremony held on Wednesday.

The intervention is expected to reach more than 625,000 people, based on an illustrative average of five people per household-equivalent connection.

The development also featured the unveiling of the Zamfara State Electricity Policy and the signing of a collaboration agreement between the REA and the state government for the solarisation of public institutions, including hospitals, schools and other critical government facilities.

Speaking at the event, Governor Dauda Lawal said the electricity policy was designed to create an investment-friendly market capable of supporting the state's economic ambitions.

"Today, we are taking deliberate steps to redefine Zamfara's electricity future. The unveiling of our State Electricity Policy is a statement of our intention to build a structured, investment-friendly and sustainable electricity market that responds to the needs of our people and the ambitions of our economy.

"We recognise that reliable electricity is indispensable to agricultural transformation, industrial development, healthcare delivery, education and job creation.

"Our collaboration with the Rural Electrification Agency on the solarisation of public institutions reflects our determination to translate policy into practical infrastructure that improves the delivery of essential services," Lawal said.

The Minister of Power, Chief Joseph Tegbe, said the projects demonstrated the Federal Government's commitment to decentralised electricity infrastructure and greater participation by states in electricity market development.

He said the Electricity Act 2023 had created opportunities for states to develop their electricity markets, adding that the Federal Government would support those taking practical steps to attract private investment.

Group urges FG to increase funding for neglected diseases

LAGOS

The Country Director of Sightsavers Nigeria, Prof. Joy Shuaibu, has urged the Federal Government to increase domestic funding for the treatment and elimination of Neglected Tropical Diseases, warning that declining foreign aid could undermine decades of investment in the fight against the diseases.

Shuaibu said Nigeria risked losing the gains recorded over the years if the government failed to take greater financial responsibility for programmes aimed at eliminating Neglected Tropical Diseases.

She spoke during a two-day Sightsavers Media Partners Meeting held in Kano on November 3 and 4, 2026, where the organisation shared updates on its programmes and impact, discussed media engagement strategies and explored ways of strengthening collaboration with journalists.

The country director said almost 99 per cent of investments in NTD programmes had come from foreign aid, expressing concern that the government had yet to demonstrate sufficient commitment to sustaining the interventions.

She noted that millions of dollars had been invested in the procurement and distribution of medicines over the past two decades, warning that such investments could go to waste without adequate domestic funding.

"Close to 99 per cent of those investments are from foreign aid because the government does not seem to think that it has a responsibility for that," Shuaibu said.

She added that the changing international funding environment had made it imperative for Nigeria to take ownership of its health programmes, particularly as donors increasingly demand financial commitments from recipient governments before releasing further support.

"More and more, donors are asking that the government makes a commitment before they can match the government's commitments. If the government is not able to say what percentage it is contributing, we may not be able to unlock the funding we are seeking to support these programmes," she said.

Shuaibu identified domestic resource mobilisation as a major priority, stressing that the government must demonstrate ownership and provide the resources required to sustain the fight against NTDs.

She said Sightsavers had detailed records of investments made in the health sector over the past 20 years, including state-by-state data on the cost of medicines and other interventions, which could help governments understand the scale of resources already committed.

On disability inclusion, the country director urged the government to move beyond charity-based interventions and recognise access to education, healthcare, employment and other opportunities as fundamental rights of persons with disabilities.

She criticised the practice of politicians distributing wheelchairs to persons with disabilities for publicity, saying such gestures did little to address the structural barriers confronting them.

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE
EDO STATE OF NIGERIA
PROBATE REGISTRY
BENIN CITY

WHEREAS the persons whose names are set out in the first column hereunder died intestate on the date and at the place stated in the column;
AND WHEREAS the persons whose names, addresses and claimed relationship to the deceased are set in the second column hereunder have applied to the Probate Registrar, High Court of Justice, Edo State of Nigeria for a grant of Letters of Administration of the real and personal property of the deceased.
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that Letters of Administration will be granted to such persons unless a NOTICE to prohibit the grant is filed in this Registry within Twenty-One (21) days from the date of the publication of this notice.

1. MR. MONDAY AIKPAEGEBOKHIAN ODEKHIAN (A.K.A) MONDAY AIKPEAGBAHBAN ODEKHIAN, late of Urohi, Esan West L.G.A., who died on the 9th day of September, 2022 in Ekpoma.	PED/693/2026 Mr. Lucky Odekhian and Miss. Godspower Precious Odekhian of No 2, Isiemwenro Lane, Off First and Second Circular Road, Benin City, son and daughter respectively of the deceased.
2. MR. HYGINUS CHIDI NWOSU, late of Umudioka, Oru-East L.G.A., Imo State, who died on the 16th day of April, 2012 in Irrua.	PED/732/2026 Mrs. Chinyere Lilian Nwosu and Mr. valentine Ekenekamchukwu Nwosu of Afua, Omo-Ojugo Avenue, Ekpoma, Edo State, widow and son respectively of the deceased.
3. INSP. SUNDAY OGUNLOWO OGUNDELE, late of Odeomu, Ayedade L.G.A., Osun State, who died on the 4th day of February, 2020 in Benin City.	PED/727/2026 Miss. Itunu Christiana Ogundele and Mrs. Jumoke Comfort Ogundele of No 6, Eregie Street, Off Uwasota Road, Ugbowo, Benin City, daughter and widow respectively of the deceased.
4. MR. SUNDAY EHIMEN, late of Ebudin, Esan Central L.G.A., who died on the 20th day of March, 2026 in Benin City.	PED/546/2026 Miss. Blessing Eguavon and Mrs. Abiodun Deborah Abel of Idumogo, Igueben, Edo State, sisters of the deceased.
5. MR. BEN-HERBERT OZOMAH, late of Akwu-Kwuigbo, Oshimili North L.G.A., Delta State, who died on the 24th day of June, 2026 in Asaba.	PED/741/2026 Mrs. Okeoghene Ozomah and Mr. Ikenna Ben-Herbert Ozomah of No 6, Gospel Avenue, Off Airport Road, Benin City, widow and son respectively of the deceased.
6. MADAM. DORIS ERHABOR ERHABOR (A.K.A) DORIS IMADE ERHABOR, late of Okada, Ovia North East L.G.A., who died on the 27th day of May, 2026 in Benin City.	PED/710/2026 John Nathaniel Imade and Madam. Eki Obakpe of No 21, Iziengbe Street, Off Ekehuan Road, Benin City, son and daughter respectively of the deceased.
7. MR. FRIDAY OFUOMANA, late of Aghalokpe, Okpe L.G.A, Delta State, who died on the 13th day of July, 2026 in Aghalokpe.	PED/735/2026 Mr. Sunday Ofumana and Mr. Charles Ofumana of Okada Junction, Okada, brothers of the deceased.
8. MR. EMMANUEL OHIREIME IMOHIOSEN, late of Uzebba, Owan West L.G.A., who died on the 28th day of April, 2022 in Auchi.	PED/649/2023 Mr. Clinton Odaro Imohiosen and Mr. favour Ohikhuare Imohiosen of No 13, Old auchi-Igarra Road, Igbira camp, Auchi, sons of the deceased.
9. MR. IDEYENUMA CHARLES OHIHOIN, late of Eruere, Owan West L.G.A., who died on the 27th day of September, 2025 in Afuze.	PED/417/2026 Mr. Abraham Eragbai Ohihoin and Madam. Ilekukpe Afeikhena of No 5 Chucks Street, Egbaen Quarters, Ovia North East L.G.A., Edo State, brother and widow respectively of the deceased.
10. MR. GODFREY ISREAL ESANYE SIMATE, late of Orogun, Warri North L.G.A., who died on the 12th day of March, 2026 in Benin City.	PED/719/2026 Shola Godfrey and Clara Itamomo Simate of No 66, Debekeme Street, Off Upper Ekehuan Road, Benin City, daughter and widow respectively of the deceased.
11. MISS. PRECIOUS UKHUREBOR, late of Igbanke, Orhionmwon L.G.A., who died on the 1st day of November, 2025 in Oghara.	PED/749/2026 Miss. Gladys Ukhurebor and Miss. Isioma Osabo of No 36, Forestry Road, Ologbo, sisters of the deceased.
12. MRS. FLORENCE AVRUKPERE, late of Kokori, Ethiope East L.G.A., Delta State, who died on the 20th day of May, 2025 in Benin City.	PED/568/2025 Mr. Innocent Oghenevware Avrukpere and Mrs. Oghenefegor Efevwiare of No 50B, Adesuwa Road, GRA, Benin City, son and daughter respectively of the deceased.
13. MRS. PATIENCE JUSTINA AKHABUE, late of Igueben, Igueben L.G.A., who died on the 10th day of September, 2026 in Benin City.	PED/720/2026 Miss. Mercy Omozele Akhabue and Mrs. Caroline Ebikweluye Ebhohimen of No 3, Ogiso Street, Off M.M Way, Benin City, daughters of the deceased
14. MR. WILLIAM OTASOWIE AIBANGBEE, late of Evbokabua, Orhionmwon L.G.A., who died on the 21st day of October, 2025 in Benin City.	PED/766/2026 Miss. Loveth Osatohanmwen Aibangbee and Miss. Evelyn Adesuwa Aibangbee of No 20, Okoedion Street, Behind Magistrate Court, Sapele Road, Benin City, daughters of the deceased.
15. MR. MOSES INABA, late of Ebor-Orogun, Ughelli North L.G.A., Delta State, who died on the 2nd day of October, 2025 in Benin City.	PED/231/2026 Inaba Kingsley and Mr. Samuel Ochuko Inaba of No 7, Lucky Ogbebor Street, Off Ekenwan Road, Benin City, sons of the deceased.
16. MR. JIMOH IZIREN, late of Otuo, Owan East L.G.A., who died on the 30th day of May, 2012 in Benin City.	PED/764/2026 Mr. Nelson Afekhide Iziren and Mr. Frank Edeki Iziren of No 46, Ibiye Road, Ibiye Town, Badagry, Lagos, sons of the deceased
17. MR. JOHN UWAGBOE, late of Obazuwa, Ovia North East L.G.A., who died on the 20th day of August, 2022 in Benin City.	PED/23/2026 Mr. Monday Uwagboe and Mr. Kennedy Eyobo Uwagboe of No 1, Uwagboe Avenue, Off Omigie Street, Off Ojo Street, Off Uwasota Road, Benin City, sons of the deceased.
18. MR. MACDONALD EJAROMEDOGHENE EDOJA, late of Otumara, Ethiope East L.G.A., Delta State, who died on the 21st day of July, 2026 in Benin City.	PED/765/2026 Miss. Daniella Enohor Edoja and Miss. Samantha Akpesiri Edoja of No 1, Efedhome Street, Oluku, Benin City, daughters of the deceased.
19. MR. PETER EMMANUEL, late of Ogbe, Akoko-Edo L.G.A., who died on the 6th day of June, 2026 in Ogbe.	PED/645/2026 Miss. Happiness Joy Peter and Miss. Cynthia Blessing Peter of No 21, Igbinoba Street, behind NNPC Benin Agbor Road, Benin City, daughters of the deceased.
20. MRS. DEBORAH OLAYEMI (A.K.A) DEBORAH OKOJIE, late of Ugboha, Esan South East L.G.A., who died on the 9th day of October, 2025 in Benin City.	PED/644/2026 Mrs. Agatha Ellah and Mrs. Esther Okojie of No 2, Osagiator Street, Off Benin Auchi Road By-Pass, Benin City, sister and mother respectively of the deceased.
21. MR. ABRAHAM PETER, late of Atan, Ubom Ini L.G.A., Akwa-Ibom State, who died on the 25th day of January, 2026 in Benin City.	PED/748/2026 Mr. Future Peter Abraham and Mr. Udoh Peter Abraham of No 8, Iyase Street, Off 2nd West Road, Benin City, sons of the deceased.
22. MRS. FELICIA OSATOHANMWEN USIEMWANTA late of Evbuobanosa, Orhionmwon L.G.A, who died on the 18th day of July, 2026 in Benin City.	PED/763/2026 Dr. Lawson Osarugue Usiemwanta and Mrs. Sandra Ehimwenma Ukah of No 6, Isihuan Street, Off Uselu Lagos Road, Benin City, son and daughter respectively of the deceased.
23. MRS. CHIKAODINAKA GLORIA YEMI-ADENIYI, late of Igbere, Bende L.G.A, Abia State, who died on the 30th t day of May, 2026 in Benin City.	PED/657/2026 Mr. Adeyemi Emmanuel Adeniyi and Pst. David Friday Aku of No 16, Idemudia Street, Off Upper Mission Extension, Benin City, widower and family friend respectively of the deceased.
24. MR. CLETUS OGHINAN, late of Uromi, Esan North East L.G.A., who died on the 2nd day of July, 2006 in Irrua.	PED/10/2007 Mrs. Comfort Omo Oghinan and Mr. Joshua Osamudiamen Imoisili of A11, Senior Staff Quarters, UNIBEN, Benin City, widow and son respectively of the deceased.
25. MR. ABRAHAM ATAMHENWAN, late of Idumotutu, Igueben L.G.A., who died on the 6th day of December, 2025 in Benin City.	PED/750/2026 Mrs. Janet Obhiera Atamhenwan and Mrs. Susan Mary Ohioma No 5, Osagie Street, Ovbiogie, Benin City, widow and family friend respectively of the deceased.
26. MRS. FLORA ENOGUMWENGIE OSARUMWENSE, late of Oza, Orhionmwon L.G.A., who died on the 26th day of September, 2023 in Benin City.	PED/724/2026 Mrs. Beatrice Iyoghama Okoro and Mrs. Philomina Ogiemwonyi of No 3, Mandela Avenue, GRA, Benin City, daughter and sister respectively of the deceased.
27. MR. FRANCIS OKUGBENI, late of Amai, Ukwuani L.G.A., Delta State, who died on the 15th day of February, 2026 in Amal.	PED/445/2026 Mr. Anthony Okugbeni and Mr. Stanley Ochonogor Iyama of No 4, Ogbewekon Street, Igue-Iheya Quarters, Benin City, son and
28. MR. EMMANUEL KENT IGHOFOSE, late of Agbarho, Ughelli North L.G.A., Delta State, who died on the 21st day of April, 2025 in Benin City.	PED/538/2026 Mr. Efe Emmanuel Ighofose and Mrs. Christiana Osayande Ighofose of No 2, Erediauwa Street, Off Upper Sakponba Road, Benin City, son and widow respectively of the deceased.
29. MR. OJIE-AKORE TIMOTHY ONOJEIDE (A.K.A) TIMOTHY OJIE-ONOJEIDE AKORE, late of Agua, Esan Central L.G.A., who died on the 20th day of November, 2025 in Benin City.	PED/758/2026 Mrs. Augustina Izegbuwa Ojie-Akore and David Oserheimen Ojie-Akore of No 5, Obadiaru Street, Off Mela Motel Road, Benin City, widow and son respectively of the deceased.
30. MR. CLEMENT ORILOYE OLATUNJI, late of Ikakumo, Akoko-Edo L.G.A., who died on the 17th day of January, 2020 in Ibillo.	PED/699/2026 Mr. Victor Oriloye and Miss Glory Temitope Oriloye of Ikakumo, Akoko-Edo L.G.A, Edo State, son and daughter respectively of the deceased.
31. MRS. QUEEN OMO IBIZUGBE, late of Erie, Oredo L.G.A, who died on the 8th day of March, 2026 in Benin City.	PED/410/2026 Barry Osagie David-Ibizugbe and Rosemary Osareniye Igbinoba of No 46, Siluko Road, Benin City, widower and niece respectively of the deceased.
32. MR. AARON OMAVORAN EKPEBE, late of Emevon, Isoko North L.G.A., Delta State, who died on the 23rd day of September, 2024 in Benin City.	PED/390/2026 Madam. Doris Airianegbe Itobere and Mr. Washington Omavoran Ekpebe of No 23, Omore Road, Off Agen Aluminium Road, Isihor, Benin City, widow and son respectively of the deceased.
33. REV. HUMPHREY IYAYI ODIGIE, late of Usen, Ovia South Westt L.G.A., who died on the 20th day of August, 2025 in Benin City.	PED/817/2025 Mr. Godwin Osazuwa Odigie and Mr. Efosa Felix Odigie of No 10, Iredia Street, Ogba market Road, Airport Road, Benin City, sons of the deceased.
34. MRS. ADESUWA EHIZOGIE, late of Isienmwenro, Oredo L.G.A., who died on the 8th day of April, 2025 in Benin City.	PED/288/2026 Mr. Kingsley Efosa Enehikhuere and Mr. Julius Tayo of No 30A, Isokpan Street, Off Aghedo Street, Off Textile Mill Road, Benin City, brothers of the deceased.
35. BARR. FRED IZUANJE AIDENAGBON, late of Igue-Saleh, Owan East L.G.A., who died on the 9th day of January, 2026 in Benin City.	PED/725/2026 Mrs. Cordillia Olohigbe Aidenagbon and Miss. Christabel Omozoje Aidenagbon of No 12, Iyeye Avenue, Off Enogie Road, Off St Saviour Road, Benin City, widow and daughter respectively of the deceased.
36. MRS. ESTHER OKORUWA, late of Uromi, Esan North East L.G.A., who died on the 22nd day of April, 2026 in Benin City.	PED/784/2026 Miss. Elizabeth Okoruwa and Mr. Sunday Okoruwa of No 19, Egbon Estate, Off Second Powerline, Evbotubu, Benin City, daughter and son respectively of the deceased.
37. MISS MARY OSATOHANMWEN OMOSEFE, late of Uhi, Uhunmwonde L.G.A., who died on the 26th day of December, 2025 in Benin City.	PED/775/2026 Miss. Omoyemwen Mercy Omosefe and Mr. Clement Omosefe of No 22, Dandy Avenue, Off Okhoro Road, Benin City, sister and brother respectively of the deceased.
38. MR. FRANCIS ESHEGIAMWEN OGEDENGBE, late of Atte, Akoko-Edo L.G.A., who died on the 19th day of July, 2026 in Benin City.	PED/792/2026 Mrs. Damiana Esosa Ogedengbe and Mr. Divine Osahon Ogedengbe of No 18, Joey Omosefe Uzamere Street, Evbukhu, Sapele Road, Benin City, widow and son respectively of the deceased.
39. MRS. JANET ORUMWENSE, late of Ubiaja, Esan South L.G.A., who died on the 10th day of February, 2026 in Benin City.	PED/718/2026 Mrs. Joy Orunmwense and Mrs. Charity Edoghogho Ayeni of No 5, Idiaghe Street, Off Nomayo Street, Benin City, daughters of the deceased.
40. MRS. JANET OKOGIE, late of Fugar, Etsako Central L.G.A., who died on the 13th day of March, 2026 in Fugar.	PED/796/2026 Mr. Matthew Okogie and Mrs. Clara Erua of No 20, St John Road, Iviavia, Fugar, Edo State, son and daughter respectively of the deceased.
41. MR. LAWRENCE OSADOLOR IBIZUGBE, late of Evbohighae, Orhionmwon L.G.A., who died on the 23rd day of April, 2026 in Benin City.	PED/686/2026 Mr. Aisosa Courage Ibizugbe and Miss. Naomi Osasenaga Ibizugbe of No 6, Osagie Street, Off Azagba Community, Benin City, son and daughter respectively of the deceased.
42. MRS. JUDITH OMOSIGHO ENODOLOMWANYI, late of Ogbe, Oredo L.G.A, who died on the 20th day of May, 2026, in Benin City.	PED/751/2026 Mr. Walter Agbonvbiye Enodolomwanyi and Mr. Imuetinyan Andrew Enodolomwanyi of No 7, Irowa Lane, Off Stadium Road, Benin City, widower and son respectively of the deceased.
43. MR. GIDEON DICK, late of Umunede, Ika North East L.G.A., Delta State, who died on the 8th day of March, 2026, in Abuja.	PED/754/2026 Madam. Victoria Ogechi Utulu and Mr. John Odion Ajayi of No 14, Ogbe-Ishago Quarters, Ogwashi-Uku, Delta State, widow and brother respectively of the deceased.
44. MR. BRAIMAH ASUZOMIEVIE SALIU, late of Agbede, Etsako West L.G.A., who died on the 8th day of January, 2025, in Benin City.	PED/654/2026 Ahmed Ogboano Saliu, Rahamotu Iyabo Saliu and Precious Asmao Saliu of No 69, Obanor Street, Off College Road, Aduwawa, Benin City, son and daughters respectively of the deceased.
45. MADAM. ALICE KAKON KUM (A.K.A) ALICE NKONYUY, late of Befang, Menchum L.G.A., Cameroon, who died on the 28th day of December, 2025, in Ikeja.	PED/767/2026 Mr. Gideon Bawe Mumba and Mr. Firmin Ngafi Nkonyuy of No 36, Igbinosa Street, Off Mela Motel Road, Uselu, Benin City, widower and son respectively of the deceased.
46. MRS. GRACE OGHENERIOBORIFOWHO AIGBODION, late of Ewu-Urhobo, Ughelli South L.G.A., Delta State, who died on the 29th day of June, 2026, in Benin City.	PED/787/2026 Mr. Godswill Ohiocheoya Aigbodion and Mr. Destiny Ohiozoje Aigbodion of No 11, Sunny Street, Off Zion Street, Off Sapele Road, Benin City, sons of the deceased.
47. PROF. MICHAEL NWABUNDO NWABUZOR, late of Ebu, Oshimili North L.G.A., Delta State, who died on the 24th day of October, 2025, in Benin City.	PED/43/2026 Mrs. Charity Uzoezi Nwabuzor and Mr. John Ndubuisi Bardi of No 10, Edoba Asemota Street, Off Asoro Bus Stop, Benin City, widow and cousin respectively of the deceased.
48. MS. PATIENCE IDOWU AKELE, late of Eme-Ora, Owan West L.G.A., who died on the 22nd day of August, 2026, in Benin City.	PED/770/2026 Mr. Jude Ohiorenuan Lawani and Mr. Emmanuel Ohis Omage of Hausa Quarters, Ewodia, Benin City, sons of the deceased.
49. MR. ISMAILA GARBA ASEKOME, late of Ivbiaro, Owan East L.G.A., who died on the 16th day of August, 2025, in Benin City.	PED/785/2026 Mrs. Helen Omozele Asekome and Miss. Nora Omokhogie Asekome of No 69, Osanohen Street, Iduowina, off Benin Lagos Road, Benin City, widow and daughter respectively of the deceased.
50. MR. ODIBOH EDEAGHE late of Ibore-Irrua, Esan Central L.G.A., who died on the 10th day of March, 2024, in Ibore-irrua.	PED/799/2026 Miss. Blessing Edeaghe and Mrs. Mabel Odiboh of Ibore-Irrua, Edo State, daughter and widow respectively of the deceased.
51. MR. YESUFU AMIEBENOMO, late of Eware, Etsako West L.G.A., who died on the 24th day of October, 2025, in Benin City.	PED/605/2026 Mr. Momoh-Sanni Amiebenomo, Mrs. Aminat Abah and Mr. Odumamwen Aighe Iyawe of No 9, Asemota Street, Aduwawa, Benin City, son, daughter and cousin respectively of the deceased.
52. MR. ELISHA UWANGUE, late of Usen, Ovia South West L.G.A., who died on the 6th day of September, 2026, in Benin City.	PED/805/2026 Madam. Eileen Ikuoyemwen Efosa and Mr. Emmanuel Uwangue of No 9, Okede Street, Usen, Ovia South West L.G.A., Edo State, widow and brother respectively of the deceased.
53. MR. GODWIN EMEKA EMORDI, late of Ubulu-Uku, Aniocha South L.G.A., Delta State, who died on the 13th day of September, 2026, in Benin City.	PED/837/2026 Mr. John Chukwuemeka Emordi and Mrs. Frances Nwanneka Aboh of No 7, Iyawe Street, Dumez Road, Benin City, son and daughter respectively of the deceased
54. MR. OSEIGWINA EBENEZA AYENI, late of Ukpoke-Uhiele, Esan West L.G.A., who died on the 20th day of May, 2023, in Ekpoma.	PED/778/2026 Mrs. Ozavize Blessing Ose-Ayeni and Miss. Osefanmen Joy Ayeni of No 1, Sunday Osadolor Street, Off Omoruyi Street, Upper Mission Road, widow and sister respectively of the deceased.
55. MR. BENSON AYEMWENRE, late of Ogwa, Esan West L.G.A., who died on the 12th day of September, 2026, in Benin City.	PED/779/2026 Miss. Charity Ayemere and Miss. Onyinye Gift Ezenwani of No 3, Imade Street, Off Osamudiame Street, Evbotubu, Benin City, daughter and step daughter respectively of the deceased.

