

DSS alerts public to imminent attacks

By **EDWARD ADAMIDENYO**
anDeputy Editor

Department of State Services (DSS) has alerted citizens to an imminent terrorist attacks in

strategic and soft targets across the the country, during and after the festive period.

The Services also drew public attention to plans by criminal elements to return the country to the pre-2015 era reminiscent of IED attacks on

soft and hard targets in parts of the country.

Public Relations Officer, Department of State Services, National Headquarters, Dr. Peter Afunanya drew public attention to the impending dangers in a statement
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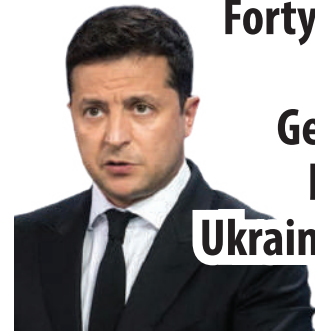
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■ Others want him back ■ Pressure mounts on ex-president from all sides



President Muhammadu Buhari and former President Goodluck Jonathan, during a recent encounter

Nigerians shocked, worried about Jonathan's 2023 moves

How can Dr. Goodluck Jonathan, a self-effacing gentleman and Africa peace ambassador allow himself to fall into a trap meant to humiliate, disgrace him because of power which is ephemeral?"

The words above were used to sum up an observer's concern over thickening and snowballing speculations that former President Jonathan is on the verge of joining the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) in order to throw his hat into the 2023 presidential ring.

Before and after his former spokesman, Dr. Reuben Abati, confirmed his planned APC membership, the rumours had been rife although he was noncommittal. However, he seems to have become interested from the signal that he gave while receiving a group that visited and urged him to contest next year's presidential election. He did not reject their call but said they should "watch out."

Many people and groups have expressed support for or against Jonathan's bid to return to power. Both sides are mounting pressure on him.

Those who want him to run give various reasons. One is that things were relatively better under him in terms of the economy and security. Another group says that he should return to prove that he is not "clueless" as ruling party propaganda had dubbed him as a sitting president. Some of the same ruling party chiefs are said to be wanting to field him as a consensus candidate in a field of heavyweights not willing to step down for each other or one another.

However, some party chiefs from the north are said to be pushing Jonathan's 2023 candidature for a selfish reason. They are said to be plotting to field him to do one term to "complete" his tenure (four years) and for power to quickly to the north, an idea rejected in the south that wants to do two terms.

As aforementioned, those worried about his return bid

also believe that he does not have the structure to win the APC's primaries if he comes up against the party's traditional and entrenched power blocs run by some chieftains like Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu unless he gets the ticket as a consensus candidate.

Jonathan is also up against the moral argument that justice and fair play require that Nigeria's next president should be an Igbo whose southeast has not occupied the office under a democratic dispensation. He is being seen as greedy for power without consideration for equity and good conscience.

The Otuoke-born taciturn former president also faces an eligibility question. Sceptics are pointing to a

law that stops a vice president who completes a President's tenure from contesting twice.

"President Muhammadu Buhari signed a constitutional amendment that stops a Vice President who completes the term of a President from contesting for the office of the President more than one more time," a newspaper noted.

It added: "The same is applicable to a deputy governor who completes the term of a state governor."

The Senior Special Assistant to the President on National Assembly Matters (Senate), Ita Enang, disclosed this to State House correspondents at the Presidential Villa, Abuja on Friday.

The term of a President or a governor can be aborted by virtue of death, resignation or removal, thereby paving the way for the Vice President or deputy governor to take over.

According to Enang, the effect of the new law, Act 16, is that having taken the oath of President or governor once, the affected person can only contest one more time and no more.

If the law had been in place, former President Goodluck Jonathan who completed the tenure of late President Umaru Yar'Adua after his death would not have qualified to contest the 2015 presidential elections having



Buhari

contested and won in 2011.

It is not clear yet if the law has foreclosed Jonathan's possible re-election bid as it (the law) may be said not to have retrospective effect.

Enang said the President also signed an amendment to the constitution that grants autonomy to state judiciary and state Houses of Assembly.

The presidential aide said the implication of the new law was that funds meant for state judiciary and state Houses of Assembly would now be going directly to them and not through state governors again.

According to Enang, the President also signed an amendment that reduced the duration for determining pre-election matters in courts to ensure that such matters do not get into the time of the elections and do not linger thereafter.

He noted that another amendment increased the time the Independent National Electoral Commission has to conduct by-election in case of vacancy from the present seven days to 21 days.

Enang said, "I just want to inform you that His Excellency President Muhammadu Buhari today (Friday) assented to the Constitution Fourth Alteration Bill which grants financial autonomy and independence to the Houses of Assembly of the respective states and to the Judiciary of

the respective states.

"Therefore, upon this signature, the amounts standing to the credit of the judiciary are to now be paid directly to the judiciary of those states and no more through the governors and from the governors."

"And then the amounts standing to the credit of the Houses of Assembly of the respective states are now to be paid directly to the Houses of Assembly of that state for the benefit of the legislators and the management of the state Houses of Assembly of that state. This grants full autonomy now to the Houses of Assembly and judiciary of states."

"Another Act which has come into force today is Constitution Amendment 21 which relates to the determination of pre-election matters. It has reduced the date and time of determining pre-election matters to ensure that the pre-election matters in court do not get into the time of the elections and do not linger thereafter. The relevant section of the Constitution has also been amended by this Act, therefore amending the constitution."

"The other one is Bill 16 which is now an Act. The intent of that Act is to ensure that where a Vice President succeeds the President and where a deputy governor succeeds a governor, he can no more contest for that office more than one more



Jonathan

time.

"The effect is that having taken the oath of President once, he can only contest one more time and no more. That is the intent of this amendment."

"The other amendment is Bill 9 now an Act which gives the Independent National Electoral Commission sufficient time to conduct by-election. It has increased the time from seven to 21

days and generally widens the latitude of the INEC to handle election matters upon vacancy."

"These four bills, added to the Not-Too-Young-To-Run Act, have now been assented to by the President and have now become laws. The Constitution of Nigeria 1999 as amended is hereby further amended by the assent of the President to these bills today."

Okowa gets lawmakers nod for N150 billion loan

By **EDWARD ADAMIDENYO**, Deputy Editor

Public anger on Tuesday trailed the Delta House of Assembly's approval of a request by Governor Ifeanyi Okowa for a bridging finance facility of N150 billion.

The governor's request was contained in a letter which was read at plenary of the Assembly by the Speaker, Chief Sheriff Oborevwori in Asaba.

Human rights activist, Deji Adeyanju immediately took to his verified Twitter handle to condemn the loan approval.

Adeyanju described the whopping loan approval as "madness".

Okowa had said that: the requested credit facility which has Zenith Bank PLC as the "lead arranger, would be principally tailored toward defraying arrears of unpaid certificates earned by contractors with respect to completion of some critical ongoing legacy projects awarded by past and present administrations" the governor said.

Consequently, the motion for the approval of the credit facility was moved by the Majority leader of the Assembly, Chief Ferguson Onwo.

The motion which was unanimously adopted by the House, of Assembly when put to a voice vote by the speaker, was seconded by the Chief Whip, Mrs Pat Ajudua.

Some Deltans who spoke to The Trumpet on condition of anonymity expressed outrage over the loan. One respondent observed that the Delta state House of Assembly under the leadership of Speaker Oborevwori is "nothing but a rubber stamp" legislature."

The governor also said that part of the loan would be tailored toward taking care of outstanding pension commitments to the state and local government areas pensions in the contributory pension scheme, amounting to N20 billion and N10 billion respectively.

"The Speaker and members of the state House

DSS alerts public to imminent attacks

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in Abuja.

Dr. Afunanya said that though there are already reported cases of such incidents in some areas, the Service has uncovered a ploy by suspected criminal gangs to forge an alliance among themselves with a view to launching further attacks on critical infrastructure and other

frequented public places like worship and relaxation centres, especially during and after the holidays and festive celebrations.