DATED THIS 5th DAY OF NOVEMBER, 2026.

B. O. OSAWARU ESQ.
Probate Registrar

NEWS

NNPCL generates ₦33.15trn revenue in 9 months, profit hits ₦3.5trn

ABUJA

AGHEDO IYOBOR

The Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPCL) generated N33.15 trillion in revenue and recorded N3.50 trillion in profit after tax between January and September 2026.

The figures were contained in the company's September 2026 Monthly Operations and Financial Report released on Tuesday.

The performance followed a strong September outing, when NNPC's revenue increased to N4.608 trillion from about N3.74 trillion in August, representing a month-on-month growth of about 23.3 per cent.

Profit after tax also rose in September to N509 billion, an 18.1 per cent increase from the N431 billion reported in August.

A breakdown of the nine-month revenue showed that NNPC generated N2.571 trillion in January, N2.680 trillion in February, N2.774 trillion in March, N4.971 trillion in April, N4.335 trillion in May, N4.389 trillion in June, N3.087 trillion in July, N3.737 trillion in August and N4.608 trillion in September.

The cumulative profit for the period stood at N3.494 trillion.

The company also paid a total of N11.14 trillion to the Federation Account as statutory payments between January and September 2026.

On production, total hydrocarbon production increased to 3.04 million barrels of oil equivalent per day (mmboe/d) in September, from 3.01 million barrels per day in August.

Crude oil and condensate production stood at 1.70 million barrels per day, while natural gas production reached 7,789 million standard cubic feet daily.

The company attributed the production improvement partly to the restart of the Obodo field and restoration of output from other assets.

Despite the improved September performance, the nine-month revenue of N33.15 trillion represents a 28.3 per cent or N13.11 trillion decline compared with the N46.26 trillion recorded in the corresponding period of 2025.

360 youths converge on Abuja to craft Nigeria's future

Confab to present action plan to Tinubu

OUR REPORTER

ABUJA

No fewer than 360 delegates converged on Abuja on Wednesday for the physical phase of the 2026 National Youth Conference to craft solutions for Nigeria's future and youth participation in governance.

The Minister of Youth Development, Mr Ayodele Olawande, said the six-day confab would turn discussions from earlier virtual sessions into actionable recommendations for government policies and programmes.

With the theme "Next Gen Nigeria: Crafting Solutions, Owning the Future", the conference follows a two-week virtual engagement which began on October 2 across the six geopolitical zones, with all states represented.

Olawande said the virtual sessions produced proposals on leadership and governance, employment, economic opportunities, education, skills development, technology, innovation, climate change, peace, security and national unity.

He urged delegates to examine the issues critically, identify major challenges facing young Nigerians and develop clear, practical and achievable action plans for President Bola Tinubu and other government leaders.

He said the recommendations should guide decisions across the executive, legislature and judiciary, while ensuring young people had meaningful opportunities to influence policies affecting their lives.

"The Renewed Hope Agenda prioritises opportunities for young people through education, skills acquisition, entrepreneurship, technology, business support and job creation.

"I urge delegates to participate actively, respect divergent views, establish partnerships and remain focused on solutions," Olawande said.

He stressed that the conference must produce concrete outcomes rather than end with discussions.

Olawande said delegates were selected through a registration and screening process designed to ensure transparency and broad representation.

Participants, he said, included representatives of student organisations, youth groups, ethnic associations, civil society organisations and persons with disabilities.

FG to build 1,000 CNG stations nationwide

To cut transport costs, ease burden on households

ABUJA

FAITH OSEMUDIAMHEN / AGHEDO IYOBOR

The Federal Government will establish 1,000 additional Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) stations across the country as part of a major push to cut transportation costs and accelerate Nigeria's energy transition.

The Executive Chairman, Presidential Initiative on CNG and Electric Vehicles, Mr Ahmad Ismael, announced the plan on Wednesday at the maiden National CNG Summit in Abuja.

Nigeria currently has 105 operational CNG stations, with 127 others at various stages of completion, bringing the total to 232.

Ismael said the new plan will deliver President Bola Tinubu's directive for 500 additional stations, plus another 500 subsequently announced, to guarantee nationwide access to CNG.

He said Nigeria's 215 trillion cubic feet of proven natural gas reserves and about 12.6 million vehicles offer a huge opportunity to grow the CNG market.

"Transportation accounts for between 15 and 22 per cent of household expenditure. Switching to CNG-powered vehicles will help reduce that burden," he said.

He, however, cited poor infrastructure, weak gas supply networks and logistics as major constraints, and called for urgent investment in pipelines, compression facilities and virtual pipelines.

In his keynote address, the Convener, National Compressed Natural Gas Forum (NCNG-F), Mr Faruk Abdullahi, urged the government and private sector to turn Nigeria's gas wealth into affordable energy, jobs and industrial growth.

He described as a paradox a situation where a country with huge gas reserves still struggles with expensive energy and poor livelihoods.

"The success of CNG transition should not be measured only by the number of vehicles converted or refuelling stations established, but by its impact on transportation costs, employment, business growth and household welfare," Abdullahi said.

"Behind every energy policy is a human story. When we discuss CNG, we are discussing the commercial driver whose daily earnings are consumed by the cost of fuel. We are talking about the trader whose transportation expenses influence the price of goods; the farmer whose produce must travel long distances to reach the market."

While commending President Tinubu for establishing the Presidential Initiative on CNG and Electric Vehicles, Abdullahi urged the government to move from intervention to a self-sustaining, private-sector-driven industry.

He listed high conversion costs, poor access to credit, inadequate infrastructure, gas availability, regulatory clarity, technical standards and low public awareness as urgent challenges.

He also called for certified equipment, accredited conversion centres and trained technicians to guarantee safety and build public confidence.

Also speaking, Governor Alex Otti of Abia, represented by his Senior Special Assistant on National Assembly Matters, Mr Emenike Onyembi, said successful CNG adoption depends on affordable pricing, accessible refuelling infrastructure and strict safety standards.

Otti warned that motorists would not convert without stations, while investors would not build stations without patronage.

He disclosed that Abia has deployed 40 electric buses under its Green Shuttle programme, with plans to raise the fleet to 100.

PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE OF LOSS OF ORIGINAL DEED OF ASSIGNMENT – VITCHEL HOSPITALITY

This is to notify the general public that the original Deed of Assignment executed between DEDAC NIGERIA LIMITED (Assignor) and VITCHEL HOSPITALITY (Assignee), in respect of a property situated at Commercial Avenue, Benin City, Edo State, has been misplaced.

The said Deed of Assignment was duly consented to by the Governor of Edo State on 23rd July, 2023, and registered at the Edo State Lands Registry with the following particulars:

Registration Number: 48

Page: 48

Volume: 812.

The original Deed was misplaced in the course of it's being moved for storage. Despite diligent searches and reasonable efforts to recover the document, it has remained missing.

Any person who may have found the said original Deed or has information regarding its whereabouts is kindly requested to contact Vitchel Hospitality through its Solicitors:

PAUL EMGBOUKE LEGAL CONSULTS

Suite 22, 2nd Floor No. Yoruba Street Opposite Waterboard, Iyaro Benin City, Edo State 08034502671.

This public notice is issued for general information, record purposes and to facilitate the application for the issuance of a Certified True Copy of the registered Deed of Assignment by the Edo State Lands Registry.

PAUL EMGBOUKE
Principal Counsel, Paul Emgbouke Legal Consults
Solicitors to Vitchel Hospitality.

CHANGE OF NAME

I formerly known as **EDWARD CLEMENT**. Now wish to be known and Addressed as **OKOH EDWARD**. all former documents remain valid concerned Authorities and the general public should please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Formerly known as **BENEDICTA OHEN**. Now wish to be known and addressed as **BENEDICTA EKI IMHOMHON**.All former documents Remain valid concerned Authorities and the general public should please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME

I formerly known as **MISS ENAJERE ENDURANCE** now wish to be known and addressed as **MRS EKAMA ENDURANCE**. All former documents remain valid concerned authorities and the general public please take note.

REMOVAL OF MLDDLE NAME

The general public is hereby notified that **IYEKOWA PAULINE IDAKE** And **IYEKOWA OSAIGBOVO PAULINE**. Are one and the same person. Henceforth, I wish to be known and addressed as **IYEKOWA OSAIGBOVO PAULINE**. All former documents Remain valid concerned Authorities and the general public should please take note.

LEGAL NOTICE

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE

EDO STATE OF NIGERIA
PROBATE REGISTRY
BENIN CITY

WHEREAS the person whose name is set out in the first column hereunder died intestate on the date and at the place stated in the column;

AND WHEREAS the persons whose names, addresses and claimed relationship to the deceased are set in the second column hereunder have applied to the Probate Registrar, High Court of Justice, Edo State of Nigeria for a grant of Letters of Administration of the real and personal property of the deceased.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that Letters of Administration will be granted to such persons unless a NOTICE to prohibit the grant is filed in this Registry within Twenty-One (21) days from the date of the publication of this notice.

1. **MRS. RACHAEL IGBINOKUN OLAGUE**, late of Usen, Ovia North East L.G.A., who died on the 1st day of October, 2024 in Ondo Town.	**PED/722/2026** Mr. Edebiri Eugene Olague and Mr. Aighobahi Andrew Olague of No 3, Obakhavbaye Street, Off Oba Market Road, Benin City, sons of the deceased.

DATED THIS 5th DAY OF NOVEMBER, 2026.

B. O. OSAWARU ESQ.
Probate Registrar

No ceasefire with Boko Haram, others — DHQ

ABUJA

The Defence Headquarters has denied any ceasefire agreement with Boko Haram, the Islamic State West Africa Province and other criminal groups.

The military high command noted that operations against terrorists and kidnappers will continue across the country.

The denial comes amid a report that the Federal Government had entered into a secret ceasefire agreement with the Boko Haram faction led by Bakura Doro, which reportedly contributed to relative calm in parts of the North-East for about three months.

The report, citing three people with contacts among senior Boko Haram members, said the truce had been in effect since June and was expected to be extended.

However, speaking at the joint security briefing in Abuja, the Director of Defence Information, Maj. Gen. Samaila Uba said the military was sustaining pressure on the armed groups, citing the number of terrorists neutralised, suspects arrested and kidnapped victims rescued during recent operations as evidence that troops were not relenting.

"On the issue of whether there is a ceasefire with Boko Haram, I want to make it clear that there is nothing like a ceasefire.

"Considering the terrorists neutralised, suspects arrested, victims rescued and other successes recorded across our operations, it is clear that we are not relenting.

"We will continue to sustain pressure on these criminal elements," he added.

The defence spokesman said the military's operations were not restricted to Boko Haram and ISWAP but also targeted kidnappers and other armed criminal groups threatening the lives and security of Nigerians.

"Our operations are not limited to Boko Haram or ISWAP. They also target kidnappers and other criminal elements who take up arms against innocent citizens," Uba said.



PRESENTATION:
Chairman, National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), retired Brig.-Gen. Mohammed Marwa, presenting a plague to Gov. Monday Okpebholo of Edo State, during the former's visit to the Government House in Benin City.

2027: Police pledge protection for corps members, election workers

ABUJA

The Nigeria Police Force has assured members of the National Youth Service Corps and other ad hoc personnel engaged by the Independent National Electoral Commission of adequate security during the 2027 general elections.

This assurance follows two recent incidents: the November 2026 abduction of nine corps members and a commercial driver on the Ijebu-Ode–Ibadan road in Ogun State, and the October 1, 2026 kidnapping of 20 prospective corps members on the Owerri-Onitsha road in Imo State, which has since gone to court.

The incidents have renewed concerns over the safety of young Nigerians deployed for national assignments, including election duties, particularly as corps members constitute a significant part of INEC's ad hoc workforce.