The objective he said is to achieve some self-serving interests as well as cause fear among the citizenry.

The Spokesperson of the secret police recalled its earlier warning that some groups and individuals were plotting to stoke violence in

the country.

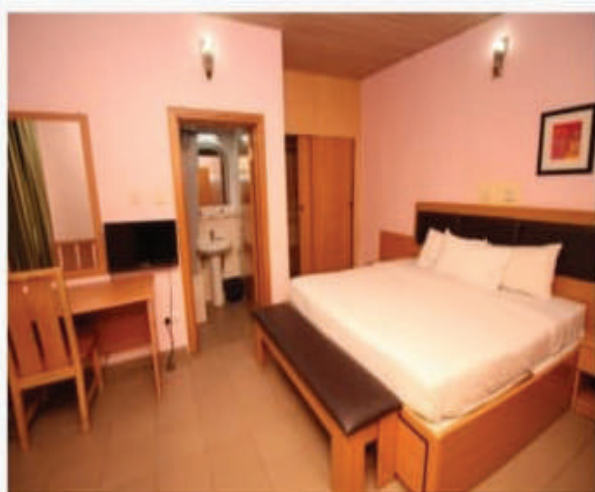
"Following these, patrons, owners and managers of aforementioned public places are advised to be wary of this development and implement basic security measures to deter the threats. While the Service is committed to the disruption of this trend and pattern of violent attacks, it will continue to partner with other security agencies to

ensure that necessary drills are employed in order that public peace and order are not jeopardized. To this end, residents are enjoined to go about their lawful businesses and share, with security and law enforcement agencies, useful information on the activities of criminals," the statement said.

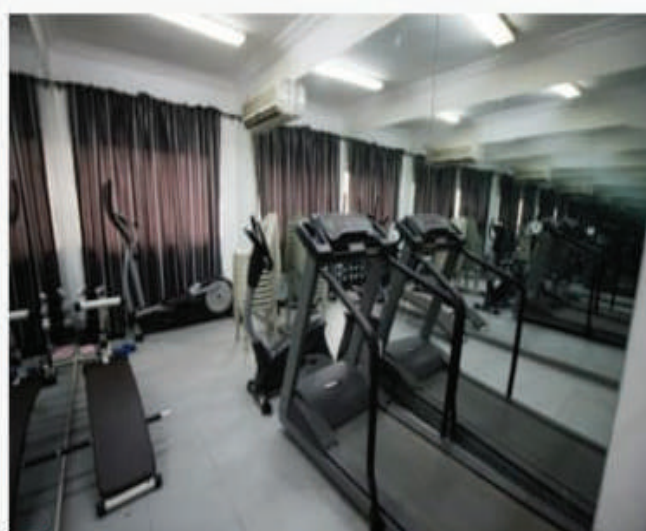
He concluded that, "The DGSS, Alhaji Yusuf Magaji Bichi, wishe



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Court affirms Conduct Tribunal Chairman's probe by Senate

By **EDWARD ADAMIDENYO**,
Deputy Editor

Code of Conduct Tribunal (CCT) Chairman, Danladi Yakubu Umar yesterday lost his bid to stop the Senate from probing a case of alleged assault and misconduct against him.

While dismissing his application, a Federal High Court in Abuja on Tuesday ordered Umar to go and appear before the Nigerian Senate to defend allegations of misconduct brought against him in a public petition.

The court dismissed Umar's suit instituted against the Senate and others seeking to stop them from investigating him on an alleged public misconduct at Banex Plaza in Abuja on March 29th 2021.

Justice Inyang Ekwo in a judgment in the suit held that the case of the CCT chairman lacked

merit and had no cogent reason to stop the Senate from undertaking its constitutional functions.

Justice Ekwo held that sections 88 and 89 of the 1999 constitution under which the CCT boss sought to be protected by the court did not confer any protection or refuge on him.

The judge said that as a public officer administering law relating to conduct of public officers, Umar has no reason to institute the suit to stop senate from investigating a public petition seeking justice on moral standard.

The Judge also said that the Code of Conduct Bureau and Code of Conduct Tribunal Act 2010 are established by the Act of the National Assembly and as such, he is subject to investigation by the National Assembly.

Besides, the judge also said that section 2 of the Code of Conduct

Bureau exposes Umar to investigation by the National Assembly than another Nigerian adding that it will be illogical for him to seek to stop Senate probe as doing so will give an impression that he is above the law.

Justice Ekwo therefore held that the declaratory reliefs sought by Umar for injunction against the Senate cannot be granted because the case the case lacked merit.

The CCT Chairman had in his suit marked FHC/ABJ/CS/ 671/2021, challenged the powers of the Senate and three others to investigate him in an alleged assault perpetrated against a security guard at Banex Plaza in Abuja.

The four defendants in the matter are the Senate, Senate President, Senate Committee on Ethics, Privileges and Public Petitions; and the Attorney General of the Federation, AGF.

In the suit filed by his lawyer, Mr Sunday Edward, Umar had asked the court for an order of perpetual injunction restraining the Senate, its members and agents from conducting or continuing to conduct investigations into the allegations of assault levelled against him via a petition submitted to the Senate.

Specifically, the plaintiff had wanted the court to determine whether the alleged case of assault which took place at Banex Plaza in Abuja on March 29, 2021, formed part of the matters the Senate is constitutionally empowered to investigate or police functions.

He had also asked it to determine whether the Senate and its Committee on Ethics and Public Petitions are competent to investigate or invite him in relation to the investigation of the allegation of assault and whether the powers

of the Senate to conduct the investigation are not governed or subject to the provision of sections 88 and 89 of the 1999 Constitution.

The plaintiff had also asked the court to declare that the purported case of assault that took place on March 29, 2021, did not form part of the matters the Senate is constitutionally empowered to investigate.

He further asked the court to declare that the Senate's moves to conduct an investigation in the matter is unconstitutional and it amounts to unwarranted usurpation of the functions of the police and of the court of competent jurisdiction.

But counsel to the Senate, Kafayat Suleyman had urged the court to dismiss the suit, insisting that the Senate has power under Section 88 of the Constitution to investigate alleged misconduct by any public officer.

Jack Dorsey reaction on Elon Musk's Twitter Acquisition

By **OROWO VICTORIA OJIEH** with agency report

Twitter co-founder and former CEO Jack Dorsey commented on Elon Musk's acquisition of the social media platform on Monday kicking off his thread with Radiohead's song "Everything In Its Right Place."

"I love Twitter. Twitter is the closest thing we have to a global consciousness," he wrote.

After stepping down from Twitter in November 2021, Dorsey continued to sit on the company's board of directors.

The idea and service is all that matters to me, and I will do whatever it takes to protect both. Twitter as a company has always been my sole issue and my biggest regret. It has been owned by Wall Street and the ad model. Taking it back from Wall Street is the correct first step.

Reacting to the \$44 billion deal, "In principle, I don't believe anyone should own or run Twitter. It wants to be a public good at a protocol level, not a company. Solving for the problem of it being a company however, Elon is the singular solution I trust. I trust his mission to extend the light of consciousness," he wrote.

Elon's goal of creating a platform that is "maximally trusted and broadly inclusive" is the right one. This is also @paraga's goal, and why I chose him. Thank you both for getting the company out of an impossible situation. This is the right path. I believe it with all my heart.

"I'm so happy Twitter will continue to serve the public conversation. Around the world, and into the stars!" Dorsey wrote.

On April 14, the world's richest man declared his takeover bid terming it as his best and final offer. Elon Musk sealed the deal for \$44 billion and is now the new owner of Twitter.

In his first tweet after taking over the social media giant, Musk said, "Free speech is the bedrock of a functioning democracy, and Twitter is the digital town square where matters vital to the future of humanity are debated."