Speaking on preparations for the forthcoming general elections at the joint security agencies briefing on Thursday in Abuja, the police spokesman, Ani Iniedu, said the Force had conducted an extensive threat assessment and was strengthening security arrangements to protect electoral personnel.

He said the police were working with INEC and other security agencies to ensure that corps members and other temporary electoral workers were adequately protected before, during and after the elections.

"In every election cycle, there are potential threats to soft targets. However, as other targets become increasingly fortified, criminals may attempt to exploit perceived vulnerabilities elsewhere.

"The Nigeria Police Force has conducted an extensive threat assessment ahead of the forthcoming general elections, and we are adequately preparing for the challenges.

"During the Osun State election, for instance, we engaged corps members, their parents and other stakeholders and assured them of our commitment to providing adequate security for all ad hoc personnel. The forthcoming general election will not be an exception.

"We are working closely with sister security agencies through the established inter-agency security arrangements. We are also engaging the Independent National Electoral Commission to ensure adequate protection for corps members and other ad hoc personnel involved in the electoral process,"he said.

Iniedu disclosed that they were increasing security deployments ahead of the elections, while the Inspector-General of Police had directed the immediate distribution of operational equipment and logistics.

"We are increasing deployments, while the Inspector-General of Police has directed that the distribution of operational equipment and logistics should commence immediately," he said.

Reassuring corps members and other young Nigerians participating in the electoral process, the police said their safety remained a priority.

Ondo partners NDLEA to tackle drug abuse among youths

AKURE

The Ondo State Government has said it is partnering with the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency to tackle drug and substance abuse, particularly among young people.

The partnership is expected to involve public awareness campaigns, community engagement, early intervention and drug-abuse prevention programmes across the state's 18 local government areas.

The Special Assistant to Governor Lucky Aiyedatiwa on Youth and Social Inclusion, Henry Okunomo, disclosed this in a statement on Thursday after a meeting with officials of the NDLEA in the state.

According to the statement, the meeting was led by the NDLEA State Commander, Folayemi Adeyemo Gabriel, and focused on areas of collaboration to address drug and substance abuse.

It said the proposed programmes would include public enlightenment campaigns, youth-focused prevention initiatives, community engagement and the promotion of healthy lifestyles.

The statement added that Okunomo's office would work with the agency to sustain awareness campaigns in schools, communities, youth organisations and other institutions across the state.

The statement read, "The meeting focused on strengthening institutional cooperation, youth-oriented drug prevention programmes, public enlightenment campaigns, community engagement, early intervention, and the promotion of healthy lifestyles among young people and the general public.

"The partnership underscores the determination of the administration of His Excellency, Dr Lucky Aiyedatiwa, to prioritise youth development, social inclusion, public safety, and the overall well-being of citizens.

ADC rejects ruling nullifying Atiku's candidacy, vows appeal

ABUJA

The African Democratic Congress has rejected the Federal High Court judgment nullifying the leadership of its National Working Committee led by former Senate President David Mark and invalidating the emergence of former Vice-President Atiku Abubakar as its presidential candidate for the 2027 elections.

The party said it would challenge the judgment through every available judicial process, arguing that the ruling raised concerns about the political rights of its members and candidates ahead of the general elections.

The ADC's National Publicity Secretary, Bolaji Abdullahi, stated this in a statement issued on Thursday.

The party also questioned the timing of the judgment, suggesting that it came amid growing political activities ahead of the 2027 elections.

In the statement titled, 'Lifu Judgment: APC Wants to Set Nigeria on Fire', the ADC said the ruling could affect thousands of its candidates seeking elective positions across the country.

It said, "Yesterday, Nigerians came out in their hundreds of thousands to demonstrate their support for the ADC and our promise of making life affordable for them.

"Today, they are being told that the party that they support and the candidates that they have supported at all levels could be erased by the stroke of a reckless judicial pen."

The party maintained that the matter went beyond Atiku and Mark, arguing that the judgment had implications on the participation of its members in the electoral process.

"Do these people understand what they are playing with? This is not about Atiku Abubakar or David Mark. It is about the democratic rights of Nigerians to freely choose their own leaders. It is about the rights of thousands of candidates to participate in a democratic process," it added.

The ADC also faulted the judgment, citing an earlier ruling by Justice Musa Liman of the Federal High Court, Abuja, delivered on July 2, 2026, in suit number FHC/ABJ/CS/1637/2025.

According to the party, the earlier judgment affirmed the legitimacy of the Mark-led National Working Committee and directed the Independent National Electoral Commission to recognise its leadership.

It argued that a court of coordinate jurisdiction could not review or overturn the decision of another court of equal jurisdiction.

The statement read, "Our objection is particularly anchored on the subsisting judgment of Justice Musa Liman of the same Federal High Court, delivered on 2 July 2026 in Suit No. FHC/ABJ/CS/1637/2025, which affirmed the legitimacy of the David Mark-led NWC and directed INEC to recognise the leadership.

"It is a settled principle of Nigerian jurisprudence that a court of coordinate jurisdiction cannot sit on appeal over, review, vary or nullify the subsisting judgment of another court of equal jurisdiction."

Reiterating its rejection of the ruling, the party said it would not accept any consequential orders arising from what it described as a flawed determination.

"The ADC, therefore, rejects any consequential orders founded on a determination that appears to disregard these fundamental legal principles," Abdullahi said.

The party, however, said it was awaiting the Certified True Copy of the latest judgment to establish its precise terms and the orders made by the court.

"We have seen this script before. When they are scared that the opposition is gathering steam, they use their judges in the courts to influence legally indefensible judgments," the statement added.

It further declared, "The ADC, therefore, rejects any consequential orders founded on a determination that appears to disregard these fundamental legal principles. However, we await the Certified True Copy (CTC) of the said judgment to ascertain its precise terms, scope and operative orders."

The party also urged the judiciary to uphold democratic principles and called on the ruling All Progressives Congress to allow political competition ahead of the next general elections.

It said, "The peace and stability of Nigeria are bigger than the ambition of any president or political party. Nobody should be so desperate to retain power that they are prepared to put the entire country at risk.

Feature

From Cannabis to Cocoa: The quiet revolution to give Edo farmers a better harvest

Uwa Jimoh



COCOA FAMERS

Deep inside the forests of Edo State, far away from the noise of Benin City and the cameras of government events, there is a farmer who wakes up every morning with a difficult choice. On one side of his farm is a crop that the law forbids, a crop that buyers come to collect in secret, a crop that pays quickly and in cash. On the other side is the possibility of a different life, a life where he can farm in the open, where he can take his produce to the market without fear, where his children can be proud of what their father grows. For years, that farmer, and thousands like him across Edo, have chosen the first option, not because they are criminals at heart, but because no one ever showed them that the second option could pay. That is the reality that the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency is now trying to change, with a new strategy that does not begin with handcuffs, but with seedlings, with support, and with a simple promise that a farmer can earn a decent living without growing cannabis.

When the Chairman of the NDLEA, Brigadier General Mohamed Buba Marwa, retired, visited the Oba of Benin and spoke about a new strategy to discourage cannabis cultivation, he was touching on one of the most sensitive and most misunderstood issues in Edo State. For decades, the story told about Edo and cannabis has been a story of crime, of raids, of farms burnt, of traffickers arrested. It has been a story that paints the farmer as the villain. But anyone who has spent time in the rural communities of Edo knows that the story is far more complicated. Cannabis farming in Edo is not just a criminal enterprise run by cartels in faraway cities. It is, in many cases, a survival economy run by ordinary families who feel abandoned by the system. A man who grows cannabis in Ovia, Owan, or Akoko-Edo often does so because the road to his village is bad, because there is no storage facility for his yams, because the middlemen cheat him on the price of his cassava, because the bank will not give him a loan, and because the buyer of cannabis is the only buyer who comes to his doorstep with cash in hand and no questions asked. To change that man, you must first change his economics.

The NDLEA strategy, as outlined by Marwa, is built on that understanding. It seeks to help cannabis farmers abandon the illegal crop and embrace the cultivation of legitimate, more profitable crops that will improve their livelihoods without breaking the law. It is a shift from a purely enforcement approach to a development approach, from burning farms to building alternatives. The logic is simple. If you only burn a farmer's cannabis farm without giving him another source of income, he will simply go deeper into the forest and plant again, because hunger does not wait for policy. But if you give him cocoa seedlings, oil palm seedlings, plantain suckers, or cassava stems, if you train him on modern farming techniques, if you link him to a cooperative that will buy his produce at a fair price, and if you give him access to a market where he does not have to beg for buyers, then you have given him a reason to leave cannabis behind for good. You have replaced fear with hope, and punishment with opportunity.

Edo State is blessed with some of the most fertile land in Nigeria. The soil that grows cannabis so well can grow almost anything. Cocoa, which was once a major source of wealth in the old Bendel State, still thrives in parts of Edo Central and Edo South. Oil palm, which grows naturally in the state, can provide steady income for decades if properly managed. Plantain, banana, yam, cassava, maize, vegetables, and even timber can all be grown profitably if the farmer has the right support. The tragedy is that many farmers have been locked out of these opportunities, not because they lack land or labour, but because they lack information, inputs, and markets. A farmer who has grown cannabis for ten years knows how to clear land, how to plant, how to nurture a crop, and how to harvest. Those are transferable skills. The same hands that planted cannabis can plant cocoa. The same discipline that was used to hide a farm in the forest can be used to manage a legitimate farm in the open. What the farmer needs is not condemnation. What he needs is a bridge to cross from illegality to legality, and the NDLEA is now offering to build that bridge, with the support of the Oba, traditional rulers, and community leaders.

The role of the palace and traditional rulers in this strategy cannot be overstated. In many rural communities, the farmer listens more to his Enogie, his Odionwere, or his community elder than he does to a government official from Benin City or Abuja. When the Oba says that cannabis farming must stop, and that the palace will support those who choose legal crops, that message carries a moral weight that no amount of radio jingles can match. It tells the farmer that his community is not against him, but is for him, and that the Kingdom wants him to prosper, not to perish. The Oba's private strategy, which he promised to send to the NDLEA, is likely to involve this community based approach, where traditional structures are used to identify farmers, to counsel them, to monitor their progress, and to ensure that those who abandon cannabis are not left to suffer. In Benin tradition, the Oba is a father to his people, and a father does not abandon a child who has gone astray. He guides him back home. That is the spirit behind this new partnership.

There are, of course, challenges that must be honestly confronted. The first is trust. Many farmers have been burnt before by government programmes that promised seedlings, loans, and support, but delivered little or nothing. They have seen politicians come during elections with promises of tractors and fertilizers, only to disappear after the votes are counted. They have seen agricultural programmes where the inputs were diverted to cronies, and the real farmers were left with empty hands. For the NDLEA strategy to work, it must be different. The distribution of seedlings, training, and support must be transparent, and the farmers themselves must be involved in designing the programme. They must be able to say what crops they want to grow, what markets they need, and what support will truly help them. A programme designed in an office in Abuja without the input of the farmers in the forest will fail, no matter how well intentioned.

The second challenge is the market. It is not enough to tell a farmer to grow cocoa or cassava. He must be assured that when his cocoa is ready in three years, or when his cassava is ready in one year, there will be buyers waiting, and that they will pay a fair price. This is where the state government, the private sector, and development partners must step in. Off taker agreements, cooperatives, processing centres, and rural roads are not luxuries. They are necessities. A farmer who grows ten tonnes of cassava but cannot transport it to the market because the road is impassable will lose his harvest and his hope. A farmer who grows cocoa but is forced to sell to a middleman at a ridiculously low price will begin to wonder if cannabis was not a better option after all. The alternative livelihood programme must therefore be a complete package, not just seedlings, but roads, storage, processing, and markets.

The third challenge is the youth. Many of the young men who are involved in cannabis cultivation are not landowners. They are labourers, hired to clear farms, to plant, to harvest, and to carry the produce. For them, cannabis is not a farm. It is a job. If that job is taken away without providing another job, they will become idle, frustrated, and vulnerable to other forms of crime. The strategy must therefore include skills training, vocational programmes, and employment opportunities for these young people. Some can be trained as tractor operators, as agro processors, as marketers, as technicians for CNG buses, or as entrepreneurs in other sectors. The fight against cannabis is, at its core, a fight for the future of Edo youths, and that fight cannot be won if the youths are left with no alternative.

If the strategy succeeds, the benefits for Edo State will be enormous. Villages that were once known as cannabis strongholds could become known as cocoa hubs, oil palm estates, or food baskets. Families that once lived in fear of NDLEA raids could live in peace, knowing that their farms are legal and their income is secure. The environment, which has suffered from the destruction of forests to make way for hidden cannabis farms, could begin to recover. The state government could earn more revenue from legitimate agriculture, and the NDLEA could focus its resources on the real traffickers, the barons who profit from the trade, rather than on poor farmers who are merely pawns in a larger game. Most importantly, the children of these farmers could grow up in communities where the path to success is not through crime, but through hard work, education, and enterprise.

There is a farmer in Edo today who is waiting to be convinced. He has heard about the NDLEA visit to the Oba. He has heard that the Oba has a strategy. He has heard that the government wants to help him grow something else. He is sceptical, but he is also hopeful, because he is tired of hiding, tired of fear, tired of watching his children grow up in a community where the only quick money comes from an illegal crop. He wants to be proud of his farm. He wants to invite people to his farm without fear. He wants to take his produce to the market in the daytime, not in the night. If the NDLEA, the palace, the state government, and the people of Edo can reach that farmer, not with threats, but with genuine support, then the quiet revolution from cannabis to cocoa will have begun. It will not happen overnight. It will take years of patience, investment, and trust building. But it is a revolution worth fighting for, because at its heart is a simple truth. The soil of Edo is rich, the people of Edo are hardworking, and when given a fair chance, they will choose a better harvest over a hidden one, every single time.

FEATURE

Forty tresures coming home: the long journey of Benin's stolen artifacts and what their return means





BENIN STOLEN ARTIFACTS:

Nkasi Obi-Dike

There are moments in the life of a people when history stops being something read in textbooks and becomes something felt in the chest. For the people of Benin, one of those moments came when the Oba of Benin, His Royal Majesty, Oba Ewuare II, announced that the Kingdom would be receiving forty artifacts in Lagos the following day. It was a simple sentence, delivered calmly in the palace during the visit of the NDLEA Chairman, but it carried the weight of more than a century of pain, struggle, diplomacy and hope. Forty artifacts. Forty pieces of a stolen soul coming home. For a Kingdom that has waited since 1897 to see its treasures return, that announcement was not just news. It was justice, delayed but not denied, and it was a reminder that the Benin Kingdom, no matter how long it takes, never forgets what belongs to it.

To understand what those forty artifacts mean, one must go back to February 1897, to a time that every Benin child learns about with a mixture of pride and sorrow. The Benin Kingdom was at that time one of the most powerful, organised and artistically advanced kingdoms in West Africa, with a civilisation that had flourished for centuries. Its Obas ruled with wisdom, its guilds of brass casters and ivory carvers produced works of art that amazed the world, its walls stretched for miles, and its palace was a centre of administration, spirituality and culture. Then came the British punitive expedition, a military invasion that followed a series of misunderstandings and confrontations between the Kingdom and British colonial interests. The expedition sacked Benin City, set fire to parts of the palace, exiled Oba Ovonramwen, and looted thousands of priceless artifacts. Plaques that told the history of the Obas, heads that honoured past kings, ceremonial swords, staffs, masks and other sacred objects were carted away, sold, auctioned and scattered across museums and private collections in London, Berlin, Paris, New York and beyond. For the people of Benin, it was not just theft. It was an attempt to erase their memory, to take away the physical evidence of their greatness and to leave them with only stories.

For more than a hundred years, those artifacts sat in glass cases in foreign lands, admired by strangers who often knew little about the people who made them. Tourists would stare at a Benin Bronze plaque in the British Museum and marvel at its craftsmanship, without knowing that the plaque was once a page in the history book of Benin, a record of a king, a battle, a trade, a victory. Students in Germany would study a Benin head as an example of African art, without knowing that the head was once placed on an ancestral altar, where it was honoured with prayers and offerings. The world celebrated Benin art, but Benin itself was denied the right to see, touch and honour its own creations. That is why the struggle for restitution has never been just about art. It has been about identity, about dignity, about the right of a people to own their story and to pass it on to their children in their own land.

The journey to bring the artifacts home has been long and difficult. It has involved Obas, historians, activists, lawyers, diplomats and ordinary Benin people in the diaspora who refused to let the world forget. Oba Ewuare II, since ascending the throne, has made the return of the artifacts one of the central missions of his reign. He has engaged with foreign governments, museums, universities and international bodies, arguing with calm but firm determination that the artifacts were stolen, that they belong to Benin, and that their rightful place is in Benin City, under the custodianship of the Oba. His efforts have not been in vain. In recent years, several countries and institutions have begun to return artifacts, some in small numbers, some in larger batches, each return greeted with celebration in Benin. The announcement of forty more artifacts arriving in Lagos is the latest chapter in that long journey, and it shows that the world is slowly beginning to listen.

The forty artifacts that are expected in Lagos are not just forty objects. Each one carries a story. A plaque may tell the story of an Oba who expanded the Kingdom, or a queen mother who was honoured for her wisdom. A head may represent a king whose reign brought peace and prosperity. A ceremonial bell may have been rung during festivals that brought the entire Kingdom together. When these objects return, they bring back those stories. They allow a child in Benin City to stand before a bronze plaque and see, with his own eyes, the face of his ancestor, to understand that his people were not primitive, as colonial narratives tried to suggest, but were master artists, engineers, administrators and diplomats. They allow researchers, artists and students in Nigeria to study their own heritage without having to travel to London or Berlin. They allow the guilds of Benin, the brass casters of Igun Street, who have kept the tradition alive for centuries despite the looting, to see the work of their forefathers up close and to draw inspiration for new creations.

There is also an economic and tourism dimension to the return that cannot be ignored. Benin City is already a city of immense cultural wealth, but the return of the artifacts opens the door to something bigger. With a proper museum, with proper security, proper curation and proper storytelling, Benin could become one of the leading cultural tourism destinations in Africa. Visitors from across Nigeria and around the world would come not just to see the artifacts, but to experience the living culture of Benin, its festivals, its food, its music, its crafts and its hospitality. Hotels, restaurants, transporters, guides and artisans would all benefit. The artifacts, therefore, are not just symbols of the past. They are assets for the future, capable of creating jobs, attracting investment, and placing Edo State firmly on the global cultural map. But that future will only be realised if the artifacts are protected, preserved and displayed with the honour they deserve, in a facility that meets international standards and is managed with transparency and professionalism.

The question of where the artifacts should be kept has itself been a subject of debate in Nigeria, with different interests claiming custodianship. The Oba has been clear that the artifacts belong to the Benin Kingdom and should be under his custodianship as the spiritual and cultural head of the Kingdom. For the people of Benin, there is no ambiguity. The artifacts were created for the palace, for the Obas, and for the ancestral altars. They were looted from the palace. They must return to the palace. The federal government, state government and international partners must respect that position, because to return the artifacts to any other place would be to repeat, in a different form, the injustice of 1897. Restitution is not complete if the rightful owner is not recognised. The Oba's stance is not about personal ownership. It is about communal ownership, about ensuring that the artifacts are held in trust for all Benin people, present and future, and that they are not sold, privatised or scattered again.

As the forty artifacts arrive in Lagos, there will be celebrations, prayers and thanksgiving in Benin. Elders will pour libations. Women will sing. Youths will share the news on social media. The Igun Street casters will feel a renewed sense of pride that their ancestors' works are coming home. But beyond celebration, there must also be reflection. The return of the artifacts is a reminder of what was lost, and of what must never be lost again. It is a reminder that a people who do not protect their heritage will lose it. It is a call to the younger generation to learn the history of Benin, to learn the language, to learn the art, to learn the values of respect, hard work and discipline that made the Kingdom great. The artifacts are teachers, and their lesson is simple. Benin was great, Benin is great, and Benin will remain great if its people hold on to who they are.

The return is also a message to the world. It tells museums that still hold looted artifacts that the era of keeping stolen treasures is coming to an end. It tells other African nations that are also fighting for restitution that persistence pays, that diplomacy, dignity and unity can achieve what anger alone cannot. And it tells the people of Benin that their Oba has not forgotten them, that he has been working quietly and tirelessly to bring back what was taken. In a time when many Nigerians are cynical about leadership, the Oba's success in this area is a powerful example of what focused, principled leadership can achieve.

For the Oba, the forty artifacts are part of a larger mission. The same Oba who is fighting for the return of artifacts is also fighting for the future of his people, whether it is by supporting the NDLEA in the fight against drugs, by encouraging education, or by promoting peace and development in Edo State. The artifacts represent the past. The fight against drugs represents the present. The empowerment of women and youths represents the future. All three are connected, because a people who reclaim their past, protect their present, and invest in their future cannot be defeated. The palace is not just a museum. It is a living institution, and the Oba is not just a custodian of artifacts. He is a custodian of a people.

As the artifacts make their way from Lagos to Benin, the people of Edo will watch with pride and expectation. They will hope that this batch will not be the last, that more will follow, that one day, all the stolen treasures will be home. They will hope that a befitting museum, the Benin Royal Museum, will be completed to house them, so that generations yet unborn can see them. And they will hope that the return of the artifacts will inspire a new renaissance in Benin, a renaissance of art, of culture, of education and of pride. Forty artifacts may seem like a small number compared to the thousands that were stolen, but in Benin, forty is not just a number. Forty is a promise that home is waiting, that history is returning, and that the Kingdom that was once looted is now reclaiming its glory, one artifact at a time.

FEATURE

NUEE-BEDC Strike: Between workers' welfare and public interest

By REBECCA EJEMOGO

In the early hours of Monday, October 19, 2026, residents of Edo State, across its 18 local government areas, were probably preparing to hit the road for another week of hustling and bustling when they were greeted with the disturbing news of a total blackout occasioned by an industrial action embarked upon by the National Union of Electricity Employees (NUEE).

The strike, which disrupted operations at the Benin Electricity Distribution Company (BEDC) Plc, plunged Edo State into darkness and extended its impact to neighbouring states, including Delta, Ondo and Ekiti.

Initially, many residents appeared unconcerned, perhaps believing that, like previous industrial disputes, the strike would be resolved within a short period. Little did they realise the extent of the hardship that awaited them in the days ahead.

As the strike persisted, the realities of life without electricity began to unfold. Residents were seen in different neighbourhoods scrambling for water from whatever sources were available, filling containers and other storage facilities to meet their immediate and future needs.

Children, who ordinarily would have spent their afternoons resting or playing with their peers after school, were also caught up in the struggle. Some accompanied their parents, carrying small buckets and containers, as families queued for water at the mercy of the few available sources.

For traders, particularly those selling chilled drinks and other perishable products, the situation was equally distressing. A businesswoman who depended on the sale of cold soft drinks suddenly found herself struggling to satisfy customers whose preference for chilled beverages had increased amid the prevailing heat.

The absence of electricity meant that she could no longer preserve her products at the required temperature, resulting in reduced patronage and possible financial losses.

Similarly, working-class families who ordinarily stocked their refrigerators with food items to reduce the daily burden of cooking were confronted with the challenge of preserving their supplies. Without electricity to keep their refrigerators functioning, many had to devise alternative means of preventing their food from spoiling.

Students in tertiary institutions were not spared. Some had to pay considerably more at commercial charging centres to recharge their mobile phones, laptops and power banks, while others resorted to appealing to neighbours who had generators or solar-powered facilities for assistance.

These experiences represent only a fraction of the hardship endured by residents during the blackout. Beyond individual households, businesses, industries, healthcare facilities, government establishments and other critical sectors of the economy were also affected.

The consequences of a prolonged electricity shutdown extend far beyond the inconvenience of living without light. They affect productivity, service delivery, commercial activities, security and the general well-being of the people.

If BEDC could report losses estimated at about N2 billion within a few days of the strike, the question naturally arises: how much did Edo State and the affected states collectively lose in economic activities, productivity and other revenue-generating opportunities during the period?

While many residents considered the strike cruel, unnecessary, selfish and inconsiderate, NUEE, on the other hand, maintained that the industrial action was necessary to compel BEDC management to address what it described as long-standing workers' grievances.

According to the union, its demands, which reportedly dated back to 2013, included issues relating to salary harmonisation, outstanding arrears, promotions and improved staff welfare. If these grievances have indeed remained unresolved for about 13 years, they raise serious questions about the relationship between management and its workforce.

"The consequences of a prolonged electricity shutdown extend far beyond the inconvenience of living without light. They affect productivity, service delivery, commercial activities, security and the general well-being of the people.



PROTESTERS

This brings us to the central issue of this discourse: Was the NUEE-BEDC strike driven by personal interest or public interest?

The impact of the industrial action could aptly be likened to the popular saying that when two elephants fight, it is the grass that suffers. In this instance, the residents and businesses that depend on electricity became the most visible victims of a dispute between workers and their employer.

However, while it is understandable that the public would express anger and frustration over the prolonged blackout, it is equally important to examine the issues from an objective perspective rather than allow emotions to determine our conclusions.

Both parties have legitimate interests that deserve attention. The challenge, however, lies in reconciling the rights of workers with the expectations and welfare of electricity consumers.

On one hand, NUEE insists that the welfare of its members must be adequately addressed. Workers deserve fair remuneration, timely payment of entitlements, career progression, improved working conditions and respect for agreements reached with their employer.

No organisation can reasonably expect its workforce to remain productive and committed when genuine welfare concerns are left unattended for years. The dignity of labour demands that employees should not have to resort repeatedly to industrial action before their grievances receive the necessary attention.

It is therefore important for BEDC management to take the union's complaints seriously and demonstrate a genuine commitment to resolving outstanding issues through constructive engagement.

On the other hand, electricity consumers have equally compelling reasons to be dissatisfied. Many residents continued to meet their financial obligations by paying electricity bills despite the prevailing economic difficulties. They therefore found it difficult to understand why they should be denied access to an essential service because of a disagreement between the company's management and its employees.

The public's frustration is understandable. Electricity is central to modern living, business operations, healthcare delivery, education and economic development. Its sudden withdrawal, particularly over an extended period, creates consequences that affect virtually every segment of society.

This is where the union must also reflect on the wider implications of its actions.

Imagine if members of NUEE had paused to consider the possible consequences of shutting down electricity operations across an entire state and neighbouring states. What would happen to hospitals and other healthcare facilities? How would small-scale businesses survive? What would become of food items stored in refrigerators and cold rooms? How would students, artisans, manufacturers and other categories of electricity-dependent consumers cope?

These are not insignificant considerations. They are important questions that should form part of the decision-making process whenever industrial action is contemplated, particularly in a sector as critical as electricity distribution.

The legitimate pursuit of workers' welfare should not completely overshadow the welfare of the public. Similarly, the public's demand for uninterrupted electricity should not be used to dismiss genuine complaints about workers' conditions of service.

The responsibility for resolving this impasse, therefore, cannot rest solely on the striking workers. BEDC management must demonstrate sincerity, transparency and urgency in addressing the issues raised by the union. There must be meaningful dialogue, a clear timetable for resolving outstanding entitlements and a mechanism for ensuring that agreements reached are implemented.

At the same time, the relevant regulatory authorities and other stakeholders should encourage constructive engagement and ensure that industrial disputes in essential service sectors do not unnecessarily expose the public to prolonged hardship.

Ultimately, this disagreement should serve as a lesson to both management and labour unions that industrial relations must be built on mutual respect, effective communication, fairness and a shared sense of responsibility.

Workers have a right to demand better conditions of service, just as consumers have a right to expect the services for which they pay. Neither interest should be treated as unimportant.

In essence, while NUEE and the residents of Edo State have valid concerns that deserve consideration, the real balance lies in recognising that workers' welfare and public welfare are not mutually exclusive. Both can and should be protected.

Industrial action may sometimes become unavoidable, but the manner in which it is pursued must reflect an appreciation of its wider social and economic consequences.

After all, the ultimate objective of any industrial engagement should not merely be to secure victory for one party over another, but to achieve a resolution that preserves human dignity, protects livelihoods and serves the greater good.

FEATURE

Edo 2027: The quest for credible elections

Growing reports of intimidation, destroyed campaign materials, and violence ahead of the 2027 general elections are heavily challenging the ability of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to deliver a peaceful and credible vote.

The concerns came into sharp focus at a stakeholders' forum convened recently by INEC in Benin City, where political parties called for stronger security, equal treatment and decisive action against electoral offences.

The meeting came amid heightened public attention following the Oct. 23 attack on popular Benin-based entertainer Osagie Idiedia, known professionally as MC Porkupyne.

The attack, reportedly carried out by unidentified assailants while the entertainer was returning from an outing, generated allegations of political intimidation and calls for those responsible to be brought to justice.

However, Gov. Monday Okpebholo linked the incident to cult-related activities, dismissing allegations of government involvement as unfounded.

The governor said intelligence available to the state government suggested that the attack was cult-related.

The Police Command in Edo, meanwhile, said investigations were ongoing to establish the circumstances surrounding the attack and identify those responsible.

Against this backdrop, the INEC forum provided a platform for political parties, electoral officials and security agencies to address concerns before the approaching elections turn competition into confrontation.

Opening the discussion, the Resident Electoral Commissioner (REC) in Edo, Mr Obo Effanga, assured stakeholders that the commission would provide a level playing field for all political parties.

He said the forum was convened to engage party leaders, address their concerns and remind them of their obligations under the Electoral Act and other relevant laws.

Effanga warned against violence, threats, attacks on political opponents, disruption of meetings, intimidation of electoral officials and journalists, and destruction of campaign materials

Effanga warned against violence, threats, attacks on political opponents, disruption of meetings, intimidation of electoral officials and journalists, and destruction of campaign materials.

He also cautioned against cyberbullying and the circulation of false information, stressing that political activities must not undermine public order or the rights of other participants.

"Violence and threats of violence should not be part of politics and campaigns." he said.

The resident electoral commissioner disclosed that 13 political parties attended the meeting, although all registered parties had been notified.

His message was that peaceful elections required not only an impartial electoral umpire but also the willingness of political parties to obey the rules and restrain their supporters

The commission, he said, remained committed to engaging stakeholders and addressing emerging concerns before they became threats to the electoral process.

In spite of the assurances, representatives of several opposition parties expressed concern about what they described as intimidation, destruction of campaign materials and inadequate consequences for electoral violations.

Mr Osiriame Edeipo, State Chairman of BOOT Party, questioned the short notice given for the meeting and argued that previous peace accords and security engagements had not always translated into sustained action.



VOTERS

Ms Helen Uwangue, State Chairman of the Labour Party, said the perceived absence of consequences for electoral offences could encourage further violations.

Mr Ugbebor Uyi, the Action Peoples Party (APP) State Chairman, argued that INEC should not distance itself from responsibility for electoral offences by placing the burden entirely on security agencies.

However, Mr Samuel Obuoh, State Assistant Secretary of the All Progressives' Congress (APC) rejected suggestions that his party was violent, saying it was campaigning across wards.

He urged political parties to concentrate on presenting their candidates and manifestoes to voters instead of trading allegations.

According to him, electoral competition should be based on persuading voters rather than accusing political opponents.

Mr Segun Jegede, State Chairman of the Social Democratic Party (SDP) also urged political actors to sustain peaceful conduct before, during and after the elections.

Responding to the allegations, the Commissioner of Police in Edo, Mr Patrick Daaor, who also heads the Inter-Agency Consultative Committee on Election Security (ICCES) in the state, assured political parties of the cooperation of security agencies.

Buy Maps

He advised parties to notify their Divisional Police Officers (DPOs) before holding rallies and other public events so that adequate security arrangements could be made.

Daaor said effective investigation of political violence required specific information and cooperation from complainants, cautioning against making allegations without evidence.

"The DPO is not a magician," he said.

On the attack involving MC Porkupyne, the police commissioner said investigations were ongoing.

The police had earlier announced that a thorough investigation had been ordered to establish the circumstances of the incident and identify those responsible.

Beyond security, the forum addressed concerns about voter registration and candidate information, which included the allegation of Ai-generated photographs.

Check Voting Info

Effanga explained that the online voters' register on display was an interim register intended to allow claims and objections before the final register was produced.

The resident electoral commissioner urged anyone who suspected irregularities to identify specific entries for investigation.

He added that biometric accreditation, including the use of voters' photographs and fingerprints would help verify voters' identities during elections.

On candidates' lists, the REC said any further changes would have to comply with the law and be processed through INEC's national headquarters, including where applicable, on the basis of court orders.

He also clarified that law enforcement agencies were responsible for enforcing criminal laws, while INEC would draw their attention to incidents affecting the electoral process.

On the collection of Permanent Voters' Card (PVCs), he said the available cards could be collected at its local government offices statewide.

He explained, however, that cards arising from fresh registration and updates undertaken in 2025 and 2026 were still being awaited. (NAN)

" His message was that peaceful elections required not only an impartial electoral umpire but also the willingness of political parties to obey the rules and restrain their supporters "

" He also cautioned against cyberbullying and the circulation of false information, stressing that political activities must not undermine public order or the rights of other participants."Violence and threats of violence should not be part of politics and campaigns."

NEWS

FOREIGN

Vance walks Trump tightrope with scathing election critique blaming Iran war

Vice-President JD Vance sent shockwaves through Washington on Wednesday by blaming his party's midterm defeat squarely on the Iran war, in what was widely interpreted as an effort to distance himself from President Donald Trump ahead of a potential 2028 White House run.

In a carefully calibrated, 600-word statement on X, the vice-president acknowledged that Trump's 2024 voters had deserted Republicans in the midterm election.

"The reason we lost is the war," he wrote. "The president himself said so last night."

In interviews late Tuesday night and Wednesday, Trump had defended the war but acknowledged that it played a factor in Democrats flipping control of the US House of Representatives and the Senate.

Vance's view on the war in Iran is an open secret in Washington. While he has repeatedly backed the conflict since the US and Israel attacked Tehran in February, he has reportedly expressed opposition in private meetings with administration officials.

But those disagreements had been kept out of the public eye - until now.

Could Democrats in Congress end the war in Iran?

Hours after Trump and the party were handed a bruising election defeat, Vance made clear that he felt the decision to go to war was a clear political mistake.

"If you'd like to argue it was worth it, that losing the Senate for the next 6 years was worth it, then do so. Argue it was a worthwhile cost to pay. Agree or disagree, that's at least honest," Vance said.

It was a striking statement, and one with no recent precedent: it's hard to recall a similar moment in recent US political history when a sitting vice-president has so sharply broken with the president on a signature foreign policy issue.

Then came an arguably even greater surprise: Trump - who typically demands steadfast loyalty from his senior advisers - agreed with Vance that the midterms were "largely" decided by the war. He added that he would "do it again" if given the same choices.

It was an early sign that Trump - who has prized loyalty from his advisers - may give Vance a wide berth should he choose to launch a presidential campaign.

"I know how he feels about it. I think it was -- I think it was fine," Trump told reporters when asked about Vance's post blaming the war. "I knew that when I went in, and we stopped them from having a nuclear weapon, and they will never have a nuclear weapon."

Vance's statement seemed like "a way of separating himself from Trump," said Daniel Byman, a foreign policy expert at the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

Drawing contrasts with Trump will be a delicate balancing act if Vance seeks the presidency, Byman added.

That balance was on display in Vance's post. The vice president didn't mention Trump by name and attributed much of his election results analysis to unnamed pollsters.

Vance "put his toe in the water to see what he's going to do," Ashley Davis, a Republican strategist, told the BBC.



James Talarico just flipped Texas' US Senate seat to the Democrats, helping them win control of Congress' upper chamber.

Typhoons batter East Asia as El Niño makes Pacific 'burn with fever'

A wave of intense and, at times, unpredictable storms exacerbated by the El Niño weather pattern has killed dozens, shuttered major airports and wiped out crops and infrastructure across a swathe of East Asia.

In October, nearly all of Taiwan shut down as a monster storm big enough to engulf the island of 23 million roared towards its north-eastern coast. Equivalent to a category five hurricane, Typhoon Champi's 295km/h (193mph) winds had the power to flatten homes and whip up destructive waves.