The Tesla Boss further stated that he wants to make "Twitter better than before by enhancing the product with new features." He plans to make the system an "open source to increase trust, defeat the spam bots, as well as authenticate all humans."

The billionaire ended his statement by saying, "Twitter has tremendous potential" and he looks forward to working with the company and the community of users.



L-R; Ekiti State Governor, Dr Kayode Fayemi; Afenifere Chieftain, Chief Olu Falae; Afenifere Leader, Chief Reuben Fazoranti; during the Governor's meeting with Afenifere leaders in Akure...on Tuesday

Forty countries meet in Germany on bolstering Ukraine defence

By **OROWO VICTORIA OJIEH**
with agency report

The United States has pledged to help Ukraine win its battle against Russia's unprovoked invasion, as allies from 40 countries met at a US base in Germany to bolster Kyiv's defence against Moscow.

The meeting called by the U. S. at its Ramstein airbase in southwestern Germany is "focussed on doing things to generate additional capability and capacity for the Ukrainian forces", Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin mentioned

following his visit to Kyiv on Sunday.

Forty countries held emergency talks in Germany on Tuesday on bolstering the defence of Ukraine, which the US Pentagon chief believes "can win" against Russia if given the necessary means and backing.

"We believe that they can win if they have the right equipment, the right support," Mr. Austin said.

Just ahead of the talks, Germany signalled that it was ready to authorise the deliveries of tanks to Ukraine, in what would be a major switch in Berlin's cautious policy vis-a-vis

defence equipment supply for Kyiv.

Defence secretary, accompanied by the U. S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken met Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky in their first visits to Kyiv since Russia invaded Ukraine two months ago.

The U. S. is already the biggest supplier of international military aid to Ukraine. It pledged to do "everything that we can to get them the types of support, the types of artillery and munitions that will be effective in this stage of the fight".

Kyiv is seeking heavy artillery and tanks to repel Russian forces trying to seize complete control of its vast southern plains and the eastern region of Donbas, but the Russian-made equipment which Ukrainians have been trained to use is now rare.

Some countries in eastern Europe which still had stocks have sent them to Kyiv, sometimes in exchange for newer generation US equipment.

Austin and Blinken held their press conference in Poland following their visit to Kyiv at a warehouse

stacked high with tonnes of humanitarian and military aid ready to be packed onto trucks bound for Ukraine.

Hundreds of Russian-made shells and rockets were at the warehouse, provided by countries that prefer to remain discreet in their participation in arming Ukraine.

Outside the warehouse, seven vehicles towing howitzers with a range of 30 kilometres (18 miles) were awaiting transfer. They were parked in front of hundreds of pallets of carefully packed shells and various ammunitions.

Okowa tasks PDP stakeholders on reconciliatory moves

Delta State Governor Ifeanyi Okowa has urged presidential aspirants and stakeholders of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) to embark on reconciliatory move that would throw up a credible candidate for it in the 2023 elections.

Okowa gave the charge at Government House, Asaba, when PDP delegates played host to one of the presidential hopefuls under the platform of the party, Governor Udom Emmanuel of Always-Ibom.

The governor who said Nigeria was in difficult times, affirmed that the nation needed a President that would comprehensively address the challenges bedevilling the nation in all spheres.

He described Governor Udom Emmanuel as a man of proven integrity and a leader that has done well in office and assured him that delegates will take the right decision at the party's primaries.

The Governor expressed displeasure with the APC administration that has kept complaining after seven years in office, adding that Nigerians should have a rethink and support the PDP's quest to rescue the nation from maladministration.

"Having listened to you, I am sure that our people are obviously convinced that you have the capacity to be the President of this country.

"There is no doubt that we are in a very difficult times in our nation and Udom Emmanuel, a presidential aspirants under the

PDP has already told us about the challenges and his intent and the processes that he intends to take us through as a nation, to rescue us and then to begin to rebuild a nation that we truly desire as a people.