Thankfully it did not make landfall in Taiwan, skirting past the island while dousing it in rain. But it had far-reaching impacts: hundreds of flights were cancelled in Hong Kong, Taiwan and Japan. In the Philippines' Batanes archipelago, seaside highways shut as huge waves crashed onto the shore, and in southern Japan's Okinawa islands, power was cut to 15,000 homes.

El Niño is a naturally occurring climate phenomenon in which warm waters pooling in the eastern Pacific and altered wind patterns drive extreme weather events around the world.

It happens around every two to seven years, lasting for around a year. This year's El Niño, which the UK Met Office has forecast to be the "strongest in living memory", is likely to last until February or March.

In June, Japan watched two storms - Typhoon Mekkhala and Severe Tropical Storm Higos - race towards its eastern coast simultaneously, forcing one million people to evacuate. In July, Tropical Storm Narra grazed China's southern coast along Guangxi, submerging villages and displacing tens of thousands.

August brought Super Typhoon Dolphin, which churned across the Pacific for 16 days - before slamming into eastern China, triggering heavy floods and dozens of casualties.

Later that month Typhoon Saudel made landfall in three south-eastern Chinese cities over one week, shutting transport networks and forcing thousands to evacuate.

'Burning with fever'

The Pacific Ocean, heated to record levels by El Niño, is now brimming with typhoon energy, according to the Accumulated Cyclone Energy (ACE) metric which measures the total intensity of a season's storms. This year, the ACE reading for South East and East Asia is forecast to be nearly double the 30-year average.

El Niño also affects wind patterns and in this case, that means typhoons are tending to form further east than usual. They are also becoming stronger as they remain over warm waters for longer.

The Pacific can be likened to someone "burning with fever", says Ana Liza Solis, head of climatology at the Philippines' national weather bureau. "It can go into convulsions soon," she said at a press briefing in Manila in September.

Forecasts suggest the worst may not be over. Last month, sea surface temperatures in the equatorial Pacific - the area monitored by the Japan Meteorological Agency for its El Niño predictions - soared to 4C above normal, the highest since records began in 1949. The previous record - 3.6C - was set in December 1997.

China's climate agency has warned of sea surface temperatures continuing to rise over the next three months because of the El Niño.

Despite typhoon season usually peaking around September to October, this is likely to raise concerns across a region that has already been battered by back-to-back storms.

China has seen back-to-back typhoons as the 2026 El Niño intensifies

'Very, very scary' simulations

What Democrats can and can't do with their new power after taking Congress

Election night was a fever dream for Democrats. In January, reality will set in.

They had a reason to be giddy on Tuesday night: Next year, Democrats will take control of both chambers of Congress after a blowout victory.

"Today begins the great American comeback," an ecstatic Hakeem Jeffries, House Democratic leader, declared.

After months of promises on the campaign trail — to investigate corruption; lower the costs of healthcare, groceries and petrol; and curtail the Iran war — they will now begin the much tougher process of putting plans into action.

A shift in the balance of power in Washington doesn't necessarily mean Democrats will immediately get to start checking items off their legislative wish list. Democrats have Congress, but Republican President Donald Trump still has the power to reject legislation.

The Democrats should not consider what just happened "a mandate," US Senator Chris Coons told the BBC, warning that the party was still "deeply unpopular".

"We need to prove we can get stuff done, actually deliver answers to their concerns and questions about low wages and rising costs in particular."

James Talarico just flipped Texas' US Senate seat to the Democrats, helping them win control of Congress' upper chamber.

What Democrats may be able to achieve

Congressman Robert Garcia of California will soon lead a powerful oversight committee in the House, with the power to make Trump's last two years in office quite difficult.

"Lawyer up," the Democrat said in a statement as victorious results poured in on election night.

Committees in both the US Senate and House have investigative powers, which they could use to delve into alleged conflicts of interest and other actions by the president and those close to him. On Tuesday, Garcia rattled off a list of possible targets: Trump's family, "corporate corruption", alleged abuses by the Department of Homeland Security and Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and the government's handling of the Epstein files.

The Senate also has the power to confirm or block the president's cabinet and judicial nominations.

Should a US Supreme Court vacancy, for example, arise during Trump's term, Senate Democrats could use their new power to block a nomination - or force Trump to choose a more moderate candidate who garners bipartisan support.

Israel's president begins consultations with parties after election deadlock

Israel's President Isaac Herzog has begun consultations with political parties on whom to task with forming a new coalition government, after he received the official results of a general election last week he said had no clear winner.

Herzog told party leaders that "not every commitment and promise can be fulfilled" if they want to avoid a new election.

Neither the bloc of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu nor his rival Gadi Eisenkot secured a majority in parliament.

Earlier, electoral officials said there was no evidence of irregularities and that unsubstantiated claims by Netanyahu's camp of Arab-led parties "stealing" the election did not justify delaying the results' certification.

The Shin Bet security service is investigating allegations of foreign interference in the election, but the head of the Central Elections Committee stressed that they would not fundamentally change the outcome.

In the election on 27 October, Netanyahu's right-wing Likud party and its far-right and ultra-Orthodox Jewish allies won 53 seats in the 120-seat Knesset. Eisenkot's centrist Yashar party and three other Jewish opposition parties in his bloc won 48.

Two Arab-led alliances, the United Arab List and the Joint List, together won an unprecedented 19 seats following a surge in turnout among Arab voters.

NEWS

FOREIGN

Why a US-funded vaccine trial on babies was cancelled in Guinea-Bissau

A proposed trial of a hepatitis B vaccine on newborn babies in Guinea-Bissau has been cancelled following accusations that the trial was "unethical" and "neo-colonial".

The trial was funded by the US, under Health Secretary Robert F Kennedy Jr, who has a long record of expressing scepticism about vaccines.

Police have seized a batch of vaccines from the research centre at the heart of the controversy.

The proposed trial drew international criticism because it planned to withhold a vaccine recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO) from half of the participating newborns.

Some public health experts argued that the proposed trial raised broader questions about whether vulnerable populations in African countries were being asked to take risks that researchers would not accept in wealthier countries.

What was the trial?

The study was planned at the Bandim Health Project, a research centre that has operated in Guinea-Bissau since 1978.

It was designed to involve 14,000 newborns, with half receiving a hepatitis B vaccine shortly after birth and the other half not being given the shot.

Bandim said the trial aimed to investigate whether the hepatitis B vaccine given at birth has broader health effects beyond preventing infection.

Previous studies in The Gambia and Guinea-Bissau have raised questions about a possible link to increased mortality.

Researchers argued that because Guinea-Bissau does not currently offer routine hepatitis B vaccinations at birth, despite WHO recommendations, they have a unique opportunity to study its effects before such vaccines are introduced in 2028.

But critics questioned the ethics of withholding the vaccine from some babies, particularly in one of the world's poorest countries, where the infection is widespread.

The Trump administration funded the proposed study, with the CDC awarding the University of Southern Denmark (SDU) $1.6m (£1.2m) in December 2025.

What did the WHO say?

Walter Kazadi Mulombo, the WHO representative in Guinea-Bissau, told the BBC they became concerned after receiving questions about the study and finding no publicly available protocol.

He said the main ethical concern was that the trial would withhold an intervention already proven to protect newborns against hepatitis B.

France gears up for strikes and protests as unions promise national mobilisation

Hundreds of thousands of demonstrators are expected to take part in marches across France as five unions join strikes and protests in a national day of action.

The protests began in September with high school students complaining about poor conditions and resources in education, but have spread to include the so-called "yellow vest" movement and workers.

Authorities expect 500,000 to 700,000 demonstrators to join marches, with tens of thousands more in Paris alone, in a day billed by one union leader as "a great day of convergence".

The five unions have combined forces across the public and private sector, with demands for higher wages to combat the cost of living and protected public services.

Interior Minister Laurent Nuñez has said that 70,000 police and gendarmes are being deployed, vowing "an extremely firm response" to any potential outbreaks of violence.

More than 250 separate actions are planned for 5 November, with some disruption reported in schools, hospitals and public transport.

Workers have also been asked to halt production at oil refineries, and France is expected to import more electricity than it produces on Thursday because of disruption at nuclear plants.

A coalition of unions has urged workers, pensioners and young people to join Thursday's day of strikes to intensify pressure on the government. In particular they are seeking a rise in the minimum wage, or Smic, which is currently €12.31 (£10) an hour.

Disruption was already reported at schools on Thursday morning

The head of the CFDT union, Marylise Léon, complained that it was not just the minimum wage that needed to increase: "We are asking for a net increase of €100 a month."

The government has sought to appease public anger over rising prices, bringing down the cost of fuel by releasing 10 million barrels of diesel from strategic reserves. Ministers have also promised school students to reform the unpopular Parcoursup university admissions platform and eventually replace it by 2028.

Large numbers are expected on the streets, especially in the capital.



BABIES VACCINE

Australia's oldest department store David Jones folds after 188 years

David Jones, Australia's oldest department store chain, has gone into voluntary administration, putting thousands of jobs at risk.

It comes after years of financial struggles for the 188-year-old retailer - known locally as DJs - as customers desert traditional shops for online shopping.

David Jones's physical and online stores will continue to operate while receivers FTI Consulting review the company, said voluntary administrators McGrathNicol.

"David Jones is an iconic company and so many Australians have stories and memories of visiting DJ's stores," said its CEO Erica Berthold, adding the brand has a "well-developed plan" to "reset the business for the future".

Berthold thanked "customers, our team members and our partners for their continued support of David Jones through this period".

David Jones employs about 6,000 staff and has 38 physical stores, with 17 of those in Westfield shopping centres.

Hours before the board voted to go into administration, Scentre - which owns Westfield - said the retailer had not paid its rent for October and was "therefore in breach" of its tenancy agreement.

"We understand the current retail trading environment, rising costs, a significant and outdated retail footprint, and supply chain challenges have led to this point," said Christopher Hill from receivers FTI Consulting.

By appointing administrators and receivers, David Jones will get "breathing space" and a chance to restructure the business, Hill said.

Vote counting gets underway in critical South Africa local elections

South Africa voted Wednesday in local government elections dominated by anger over failures in water and power supply that are expected to result in a further slide in support for the ANC.

Control of the major cities is at stake in the vote for 257 councils that will gauge the political mood ahead of the next national elections in 2029.

Moses Mashaba, a 27-year-old street vendor from Johannesburg's Soweto township, said he voted because "things have been horrible".

"Sometimes we don't have water or electricity. There is also a high unemployment rate, which has been frustrating," he told AFP.

More than three decades after the first all-race election thrust the African National Congress (ANC) into power, South Africans are fed up with crumbling infrastructure, dry taps, persistent inequality, high crime and unemployment above 30 percent.

Polling stations began closing at 9:00 pm (1900 GMT), after a 14-hour day, but authorities said anyone still in a queue would still be able to cast their ballot.

Counting would start at polling stations soon after the last votes had been cast, with final results due by Sunday, the election authority said.

Of 29.2 million registered voters, 12 million had cast their ballots on Wednesday by 5:00 pm, it said in its latest turnout figure.

Some 2.6 million people were allowed to vote early on Monday and Tuesday but only 1.4 million did so.

Ntando Sithole, 24, who makes a living washing cars, said he had chosen to stay away from the polls because "there won't be any changes" and "most of these political parties are led by old people".

"The streetlights in my area are just for decoration because they don't work. It gets very dark at night, making it unsafe to even walk home," he said.

South Africa's deputy police chief resigns after being charged with sexual offences

South Africa's deputy police chief has resigned three weeks after he was charged with sexual offences.

A lawyer representing Lt Gen Shadrack Sibiya submitted his resignation letter at his disciplinary hearing on Monday, a police spokesperson said.

Sibiya, 59, is also accused of having links to organised crime bosses - allegations which led to him being suspended last year.

He denies those allegations, as well as charges that he sexually groomed a 16-year-old girl and raped an 18-year-old woman. He also faces a charge of human trafficking.

Sibiya says he did have sex with the 18-year-old but that it was consensual.

He has been in custody since he was arrested three weeks ago.

Police spokesperson Athlenda Mathe said in a post on X that his departure from the police force was regarded as a dishonourable discharge because he was still facing a disciplinary case when he resigned.

The accusations that Sibiya was linked to crime bosses emerged at a major public inquiry over allegations of police corruption and collusion with criminals, known as the Madlanga Commission.

Sibiya was accused of interfering with investigations into political killings in KwaZulu-Natal province.

He was also accused of receiving a gift of cash, as well as 20 impalas, from an alleged criminal kingpin in exchange for a police contract.

He denied the allegation.

The Madlanga Commission has transfixed South Africa over the past year and unearthed widespread allegations of links between police officers and crime bosses.

It was set up by President Cyril Ramaphosa after the KwaZulu-Natal police chief held a press briefing where he accused the then Police Minister Senzo Mchunu of working with criminal gangs.

Mchunu denies the allegations against him but has been suspended.

Opinion

Ogheghe road: How years of neglect gave way to renewed hope



EUBALDUS ENAHORO

Residents recount hardship, welcome road construction under Okpebholo administration

For nearly a decade, mentioning Ogheghe community along Sapele Road in Ikpoba-Okha Local Government Area of Edo State was almost synonymous with hardship, frustration and government neglect.

During the dry season, clouds of dust enveloped the community, leaving schoolchildren and residents struggling to breathe. In the rainy season, the situation became even worse as the road turned into a muddy stretch, making transportation difficult and, at times, virtually impossible.

Vehicles became trapped in potholes, motorcycles skidded off the road, while pregnant women and critically ill residents faced enormous difficulties accessing healthcare facilities.

Farmers also bore the consequences of the deplorable road. Their yams, plantains and cassava often remained stranded on farms because vehicles could hardly access the community to evacuate their produce.

For commuters, the experience was equally distressing. Long queues of vehicles became a familiar sight as motorists struggled to navigate the bad portions of the road. Residents returning home from work and school frequently endured frustrating delays.

The situation eventually provoked protests by youths of the community, who barricaded the major road in an effort to draw government attention to their plight.

Pa. Osayande, a 72-year-old community elder, recalls the years of frustration.

"My son, we have written letters, we have staged protests and voted for different governments. Whenever elections approached, they would bring a grader, grade the road, take pictures and leave. After the elections, the road would deteriorate again.

"Our children could hardly go to school easily. If someone fell sick at night, we would simply pray because an ambulance could hardly enter Ogheghe," he lamented.

Mama Deborah, a market woman who makes and sells garri, also recalled the economic hardship imposed by the road.

"I used to pay over N2,000 to transport a bag of garri to my customers. Sometimes, the keke would fall into a pothole and my garri would spill into the water. We were losing money every market day. Many of our youths eventually left the community because of the road," she said.

For the people of Ogheghe, the road had become a symbol of prolonged neglect. Successive administrations had made promises, but residents maintained that little meaningful improvement was achieved.

The old road leading into the heart of the community eventually became almost impassable, with weeds taking over sections of the abandoned route.

However, following the assumption of office by Governor Monday Okpebholo, the community's experience began to change with the commencement of road construction under the administration's SHINE Agenda.

Rather than routine grading and temporary repairs, the intervention involved road construction, drainage works, earthworks, asphalt laying and the rehabilitation of the previously abandoned access road.

The development has reportedly improved access to Ogheghe and adjoining communities, easing transportation and reconnecting residents with neighbouring settlements.

Today, motorists can drive into parts of the community with greater ease, while commercial motorcycles, tricycles and pedestrians have also benefited from the improved access.

The impact is increasingly visible in the community's economic and social activities.

Traders are returning to their businesses, while some landlords who had previously abandoned their properties are reportedly returning to renovate and repaint their houses.

Residents also say property values have appreciated considerably, with some suggesting that land values have multiplied since the road intervention.

Mr Monday Osifo, a youth leader and member of an opposition political party in the state, acknowledged the development, describing it as a significant intervention in the community.

"We are happy. This is the first time a governor has remembered us in this manner. Governor Okpebholo did not merely make promises on television; we have seen work taking place.

"He has shown that government intervention can reach communities that have suffered neglect for years," he said.

Osifo, however, recalled that previous administrations had often cited the federal ownership of the major road as a reason for the absence of substantial intervention.

An elderly resident, Mama Adesuwa, was equally emotional about the development.

"I thought I would die without seeing this road become good. Now my grandchildren can drive into the community to visit me. God bless Governor Okpebholo," she said.

For Ogheghe, the road project represents more than asphalt and drainage infrastructure. It means improved access to schools, healthcare facilities, markets and other essential services.

> "I thought I would die without seeing this road become good. Now my grandchildren can drive into the community to visit me. God bless Governor Okpebholo.

It also highlights the importance of extending infrastructure development beyond the urban centres to rural and semi-urban communities whose residents depend heavily on accessible roads for their livelihoods.

A marketer with a reputable publishing company, who also expressed satisfaction with the development, particularly commended the drainage component of the project.

"What we are experiencing today on this road is wonderful. The governor has addressed the water problem that used to make vehicles fall into dangerous portions of the road. The drainage has made a remarkable difference," the marketer observed.

Indeed, the improved road has altered the everyday experience of residents. Children can move around with less exposure to the dust that previously characterised the dry season, while traders and farmers have better opportunities to transport their goods.

The rehabilitation of the old abandoned road has also restored an important access route that residents had almost given up on.

As the 2027 general election approaches, the Ogheghe experience is likely to feature prominently in conversations about infrastructure, government performance and the expectations of rural communities.

For residents who endured years of difficult transportation, the road has become an important reference point in assessing the impact of government intervention.

Their accounts underline a fundamental expectation of governance: that development should reach every community, irrespective of its location or political affiliation.

For Ogheghe, a community that once struggled to attract attention because of its deplorable road network, the ongoing transformation has brought renewed hope and opened fresh possibilities for economic and social development.

*• **Eubaldus Enahoro is a former Editor of the Nigerian Observer Newspaper***

Curbing Road Crashes In Nigeria

Tochukwu Obi

The ember months are here again, bringing with them increased human and vehicular activities as the year gradually winds down. Traditionally, this period is associated with increased movement of people, commercial activities, social engagements and long distance journeys across the country. Unfortunately, it is also a period when Nigeria often witnesses a surge in road traffic crashes, with the resultant fatalities and injuries. This calls for renewed commitment by all road users and stakeholders to ensure that the roads remain safe.

Over the years, Nigeria has continued to record more than 5,000 reported deaths annually from road traffic crashes, a disturbing trend that must not be allowed to continue. Behind every fatal crash is a family that loses a loved one, a breadwinner, a parent, a child or a friend. Beyond the immediate loss of lives, road crashes also leave thousands of people with injuries, disabilities and psychological trauma, while imposing enormous economic and social costs on families and the nation.

Available statistics from the Federal Road Safety Corps show the seriousness of the situation. The FRSC recorded 9,570 road traffic crashes, 5,421 deaths and 31,154 injuries in 2024, compared with 10,446 crashes, 5,289 deaths and 33,400 injuries in 2025. Although there was a 2.4 per cent reduction in the number of deaths in 2025 compared with 2024, the number of injured persons increased by 7.2 per cent, while serious crashes rose by 10.5 per cent. These figures demonstrate that much more needs to be done.

The reforms being introduced by the FRSC Corps Marshal, Shehu Mohammed, and his strategic approach to addressing the factors responsible for road crashes deserve commendation. The Corps has continued to explore operational measures aimed at reducing crashes and improving compliance among road users. One notable example is the special operation against articulated vehicle related crashes along the Abuja Keffi road, particularly the Kugbo axis, which the Corps Marshal has been personally monitoring, as well robust public enlightenment of road users across Nigeria.

Such targeted interventions should be sustained and replicated in other parts of the country where similar problems exist.

Human behaviour remains a major factor in many road traffic crashes. Speed violations, driving while using mobile phones, dangerous overtaking, fatigue, poor vehicle maintenance, disregard for traffic regulations and embarking on long journeys without adequate rest are among the practices that continue to endanger lives. Drivers must understand that reaching a destination a few minutes earlier is never worth risking a human life. The ember months should therefore not become a period of reckless driving, but a time for greater caution, patience and responsibility.

The movement of articulated vehicles during busy periods on major roads also requires urgent attention. While truck drivers and operators have legitimate economic responsibilities, their movements must be properly regulated to minimise conflicts with other road users, particularly in densely populated areas and during peak traffic periods. The success of the special operation along the Abuja Keffi Kugbo axis should encourage the development of similar coordinated interventions across the federation, involving the FRSC, state traffic management agencies, the police, transport unions and other relevant stakeholders.

However, road safety cannot be left to the FRSC alone. The causes of road traffic crashes are multidimensional and require a coordinated response. State and local governments, road construction agencies, vehicle inspection authorities, transport operators, vehicle owners, driving schools, security agencies and individual road users all have important roles to play. The Federal Government must also give road safety the level of attention it gives to the aviation sector. Virtually everyone uses the roads, and road traffic crashes do not discriminate on the basis of status, age, profession or social standing.

Government must equally ensure that roads across the country are motorable and equipped with appropriate safety infrastructure. Proper road markings, warning signs, functioning traffic signals, adequate drainage, guardrails and other safety measures should be provided and maintained. Solar powered street lighting should also be installed at appropriate locations, particularly on dangerous and accident prone sections of highways, to improve visibility at night. It is unacceptable for motorists to be expected to observe safety rules on roads that themselves are poorly maintained or inadequately equipped.

Finally, the FRSC must be adequately funded and equipped to enable it to meet its objective of achieving a significant and sustained reduction in road crashes and fatalities. Equally important is the welfare of the men and women of the Corps who work tirelessly, often under difficult and dangerous conditions, to save lives and enforce road safety regulations. Their commitment deserves recognition, and improved remuneration and welfare should form part of the broader effort to motivate them. As the ember months unfold, every Nigerian must remember that road safety is a collective responsibility. Saving lives on our roads requires responsible drivers, safer vehicles, better roads, effective enforcement and a government that treats road safety as a national priority.

*Obi writes from
Obosi, Anambra State

FEATURE

When divorce becomes worth celebrating

Bagudu Mohammed

Normally you do not need anyone to tell you what news is. You feel it in your gut before you finish the headline. News of an engagement, let alone a wedding, arrives with an instinctive laughter, a dance in the chest, a sudden urge to celebrate. News of a breakup arrives with the opposite weight, pain, disappointment, bitterness, a silence that feels like mourning. That is how we were raised to read life, marriage is celebrated with joy, while divorce is often accompanied by grief.

But time is changing fast, and so is the grammar of our emotions. A family now gathers not to mourn a divorce but to celebrate it, to throw a party, to sing, to dance, to drink, to have fun, as if a marriage ending is not a tragedy or a loss but a rescue. What used to be whispered behind closed doors is now posted, hashtagged, and cheered, and the world is watching with a mixture of shock and secret envy.

There is now a full-blown social media storm with a caption that has become a joke, a challenge, and a declaration all at once, I am not the divorcee, I am the divorcee's sister, bro. In the viral clip that started it all, a set of siblings took turns introducing themselves to the camera, each one stepping forward with mischief and pride. I am not a divorcee, I am the divorcee's baby sister, said one. I am not a divorcee, I am the divorcee's big sister, said another. I am not a divorcee, I am the divorcee's big bro, said the brother.

Another added with a laugh, I am the divorcee's sister and assistant divorcee. Then the woman herself, dressed in a brown niqab, appeared with a big smile and announced with a confidence that disarmed the whole internet, Hi guys, I am the divorcee. Her siblings gathered around her, placed a crown symbolically on her head, celebrated her as their queen, showered her with praise, and made it clear that divorce had not reduced her worth or the love she receives. Her elder sister presented her with a bouquet of flowers. They used the moment to encourage people to walk away from toxic and unhappy marriages rather than remain in situations that destroy their well-being, and they ended with the now famous phrase, Clock it.

It blew up not because there was cake and a DJ, but because it was a family endorsement. In Nigeria, especially in Northern and Muslim communities where a divorced woman is often shamed, sent back home, or called bazawara with contempt, siblings publicly crowning her was radical, almost blasphemous to old sensibilities.

Supporters wrote, this is what family should do, she did not fail, the marriage failed. Critics fired back, you are normalising divorce, you are mocking marriage, what about the children. That split is exactly why the phrase has become a challenge. As one report noted, a new social media trend featuring the phrase has taken over online conversations, while others found it amusing because it turns a sensitive subject like divorce into online entertainment.



CELEBRATING DIVORCE WITH POSITIVITY AND NEW BEGINNINGS:

Sociologist Erving Goffman would have called this stigma management, the deliberate flipping of a spoiled identity into a celebrated one. Anthropologist Victor Turner would have called it a rite of passage, a liminal moment where a person is neither wife nor single, and the community must ritualise her crossing into a new status.

And the Nigerian siblings are not alone. In Port Harcourt in May 2023, a video resurfaced that still haunts every debate, an association of divorced Nigerian women celebrating the initiation of new members amid dancing and jubilation, carrying a cake that read I do, I did, I'm done, with a slogan that made the whole country laugh and gasp at once, End Of An Error, and live a free life.

On TikTok, a Nigerian woman known as AtusGirl wept with joy after finalising her divorce under the Matrimonial Causes Act, saying thank you Jesus, Father I'm free at last, and thousands commented that only those who have been through it understand, that what looks like a joke to outsiders is survival to insiders.

By July 2026 the News Agency of Nigeria was interviewing Abuja residents about divorce freedom parties, and the report captured the outrage, that celebrating breakups undermines marriage sanctity and shuts the door on reconciliation. One divorcee, Chidiebere Ezenwa, admitted that ending an abusive marriage could bring relief but warned that turning it into a public celebration diminished the seriousness of marriage. Marriage counsellor Ifeyinwa Nnubia warned that social media had influenced perceptions and that celebration should not trivialise the emotional, social and financial consequences. That tension, relief versus reverence, is the heart of the story.

Around the world the script is the same, only the accent changes. In London, 28-year-old Ilma Amin threw a party after divorcing her husband of three years, complete with divorce maids like bridesmaids, speeches, a Taylor Swift-inspired cake that read legally single, and balloons that read single and loving it. She said she never got to have that white wedding, so the party was her having it, a bachelorette party and a white wedding all at once, and she threw her bouquet to the next person to get divorced, asking who's next, who dares to be my next husband, only for her new boyfriend to dump her two days later, a twist she laughed off by saying she could have celebrated a divorce and a breakup together.

In Macclesfield, 39-year-old Kirsty Henshaw threw what she called a funeral divorce party after her divorce was finalised in September 2026, setting fire to her two thousand pound wedding dress with a blowtorch and burning fifteen photos, while friends marched in all-black carrying a black heart-shaped cake that read divorced, and she now tells others it felt liberating and cathartic, a chapter closed.

In the United States, 42-year-old Toni Harding split after nine years, finalised her divorce in December 2025, and threw a party a month later with ninety friends, catering, a selfie booth, a DJ costing over two thousand six hundred dollars, a light-up divorced sign, and desserts reading the end of an error and I will survive, and she said it was better than my wedding, it was the best night of my life, filled with love, happiness and respect.

In Pakistan, influencer Azima Ihsan danced in a long shirt and gharara, saying divorce in Pakistani society is viewed as a death sentence especially for women, but divorce is not a sin nor an embarrassing word but a new beginning, that she did not decide lightly, but for her and her three children it was an escape, and that after two years she is living proof of how one can grieve, heal, and then dance.

In India, TV actress Akanksha Chamola joked with paparazzi, mera divorce party tera breakup party, my divorce party, your breakup party, while saying she is busy building her home first, then will party. In Egypt, women now throw Just Divorced parties with invitation cards, hotel ballrooms, fancy dress and a three-dimensional cake in bright pink icing saying Just Divorced, because to them it is not a failed marriage but a successful exit from an unhappy one.

In Mauritania, this is not new at all, in Nouakchott a finalised divorce is a rebrand, friends gather to apply fresh henna, help her wear her finest clothes, singing and dancing, and a divorced woman is called a shabiba, a star, experienced, no longer under the strict thumb of parents, a first divorce as a liberating rite of passage.

In America, the numbers tell the scale, searches for divorce parties have reached a five-year high, Pinterest recorded around thirty-nine thousand searches related to divorce parties, Google searches for divorce party decorations surged by sixty percent in three months, TikTok's DivorceTok has millions of views, and one woman spent more than thirty thousand dollars on hers in 2024, while even Nicole Kidman was rumoured to hold one.

Psychologists quoted in Hello Magazine say that for many women, divorce parties are not necessarily about mocking marriage or celebrating pain, but instead they can represent survival, freedom, and the reclaiming of identity after years of feeling stuck, and that insight is supported by research.

Judith Wallerstein's twenty-five-year longitudinal study of children of divorce found that the long-term outcome depends less on the divorce itself than on how the family reorganises after it, whether there is support, dignity, and a new narrative. Psychologist John Gottman, famous for predicting divorce with over ninety percent accuracy, argues that contempt, not conflict, kills marriages, and when contempt has already killed it, leaving can be healthier than staying.

NEWS EXTRA



RETREAT:
From left: Chief of Policy and Plans, Naval Headquarters, Rear Adm. Olatunde Olodudu; Chief of the Naval Staff, Vice Adm. Idi Abbas; Chief of Administration, Rear Adm. Jonathan Mamman, during the closing ceremony of CNS 2026 Annual Retreat on Wednesday night in Abuja.

Tinubu's visit: police ban drones, restrict traffic in Akwa Ibom

UYO

The Akwa Ibom State Police Command has banned drone operations and fireworks in Uyo and announced temporary traffic restrictions ahead of President Bola Tinubu's visit to the state on Friday.

The state Commissioner of Police, Baba Mohammed Azare, announced the measures on Thursday while briefing journalists at the Police Headquarters in Ikot Akpan Abia, Uyo.

He said the restrictions were part of security arrangements to maintain public order, protect strategic locations and ensure the smooth movement of the President's convoy during his engagements.

"There will be total restriction on the operation and flying of drones within Uyo metropolis throughout the period of the visit. Members of the public, drone operators and service providers are advised to strictly comply with the directive," he said.

The police commissioner also announced a ban on fireworks, knockouts and other explosive sound-producing devices within the state capital during the visit.

He said the measure would prevent panic and allow security personnel to respond effectively to genuine security threats.

The command also announced temporary restrictions on public access to designated routes and locations in Uyo to facilitate the movement of the presidential convoy.

The affected areas are Airport Road, Shelter Afrique Junction, Oron Road, Nung Oku Junction, Mbierebe Junction and Godswill Akpabio International Stadium.

Gas shortages, low water levels reduce power generation — NISO

Nigerians are facing worsening electricity supply amid intense heat as gas shortages and reduced water levels in hydroelectric reservoirs combine to constrain power generation across the national grid.

The development has forced electricity distribution companies to reduce supply hours and increase load shedding across their networks, leaving households and businesses with fewer hours of electricity at a time when demand for cooling and other essential services is high.

The Nigerian Independent System Operator disclosed this in a statement signed by its management on Thursday, attributing the decline in electricity generation to inadequate gas supply to thermal power plants and reduced output from hydroelectric stations.

The disclosure highlights the vulnerability of Nigeria's electricity system to disruptions in its two major sources of grid power, with gas-fired plants and hydropower stations both struggling to deliver their available capacity.

The statement read, "The Nigerian Independent System Operator wishes to inform the public that the current decline in electricity generation on the national grid is primarily attributed to constraints in gas supply to thermal power generating stations and reduced output from hydroelectric power stations.

"The limited availability of gas has constrained the capacity of affected thermal generating stations to operate at their available levels, while reduced water inflows into reservoirs have impacted the generation capacity of hydroelectric power stations."

NISO explained that inadequate gas supplies had prevented affected thermal generating stations from operating at their available capacity, while reduced water inflows into reservoirs had limited the output of hydroelectric power stations.

It said the combined constraints had reduced the electricity available for distribution to consumers, forcing DisCos to adjust their supply schedules.

"Consequently, the reduction in available generation has affected the quantum of electricity allocated to Distribution Companies (DisCos) for onward supply to consumers thereby resulted in reduced hours of electricity supply and increased load shedding across distribution networks, with the level of impact varying according to available generation and the corresponding allocations to individual DisCos," the operator stated.

The situation comes amid intense heat conditions, increasing the importance of reliable electricity for households, businesses and public facilities that depend on fans, air conditioners and other cooling equipment.

Reduced electricity supply also threatens the operations of small businesses that rely on power for refrigeration, water pumping, food preservation and other daily activities, potentially increasing their dependence on expensive petrol and diesel generators.

The development is particularly concerning as Nigeria faces the emerging effects of El Niño, a climate phenomenon associated with unusually high global temperatures and changing rainfall patterns.

The Nigerian Meteorological Agency confirmed in an August 2026 climate update that a strong El Niño event had developed and was expected to influence global weather patterns. The World Meteorological Organisation also projected that the phenomenon could strengthen towards the end of 2026 and persist into early 2027.

Akoko-Edo chairman inspects ongoing projects, says 100-day target realistic

Lamai Cassius

IGARRA

The Executive Chairman of Akoko-Edo Local Government Council, Hon. Robert Akande Olumole, has expressed satisfaction with the progress of works recorded across the various project sites, describing his administration's 100-day development target as realistic and achievable.

The Chairman stated this when he embarked on a routine inspection tour of ongoing projects across various communities in the local government area, reaffirming his administration's commitment to effective monitoring and quality project delivery.

He said his administration remains committed to purposeful leadership, people-oriented governance and the execution of projects that would directly improve the living conditions of residents across the ten wards of Akoko-Edo.

He noted that his greatest fulfilment comes from witnessing the positive reactions of residents and seeing communities benefit directly from projects delivered by his administration.

The projects, which covered critical areas such as healthcare, education and infrastructure, are part of the Chairman's determination to bring government closer to the grassroots in line with the SHINE Agenda of Governor Monday Okpebholo.

He expressed optimism that the visible impact of the ongoing projects and other developmental initiatives would strengthen public confidence in the All Progressives Congress (APC) and reinforce support for the party from top to bottom ahead of the forthcoming general elections.

The Chairman, who was accompanied by Supervisory Councillors and other aides during the inspection, first visited the Enwan II Primary Healthcare Centre, where construction of a modern primary healthcare facility is ongoing.

At Ososo Maternity Centre, Hon. Akande also inspected the ongoing comprehensive renovation of the facility, which is expected to improve maternal healthcare and reduce infant mortality in the area.

ADC ruling: Law is about facts, not sentiments, Keyamo tells Atiku

ABUJA

The Minister of Aviation and Aerospace Development, Festus Keyamo, has mocked former Vice-President Atiku Abubakar over the Federal High Court judgment nullifying the David Mark-led leadership of the African Democratic Congress, saying the law is decided on facts and evidence, not sentiments and outrage.

Reacting to the judgment, Keyamo declared that although justice might be slow, it was always certain.

The minister made the remark in a post on his social media handle, hours after news of the court's decision emerged.

Justice Peter Lifu of the Federal High Court had declared the Mark-led Caretaker Committee illegal, consequently invalidating its actions, including the conduct of the presidential primary that produced Atiku as the ADC's flag bearer.

The court also nullified the emergence of former Minister of Interior, Rauf Aregbesola, as the party's National Secretary, as well as the appointments of other national officers and the nominations of candidates presented by the party for the 2027 elections.

The judgment followed a suit marked FHC/ABJ/CS/1819/2025, instituted by a former ADC Deputy National Chairman (North-East), Nafiu Bala Gombe, who challenged the process through which Mark and other members of the caretaker committee assumed control of the party.

Gombe had argued that, following the resignation of the party's former National Chairman, Ralph Nwosu, he was constitutionally entitled to take over its leadership.

The Nigerian OBSERVER
That The People May Know

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	RATE	TOTAL (7.5% VAT incl)	RATE	TOTAL (7.5% VAT incl)	RATE	TOTAL (7.5% VAT incl)	RATE	TOTAL (7.5% VAT incl)	RATE	TOTAL (7.5% VAT incl)
FULL PAGE	417,344	448,645	369,500	397,213	325,150	349,536	565,156	607,542	443,440	476,698
13 X 4	369,500	397,213	295,600	317,770	206,938	222,458	443,500	476,763	369,550	397,266
10 X 4	340,000	365,500	273,500	294,013	177,400	190,705	370,000	397,750	295,600	317,770
HALF PAGE	295,600	317,770	236,500	254,238	147,800	158,885	340,000	365,500	273,450	293,959
10 X 3	221,700	238,328	147,800	158,885	118,300	127,173	266,000	285,950	251,300	270,148
13 X2	206,900	222,418	133,000	142,925	103,500	111,263	221,800	238,435	147,810	158,896
QUARTER PAGE	192,150	206,561	118,250	127,119	88,690	95,342	236,500	254,238	133,000	142,975

FRONT PAGE POSITIONS

SIZES	PRODUCTS RATE	PRODUCTS TOTAL (7.5% VAT incl)	PUBLIC NOTICE RATE	PUBLIC NOTICE TOTAL (7.5% VAT incl)
FP 6X2	89,800	96,535	105,450	113,359
FP 5X2	81,100	87,183	97,300	104,598
FP 4X2	73,000	78,475	80,700	86,753
FP 3X2	64,870	69,735	73,000	78,475
FP 2X2	59,000	63,425	64,900	69,768

SPECIAL POSITIONS

SIZES	RATE	TOTAL (7.5% VAT incl)	RATE	TOTAL (7.5% VAT incl)
STRIP	118,250	127,119	147,800	158,885
STRIP INSIDE	88,600	95,245	118,250	127,119

SPECIAL PAGES

FRONT PAGE	ADD 70% SURCHARGE
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BACK PAGE	ADD 60% SURCHARGE

OTHER SIZES

SIZES	PUBLIC NOTICE RATE	PUBLIC NOTICE TOTAL (7.5% VAT incl)	PRODUCTS RATE	PRODUCTS TOTAL (7.5% VAT incl)	
6 X 2	60,640	65,188	49,140	52,826	
5 X 2	51,950	55,846	42,120	45,279	
4 X 2	45,260	48,655	34,400	36,980	
3 X 2	30,900	33,218	26,600	28,595	
2 X 2	18,680	20,081	15,600	16,770	
2 X 1	12,400	13,330	15,600	16,770	
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COLUMN

Foreign exploiters, local traitors: Who is plundering Nigeria?



The increasing involvement of some Chinese nationals and other foreign nationals in suspected illegal economic activities across Nigeria has become a source of considerable concern. From illegal mining of gold and other solid minerals to illicit oil refining, cybercrime and financial fraud, disturbing reports of foreigners operating outside the confines of Nigerian laws have continued to emerge.

More worrisome, however, is the apparent collaboration of unscrupulous Nigerians who provide the local connections, logistics, protection and support that enable these criminal enterprises to flourish.

One cannot help but wonder why some foreign nationals appear to have developed the temerity to engage in activities that constitute flagrant violations of our laws. Is Nigeria gradually becoming a safe haven for foreign economic predators, or have we simply demonstrated an alarming inability to protect our national resources?

The latest discovery by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) in Ogere, Ogun State, has brought this disturbing phenomenon into sharp focus. On 31 October 2026, EFCC operatives uncovered an illegal oil refinery allegedly operated by Chinese nationals. The facility, which was deserted when the operatives arrived, reportedly contained waste materials from refining activities and underground tanks believed to have been used for heating and processing sludge oil.

Preliminary investigations reportedly indicated that the operators sourced black sludge from Warri, Delta State, and Port Harcourt, Rivers State, before transporting it to Ogere for processing. Through a process involving intense heating, chambers and filters, the operators allegedly extracted lighter petroleum components believed to be suitable for producing Automotive Gas Oil (AGO), popularly known as diesel, for sale.

Interestingly, the discovery followed an earlier EFCC operation against four illegal lithium-processing plants in the same area. On 23 October 2026, the Commission reportedly arrested 15 Chinese nationals and a Nigerian in connection with the suspected illegal processing activities.

One particularly disturbing revelation was that security personnel at the facility reportedly told EFCC operatives that the Chinese operators had not disclosed their identities or the name of the company behind the operation. How could an industrial-scale operation involving petroleum products function under such circumstances without the authorities establishing the identity of its owners?

More importantly, who provided the land, equipment, transportation, electricity and other logistical requirements? Surely, the Chinese nationals could not have established and sustained such an operation without some form of local assistance.

Unfortunately, Ogere is not an isolated case. In May 2025, the EFCC arrested two Chinese nationals and six Nigerians in the same area over alleged illegal mining activities. Three trucks loaded with sacks of substances suspected to be ground lithium powder and other solid minerals were reportedly recovered.

Similarly, in July 2025, seven Chinese nationals and four Nigerians were arrested in Emem-Asuk community, Eastern Obolo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State, over alleged illegal mining. The suspects were reportedly operating two mining sites without the requisite licences and extracting ilmenite, popularly known as black sand. One of the Nigerian suspects reportedly served as a translator.

In March 2025, the EFCC also arrested four Chinese nationals and 27 Nigerians at a mining facility in Plateau State over suspected illegal mining. These incidents demonstrate that the problem is neither geographically isolated nor restricted to a particular mineral resource.

The situation is particularly disturbing in northern Nigeria, where illegal gold mining has become entangled with the region's security challenges. States such as Zamfara, Kaduna, Niger and Nasarawa have witnessed illegal mining activities involving local and foreign interests.

An investigation published by the Institute for Security Studies through its ENACT programme in December 2023 highlighted the involvement of Chinese actors in illegal gold-mining networks in Nigeria. It drew attention to the relationship between foreign demand for gold, local criminal networks and insecurity in parts of the North-West.

The implications are enormous. Illegal mining deprives government of legitimate revenue, encourages mineral smuggling, destroys farmlands and contributes to environmental degradation and water contamination. Even more alarming is the possibility that proceeds from such activities could finance criminal networks and armed groups, thereby aggravating the insecurity confronting the country.

In July 2026, reports also emerged of arrests involving Chinese nationals and Nigerians over alleged illegal mining in Amba community, Kokona Local Government Area of Nasarawa State. Such developments reinforce the need for a comprehensive review of activities in Nigeria's mineral-rich communities.

Beyond illegal mining and refining, the involvement of foreign nationals in cybercrime and financial fraud has equally attracted considerable attention.

On 10 December 2024, the EFCC conducted a major operation at a building on Oyin Jolayemi Street, Victoria Island, Lagos, where 759 suspects were arrested in connection with an alleged sophisticated cybercrime network. The operation involved 599 Nigerians and 160 foreign nationals, including Chinese and Filipinos.

According to the Commission, the network was involved in internet fraud, identity theft and cyber-enabled financial crimes, including Ponzi scheme operations. Following prosecution and conviction, 192 foreign nationals were deported in October 2025. They included nationals of China, the Philippines, Tunisia, Malaysia, Pakistan, Kyrgyzstan and Timor-Leste.

In another development, two Chinese nationals were sentenced to 25 years' imprisonment each in July 2026 by the Federal High Court in Lagos for offences relating to the illegal export of Nigeria's mineral resources. Their conviction and the forfeiture of recovered minerals to the Federal Government further underscore the seriousness of the problem.

These cases should compel us to interrogate the institutional weaknesses that allow such activities to persist. Foreign nationals do not possess supernatural powers that enable them to establish illegal refineries, operate mining sites, transport stolen minerals or maintain sophisticated criminal networks without assistance from within the country.

There must be Nigerians providing the enabling environment.

Such collaborators may include landowners who knowingly lease properties for unlawful operations, businessmen who provide front companies, transporters who move illegally extracted minerals, suppliers of equipment, community intermediaries and corrupt public officials. Some security personnel may also compromise their responsibilities for financial gratification, while others may provide intelligence that helps criminal operators evade arrest.

It is particularly reprehensible that some Nigerians appear willing to mortgage the collective interest of their country for personal financial benefits. What could be more disgraceful than a Nigerian facilitating the plunder of his country's resources by foreigners while millions of citizens remain impoverished?

The irony is that some of these collaborators may occupy influential positions in their communities and institutions. They may publicly condemn economic sabotage while privately benefiting from the proceeds of illegal enterprises. Such individuals are no less culpable than the foreign operators they assist.

Consequently, the authorities must look beyond the foreign nationals apprehended at illegal mining sites and suspected refineries. Local sponsors, financiers, beneficiaries and political protectors must also be identified and prosecuted. Otherwise, arresting foreign operators without dismantling their Nigerian support networks will amount to treating the symptoms rather than addressing the disease.

The situation also raises fundamental questions about the effectiveness of our immigration system. What category of visas do these individuals obtain before entering Nigeria? Are their declared purposes of entry consistent with the activities they eventually undertake? Do the Nigeria Immigration Service and relevant security agencies adequately monitor their movements and business engagements?

A foreign national who enters Nigeria as a tourist, businessman or technical consultant should not be allowed to use such privileges as a cover for unlawful economic activities. Immigration regulations must be enforced without fear or favour.

Similarly, the Ministry of Solid Minerals Development, the Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission, the Nigeria Midstream and Downstream Petroleum Regulatory Authority, the EFCC, the Nigeria Police Force, the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps and the Nigeria Immigration Service must strengthen inter-agency collaboration. Intelligence sharing, surveillance and coordinated enforcement should become routine rather than reactive measures introduced only after criminal activities have been exposed.

The Federal Government must also intensify scrutiny of companies with foreign ownership or participation in the extractive industry. Their beneficial ownership, mineral titles, export documentation, environmental compliance and tax records should be properly verified. No company should enjoy the privilege of operating in Nigeria without demonstrable compliance with the laws of the land.

Traditional rulers and community leaders also have important responsibilities. Residents of mineral-bearing communities should be encouraged to report suspicious activities, while whistle-blowers must be adequately protected against intimidation and victimisation. The Chinese Government and other countries whose nationals are implicated should equally cooperate with Nigerian authorities in investigating transnational criminal networks. Diplomatic and economic relationships must never become shields for individuals who violate the laws of their host country.

Let me make an important clarification: this intervention is not an indictment of all Chinese nationals or foreign investors. Nigeria needs legitimate foreign investment, technological partnerships and international economic cooperation to accelerate development. Responsible foreign businesses contributing to the Nigerian economy deserve encouragement and protection.

However, legitimate investment must never be confused with economic exploitation. Nigeria cannot continue to welcome foreign investors while turning a blind eye to those who regard its natural resources as commodities to be plundered without accountability.

There is also a fundamental issue of national dignity. The sovereignty of a country is not demonstrated merely by its territorial boundaries, national anthem or flag. It is equally reflected in its capacity to enforce its laws, protect its resources and hold accountable everyone who violates its statutes, irrespective of nationality, wealth or political connections.

Ultimately, the greatest tragedy may not be the foreign nationals who come to Nigeria to exploit our weaknesses, but the Nigerians who willingly create those weaknesses for personal gain. A country cannot successfully combat economic sabotage when some of its own citizens are actively facilitating it.

The EFCC's discovery in Ogere should therefore serve as a wake-up call. It must not end with the sealing of an illegal refinery or the arrest of a few suspects. A comprehensive investigation must expose the ownership structure, financial beneficiaries, supply chains, local collaborators and possible institutional complicity behind these operations.

Nigeria's natural resources belong to its people, not to foreign economic predators or their Nigerian collaborators. The Federal Government must demonstrate that this country is not an economic playground where anyone can exploit its resources, violate its laws and walk away with the proceeds.

The message must be unequivocal: Nigeria welcomes genuine investors, but has no room for economic saboteurs, whether foreign or Nigerian.



Kelly Odaro, PhD, is a columnist and lecturer in the Department of Journalism and Media Studies, Auchi Polytechnic, Auchi, Edo State, Nigeria.

Ogbomo lauds Okpebholo on security, urges transport database, improved rural roads

Matthew Okagha

BENIN CITY

The National President of the Elderly Care Alliance of Nigeria, Hon. Chief Eddy Ogbomo, has commended Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo, for what he described as his purposeful leadership and commitment to maintaining peace and security in the state in the last two years.

Ogbomo, who gave the commendation in an exclusive interview with The NIGERIAN OBSERVER in Benin City on Thursday, said the governor had demonstrated leadership capacity in steering the affairs of the state, particularly through efforts to curb cultism, kidnapping and other security challenges.

He noted that the relative peace being experienced in the state was a welcome development, adding that the administration's response to security threats had helped to strengthen public confidence in government.

The Elderly Care Alliance president made particular reference to the kidnap incident at the Vegetable Market, where the suspects were reportedly apprehended and successfully prosecuted, describing the development as a demonstration of the government's determination to tackle criminality and ensure that offenders face the consequences of their actions.

He stressed that effective security management must go beyond arresting suspects to ensuring diligent prosecution, adding that the government's response to criminal activities would serve as a deterrent to others.

While applauding the governor's efforts, Ogbomo urged the Edo State Government to establish a comprehensive database of commercial transport fleets and their drivers operating across the state.

According to him, such a database would provide government with reliable information on transport operators, enhance regulation of the sector, improve security monitoring and strengthen revenue generation.

He expressed concern over the activities of touts and some vigilante groups, who, he alleged, were taking advantage of the absence of a well-structured revenue collection system to extort commercial bus drivers.

He said a transparent and properly coordinated transport management framework would eliminate multiple and illegal collections, protect transport operators from harassment and ensure that legitimate government revenues were properly accounted for.

Ogbomo maintained that the state government should take the initiative in regulating the activities of transport operators rather than allowing unauthorised individuals and groups to impose arbitrary levies on them.

On grassroots development, the community leader called on Governor Okpebholo to give a clear directive to local government chairmen to intensify efforts towards improving earth roads in their respective localities.

He observed that the condition of. rural and community roads remained a major concern to residents, particularly those in areas where poor road access affects movement, commercial activities and the general wellbeing of the people.

He urged the governor to hold local government chairmen accountable for the state of infrastructure in their councils, stressing that development must be visible at the grassroots to make meaningful impact on the lives of ordinary citizens.

The Elderly Care Alliance president also raised concern over the alleged open-air sale and distribution of illicit drugs around the Ring Road axis of Benin City.

He specifically called on the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) to intensify surveillance and enforcement operations in the area, alleging that drug peddling was taking place openly and in broad daylight.

He warned that the growing accessibility of illicit substances, particularly to young people, could undermine the gains being made in the fight against cultism, kidnapping and other social vices.

Ogbomo therefore urged the NDLEA to strengthen its intelligence-gathering and monitoring operations around the axis, while collaborating with other relevant security agencies to rid the area of drug-related activities.

He noted that the fight against insecurity would yield better results if attention was also given to the underlying factors, including drug abuse, unemployment and other social challenges that expose young people to criminal activities.

Looking ahead, Ogbomo expressed optimism that the Okpebholo administration would consolidate its achievements and deliver more enduring legacies in the next two years.

He said the state's development aspirations would be better achieved through sustained attention to security, rural infrastructure, effective transportation management, revenue accountability and the welfare of the people.

He urged residents to support government policies and programmes while encouraging public office holders to remain responsive to the needs and expectations of the people.

Ogbomo said the next phase of the administration should build on the progress already recorded, noting that good governance must ultimately be measured by its positive impact on the security, livelihood and overall wellbeing of Edo people.



PRESENTATION OF RELIEF MATERIALS: Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo, yesterday handed over relief materials to affected traders at the recent Oluku market fire disaster. Here are some of the relief materials.



CHIEF EDDY OGBOMO

ICC 1976 class celebrates five decades of brotherhood

...as reunion rekindles old friendships and memories

Matthew Okagha

BENIN CITY

Sharing classrooms, school experiences, youthful dreams and the unforgettable bonds of adolescence, members of the 1976 Class of Immaculate Conception College (ICC), Benin City, are set to reunite in a celebration of friendship, nostalgia and enduring brotherhood.

The three-day golden jubilee reunion, scheduled for November 6–8, 2026, promises to be more than an anniversary celebration. It is an opportunity for old schoolmates to reconnect, relive cherished memories, renew friendships and celebrate the remarkable journey of a generation whose bonds have endured the test of time.

Speaking on the preparations for the reunion, the Organising Committee Chairman, Mr Patrick Irurhe, said the three-day event had been carefully designed to provide members of the class with an opportunity to reconnect, rekindle old friendships and celebrate five decades of shared history.

He noted that the programme would feature social activities, a homecoming visit to the college, sporting interaction, a gala night and a thanksgiving service, reflecting the values of friendship, gratitude and collective responsibility that have sustained the class over the years.

Under the evocative theme of coming home, the reunion will bring together members of the class for a memorable homecoming that combines social interaction, institutional appreciation, thanksgiving and fellowship.

The festivities will begin on Friday, November 6, with the arrival of alumni and hotel accommodation at Eterno Hotel, where participants will be lodged together to encourage bonding and ensure convenience and security.

The evening will provide an opportunity for an informal meet-and-greet session at the hotel's poolside, lobby and bars. Against the backdrop of an African evening, old classmates will have the opportunity to exchange handshakes, warm embraces, jokes and familiar banter, rekindling the unique camaraderie that defined their school days.

For many, it will be an emotional encounter, particularly for classmates who may not have seen one another for several decades. Familiar faces, old nicknames and shared experiences are expected to bring back memories of youthful adventures and the formative years spent within the walls of their beloved institution.

Saturday, November 7, aptly designated Back to the Moat, will take the alumni back to their alma mater for a campus visit scheduled between 10 a.m. and 2:30 p.m.

The visit will feature interactive sessions with the Principal, members of staff and current students, providing an opportunity for the old boys to appreciate the school's present state while reflecting on its enduring contribution to their personal and professional development.

The presentation of gifts and trophies to the school will underscore the alumni's appreciation and commitment to giving back to the institution that helped shape their lives.

A novelty ping-pong competition between members of the 1976 Class and current ICC champions will add a touch of sporting excitement and friendly rivalry to the occasion.

The day will climax with a gala night, offering another opportunity for celebration, entertainment and fellowship among classmates and invited guests.

The reunion will conclude on Sunday, November 8, with a thanksgiving Mass scheduled for 8 a.m. at the ICC Chapel or St. Paul Cathedral, Benin City.

The spiritual gathering will provide an opportunity for the alumni to give thanks to God for the gift of life, preservation, achievements and the privilege of witnessing five decades since their school days.

A brunch and lunch, graciously hosted by Arch/Engr. Osbert Evbuomwan at his residence, will follow the thanksgiving service before the departure of alumni and guests.

Beyond the carefully planned activities, however, the real significance of the golden jubilee lies in the enduring relationships it seeks to celebrate.

Fifty years is a remarkable passage of time. It has witnessed different careers, family experiences, personal triumphs, challenges and the inevitable changes that life brings. Yet, the shared identity of being members of the ICC 1976 Class remains a powerful bond.

The reunion is therefore a celebration of more than an academic milestone. It is a tribute to friendship, loyalty, shared history and the priceless memories that continue to connect members of the class across geographical boundaries and generations.

It also offers an opportunity to honour the institution and the teachers whose guidance, discipline and commitment helped lay the foundation for the journeys that the alumni have undertaken.

As the old boys return to their roots, the message is unmistakable: while time may have changed appearances, careers and circumstances, it has not diminished the value of genuine friendship.

For the ICC 1976 Class, the golden jubilee is not simply about looking back at the past; it is about celebrating the present, appreciating God's faithfulness and strengthening the bonds that will carry the brotherhood into the future.

Indeed, after five decades, the boys are coming home again—not merely to revisit a school, but to reconnect with a shared heritage and reaffirm a friendship that time has refused to erase.

WHO: Climate, health interventions can save 1.6m lives annually

BENIN CITY

The World Health Organization (WHO) says six proven climate and health interventions could save 1.6 million lives annually and generate trillions of dollars in economic and fiscal benefits.

WHO said this in a statement on Wednesday, estimating that scaling up the interventions globally could deliver 3.9 trillion dollars in annual economic welfare benefits and 5.4 trillion dollars in fiscal gains.

It said the report, titled Global Benefits and Costs of Prioritised Actions on Climate Change and Health, also estimated that the measures could prevent 16.7 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions annually.

According to WHO, the interventions can prevent one in every 40 deaths globally while helping countries reduce carbon emissions and strengthen their economies.

"The six recommended interventions include heat-health warning systems, climate-resilient drinking-water services, basic sanitation, hygiene and handwashing facilities, cleaner household cooking and heating fuels, and efficient fossil fuel pricing policies," it said.

According to the report, every dollar invested in five of the interventions can generate an estimated 24 dollars in benefits, with greater returns expected in low- and middle-income countries.

"Heat-health warning systems are projected to deliver the highest return on investment among the interventions, generating an estimated 835 dollars in benefits for every dollar invested.



Sports

● Football ● Athletics ● Golf ● Basketball ● Tennis ● Boxing



Portuguese football federation pays tribute to Cristiano Ronaldo as former captain cnnounces retirement

The Portuguese Football Federation have paid tribute to Cristiano Ronaldo following his retirement from international football, thanking him for his extraordinary 23-year career, during which he made 234 appearances and scored 146 goals for Portugal.

The federation described him as an inspiring leader and a symbol of the national team's spirit, calling him the greatest player of all time for many. It also expressed its desire to organise a fitting farewell tribute in his honour.

"The Portuguese Football Federation expresses its deepest and eternal gratitude to the legendary captain, Cristiano Ronaldo, who today announced his definitive retirement from the national team.

It is with a feeling of profound gratitude and immense admiration that the Portuguese Football Federation publicly recognises and thanks Cristiano Ronaldo for his truly extraordinary career representing our country.

More than an exceptional athlete, our captain was an inspiring leader, an example of dedication and the ultimate symbol of the spirit of our national team.

Throughout a legendary international career, marked by 234 appearances and 146 goals, the captain carried the nation on his shoulders, broke records and led the team through moments that will forever be etched in the history of Portuguese football.

Every drop of sweat, every decisive goal and every time he wore the captain's armband on the pitch reflected his unconditional love for our shirt.

His commitment and legacy go far beyond the pitch.

Cristiano Ronaldo elevated Portugal's name and inspired generations of young people who dream of following in his footsteps. For many of us, he is the greatest player of all time!

For this reason, the Portuguese Football Federation refuses to let this farewell pass without the tribute it deserves.

It is our firm and sincere desire to organise, plan, participate in and actively contribute to what will undoubtedly be a fitting tribute to Cristiano Ronaldo's immense career, allowing the fans and the entire country to applaud and celebrate once again the player who has given us so much.



Awoniyi foundation brings UK trainers to Kwara for grassroots coaches' training

The Taiwo Awoniyi Foundation (TAF) has concluded arrangements to bring football trainers from the United Kingdom (UK) to Kwara State for a four-day capacity-building programme aimed at strengthening grassroots football development across the state.

The Secretary of the foundation, Sulaiman Atunrase, in a statement on Thursday, said the training is scheduled to hold from November 7 to 10, 2026, at the George Agbazika Inih Stadium, Ilorin, and will feature both theoretical and practical sessions, with 44 grassroots coaches targeted to benefit from the initiative.

According to Atunrase, invitations have also been extended to the head coaches of Kwara United FC and ABS Ilorin FC, underscoring the Foundation's commitment to promoting coaching education and knowledge-sharing across different levels of the game.

The initiative reflects the commitment of Super Eagles striker Taiwo Awoniyi, through his foundation, to investing in the people and structures responsible for identifying, nurturing and developing young football talents in Kwara State.

Atunrase said the foundation aims to expose participating coaches to modern coaching methodologies, contemporary football development principles and practical approaches to improving players' technical abilities, tactical awareness and overall performance.

"The combination of theoretical instruction and on-field practical sessions is expected to provide participants with opportunities to deepen their understanding of the game while acquiring practical skills they can apply in their respective clubs, academies and communities.

"Grassroots coaches remain central to football development, as they often serve as the first point of contact for aspiring footballers.

Nigeria make history as Flamingos stun Brazil to reach first-ever U-17 World Cup final

Nigeria have reached a first-ever U-17

Nigeria's Flamingos have made history by reaching their first-ever FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup final after producing a superb second-half performance to defeat Brazil 3-1 in Wednesday's semi final in Rabat, Morocco.

Japan now stand between the Flamingos and a historic title before Saturday

After a cautious opening period in which neither side could find a breakthrough, the Nigerian youngsters took control following the restart. Queen Joseph opened the scoring before Awawu Bashiru struck twice to put the South Americans under severe pressure.



Brazil eventually found a late response through Greise Kelly, but the goal could not change the outcome as the Flamingos held on for a memorable victory at the Mohammed VI Football Complex.

The achievement carries significance beyond Nigeria. The Flamingos have become the first African team to reach the final of the FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup, giving the continent a historic opportunity to compete for the title. They will now face Japan on Saturday, November 7, with a chance to become the first African nation to win the competition.

The opening 45 minutes showed the importance of the occasion, with both teams approaching the contest carefully. Brazil arrived unbeaten after five matches and with an impressive attacking record, while Nigeria had built their campaign around defensive organisation, collective discipline and timely contributions in the final third.

The contrasting strengths identified before the match were evident from the start. Brazil looked to use their technical quality and attacking movement, but Nigeria were determined not to give Rilany's side the space to establish their usual rhythm.

The Flamingos gradually grew into the contest and looked for openings through their forward players. Queen Joseph, Mary Dunstan, Kanyinsola Yusuf, Oluwakemi Adegbuyi, Oluebube Umejiaku and Favour Nkwocha all attempted to trouble the Brazilian goal, while Pepe offered a threat at the other end.

Neither team, however, could turn those opportunities into a goal before the interval. The sides went into half time locked at 0-0, leaving the semi-final delicately balanced.

Brazil had scored 17 goals in their previous five matches, but Nigeria had conceded only four over the same period. The first half suggested that the Flamingos' defensive discipline would make it difficult for the South Americans to reproduce their earlier attacking numbers.

Nigeria needed to find a way to turn that defensive control into a greater threat going forward. They did exactly that after the restart.

The breakthrough arrived in the 56th minute, just 11 minutes into the second half.

Oluwakemi Adegbuyi provided the assist for Queen Joseph, who finished to give Nigeria a 1-0 lead and send the Flamingos into celebration.

Joseph marked the important moment with the familiar 'Siuuu' celebration, but the significance of the goal went far beyond the moment of joy. Nigeria had taken the lead against an unbeaten Brazil side and placed themselves within touching distance of a first-ever appearance in the final.

The goal also forced Rilany's team to reconsider their approach. Brazil could no longer afford to remain as cautious, and the need to find an equaliser threatened to create more space for Nigeria to exploit.

The Flamingos continued to press for another goal rather than simply retreating to protect their advantage. In the 62nd minute, Mary Dunstan tested Brazilian goalkeeper Nathy, who produced another important save to keep her team in the contest.

Nigeria were growing in confidence, and their attacking intent would soon produce an even bigger reward.

The Flamingos doubled their advantage in the 71st minute through Awawu Bashiru.

Queen Joseph, who had opened the scoring, turned provider by setting up Bashiru for a fine finish that made it 2-0. It was another decisive moment for Nigeria, who were now putting Brazil under serious pressure.

SPORTS FEATURE

Nigerian women's youth football: 90 minutes from history

Douglas Baye-Osagie





Some sporting teams win matches. Some entertain while a rare few make a whole nation stop and believe again. At the FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup in Morocco the Nigerian girls have restored hope and pride, and a first African title is within reach.

With just 90 minutes separating them from an extraordinary piece of history, the young girls have given the country something it badly needs: hope, pride and a glimpse of the future of women's football.

The journey did not begin smoothly. An opening-day defeat to Poland raised immediate questions about the team's readiness to compete with the best in the world. Rather than let that setback define their tournament, the Flamingos regrouped and fought their way to the final.

That response deserves enormous credit. The difference between an ordinary team and a special one is often how it reacts when things go wrong. The Flamingos treated the Poland defeat as a lesson, corrected their mistakes and returned with a determination that has shown in every performance since.

ROAD TO THE FINAL

The Flamingos have played six games, won five and lost one on their way to the final:

Group Stage - Group B
- Nigeria 1 - 2 Poland
- Nigeria 2 - 0 Puerto Rico
- Nigeria 3 -1 Korea DPR

Knockout Stage
Round of 16:
Nigeria 2-1 Mexico- **Quarter-final:**
Nigeria 1-0 Venezuela
Semi-final: Nigeria 3-1 Brazil

Busari's influence

At the centre of the transformation is local coach Hakeem Busari. There is something deeply satisfying about watching a Nigerian coach understand young Nigerian players, identify their weaknesses and build a team that can challenge the world's best.

Busari did not cling to an approach that failed against Poland. He adjusted his personnel, improved the team's balance and made substitutions that have produced a side that looks increasingly confident and dangerous. That is coaching, not merely picking eleven players and hoping for the best.

The players have also stayed grounded despite the growing attention. They appear to understand that reaching the final is an achievement, but winning it is the assignment. There is a maturity about this group that goes beyond their age.

A team of match-winners

Five different Flamingos have won Player of the Match awards in six games at this tournament, a statistic that speaks to the strength of the collective efforts and tactical brilliance of the team.

Oluwakemi Adegbuyi of Robo Queens earned the award against Puerto Rico, and her club-mate Kanyinsola Yusuf took it against Korea DPR. Oluebube Umejiaku of Heartland Queens was recognised against Mexico, Favour Nkwocha of Robo Queens against Venezuela, and Awawu Bashiru of Confluence Queens against Brazil.

The Flamingos do not depend on one superstar to rescue them. Different players have stepped forward when the occasion demanded it, which is the hallmark of a united team.

The list also reflects well on Nigeria's grassroots and club football. Robo Queens, Heartland Queens and Confluence Queens now have players recognised on one of FIFA's biggest youth stages. The clubs and the people who develop these girls deserve acknowledgement, and the wider ecosystem that produced them must be strengthened and sustained.

The bigger picture

Nigeria is 90 minutes from becoming the first African nation to win the FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup. It would be a landmark for the continent and a defining moment for Nigerian football, just as the men's U17 team, captained by Nduka Ugbade and coached by Sebastian Brodericks-Imasuen, conquered the world for the first time in 1985. That victory in China announced Nigeria to the world and opened the door to a golden era of youth football. This will open a new chapter in African women's football.

It would also carry symbolic weight. A team coached by a Nigerian and built on players developed in the domestic game challenges the assumption that international success must depend on foreign expertise. Local knowledge, tactical intelligence, discipline and proper preparation can compete at the highest level. What Nigerian football often lacks is not talent but the right environment, continuity and a clear development pathway.

The wider picture is not all positive. The Super Falcons' failure to qualify for next year's FIFA Women's World Cup remains a painful disappointment for the country that has long been the powerhouse of African women's football. No amount of celebration at youth level can fully compensate for it.

Yet the Flamingos offer a reason not to despair. The challenge is to ensure this generation does not join the long list of promising players lost to the uncertainties of football administration. They must be monitored, developed, protected and given a clear pathway into the senior team.

The Nigeria Football Federation must understand that the work does not end with the final whistle in Rabat. Whether the Flamingos return with gold or silver, the team deserves continuity.

The technical crew should be supported, the players tracked, and the best of them integrated into long-term development plans. Nigeria cannot celebrate them today and forget them tomorrow.

Saturday's final

The Flamingos will take the field on Saturday, November 7, 2026, at Pitch 3 of the Mohammed VI Football Complex in Rabat. Kick-off is at 7:30 pm Nigerian time.

The expectations are enormous, but they should not become a burden. Nigeria wants the trophy, and Nigeria wants these girls to finish what they have started. The most important thing is that they play with the same courage, organisation, discipline and freedom that brought them this far, respecting their opponents without being intimidated by them.

One more performance, girls. One more collective effort and one more night of brave, beautiful football. Africa is waiting, Nigeria is waiting, and history is calling. Go, Flamingos! Bring the trophy home.

SPORTS

The Nigerian OBSERVER
That The People May Know

Praiz promises credible electoral process as Lagos SWAN gears up for election

Mozez Praiz, Chairman of the Lagos State Sports Writers Association of Nigeria Electoral Committee (SWANECO), has promised a credible electoral process for the emergence of a new executive.

Speaking on behalf of the committee, Praiz described the assignment as a call to service and an opportunity to put in place a fair and credible process to herald a new leadership to rebuild Lagos SWAN.

"We are working towards a new swan. It's a big rebrand. There will be a new thinking on how to do things. We promise to the best of our abilities to have credible process for the emergence of new SWAN exco", Praiz said. He assured that the seven man committee would work towards an electoral process that would produce a new Lagos SWAN leadership accepted by all.

Praiz assured members that SWANECO would work to the best of its abilities to deliver a credible process for the emergence of a new executive germane to the restoration of Lagos SWAN as a leading association of sports journalists in Nigeria.

The Caretaker Committee of Lagos SWAN, headed by Patrick Omorodion, on Friday, October 23, 2026 appointed and inaugurated the electoral committee during an Extraordinary Congress held at the Teslim Balogun Stadium, Lagos.

The committee comprises Mozez Praiz of SuperSport as Chairman; McAnthony Anaelechukwu of Community Watch Plus as Secretary and Dr Abdulrahman Abolore of Voice of Nigeria. Others are Jovita Eke of Wazobia FM; Dr Suo Chapelle of SuperSport International; Soliu Adeyemo of Booom-Green Media Services; and Tega Onajaife of Smooth FM as members.

The inauguration of SWANECO marks a significant step towards conducting elections and ushering in a new executive to steer the affairs of the association.



Kristabel Oldeide chooses Nigeria despite eligibility for three countries

Young Nigerian athlete Kristabel Chisa Oldeide has opted to represent Nigeria, her mother's country, despite being eligible to compete for three different nations.

Oldeide, who has a Norwegian father and a Nigerian mother, grew up in England, making her eligible to represent Norway, Nigeria and England.

However, the youngster has chosen to represent Nigeria on the international stage, demonstrating her commitment to her maternal heritage.

Her decision highlights the growing number of dual-nationality athletes embracing their Nigerian roots and choosing to represent the country in international competitions.

Awawu Bashiru joins Flamingos' roll call of historic performers at FIFA women's U-17 World Cup





Previously unsong member of Nigeria's female cadet national team, Flamingos, shot into the history books on Wednesday night, after netting a brace of goals that helped her country defeat Brazil 3-1 in the FIFA U17 Women's World Cup semi-finals.

Sports247 reports that the latest name to hail in the annals of Nigerian football across all levels and categories of the game is Awawu Bashiru, who made the best of her first start in the ongoing competition in Rabat, Morocco to significantly etch her name in glory.

Though not listed with any formidable club back home in Nigeria, the 16-year-old lass fondly called 'Omo Bashiru' justified the trust Coach Akeem Busari has on her, as she made the best of her first start and eventually emerged player of the match.

Incidentally, Bashiru's brace came during a second half blitz from Busari's girls, as the Flamingos turned on the heat and got their breakthrough when Oluwakemi Adegbuyi cut in from the right, then slid a neat pass across to equally vibrant Queen Joseph to net the first goal.

Bashiru then doubled the advantage when what initially appeared to be her cross from the left went all the way into the net with a stroke of luck, but the Nigerian number 11 proved her exceptional class just nine minutes later, after skipping past a defender and calmly knocked in her brace.

Suddenly, everyone started muttering the new name to cherish, 'Bashiru,' a teenage attacking midfielder, who hit target in the 71st and 80th minutes, while helping Nigeria become the first African country to reach the Female Cadet Mundial's final and on the threshold of another historic trophy.

Interestingly, though, Bashiru had been earnestly knocking on the door of fame before now, having earlier excelled in the West African Football Union (WAFU)-B qualifiers, during which she scored a long-range goal against Côte d'Ivoire and another sizzler in a 5-0 win over Niger Republic.

'Omo Bashiru' (born March 30th, 2010), who is highly regarded for her footwork, ball skills, long shots, vision, mobility and energy in the middle of the park, has played just 73 minutes of this championship, but she has already joined Nigeria's roll call of heroines with personal gongs at Morocco 2026.

"(It) was my first start, so I'm so happy, I'm so excited. I'm so proud of myself, my teammates, my coach and the teamwork. We did it, and it was not an easy task. I thank God. I'm grateful," Bashiru retorted gleefully.

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