"I have known him for several years, we have been governor for seven years by next month and I am aware that he is a man that has not just only the knowledge but has the level of integrity to be able to put necessary machinery into action with a view to advancing the development of the country.

"I believe that that is the kind of things we need in our nation Nigeria. The APC led government has done seven years and even at the end of the seven years they are still blaming past administration, that is not governance.

"Because if you meet something and you meet it in a very bad state as they made us believe, by the time you go through the first year, the second year, the third year, the fourth year and you are still complaining and you are about ending the two year tenure and you are still complaining, then something is wrong with that government and with that party," Okowa said.

In his speech, the presidential hopeful and Governor of Akwa-Ibom State, Mr. Udom Emmanuel said he was offering himself to serve as President because he has answers to the myriads of challenges confronting the socio-economic and infrastructural growth and development of the

country in the last seven years.

Mr. Emmanuel appealed to delegates to throw their weight behind him to enable him emerge as presidential candidate of the PDP, even as he promised to use his vast wealth of experience in the private sector and politics

to conquer the nation's teething problems.

Also speaking, the Chairman of Udom Emmanuel Campaign Organisation, Senator Gabriel Suswan said the presidential aspirant has all it takes to reposition Nigeria in the areas of

security, economy, infrastructure and all round development.

The state Chairman of the PDP, Chief Kingsley Esiso said he was impressed with the antecedents of Mr. Udom Emmanuel, stressing that delegates will do the needful at the right time.



Delta Governor, Senator Dr. Ifeanyi Okowa (left), exchanging pleasantries with his Akwa-Ibom State counterpart, Emmanuel Udom, on his arrival to Asaba on his nation wide consultation visit for his presidential aspiration to the Governor in Government House, Asaba on Tuesday. PIX: SAMUEL JIBUNOR.

Obaseki explores telemedicine to tackle health sector brain drain •Urges biodiversity sustenance, protection of forest belt

Edo State Governor Godwin Obaseki, has said his administration is exploring opportunities in telemedicine to address the problem of brain drain in the health sector.

Obaseki said this during a tour of facilities at the Edo Specialist Hospital and the Edo State Health Management Agency which are venues for the ongoing free medical healthcare outreach in the state.

The five-day medical mission for over 4,000 residents is being organized in collaboration with the Association of Nigeria Physicians in the Americas (ANPA).

Obaseki said the state's extensive broadband infrastructure in Benin City, put in place by his administration, will support the telemedicine system.

He said, "We are faced with brain drain in the healthcare system and one option we are looking at is to find a way around it by working with our health specialists from the Americas and setting up telemedicine facilities in the state.

"We have an extensive broadband infrastructure in place in Benin City, and we are looking at the possibility of having telemedicine facilities in all our Primary Healthcare Centres (PHCs) since we have the technology to track cases, review them and send them to specialists in their clinics in Americas, particularly in the United State to review the cases using technology. With the model, they can interface with the patients and if surgery is required, they can now direct the process from where they are in the Americas."

Obaseki promised to sustain ongoing reforms in the healthcare system, ensuring that Edo people

get efficient and quality healthcare services.

On his part, the President of ANPA, Christopher Okunseri said with telemedicine, individuals can contact physicians in the Americas from the comfort of their homes using technology and get the needed attention immediately.

He said, "ANPA is committed to ensuring that the telemedicine service works as the difference in time zone will not stop us from implementing this telemedicine through the PHCs. We are determined to ensure the delivery of better healthcare services to the Edo people.

"ANPA was the first organization to hold a virtual medical mission to Calabar. We did that a year ago as we did telemedicine across the globe. We examined patients through cameras, diagnosed them, and referred them for investigation. Telemedicine in Edo State is actualizable."

Meanwhile, Obaseki has said that the state government is strengthening partnerships with stakeholders, including multinational organisations on the implementation of programmes, policies and initiatives to regenerate the state's forest belt and conserve its biodiversity.

Obaseki said the state government's effort to preserve its flora and fauna through effective regulation is codified in the bill on Edo State Forestry Commission, which is before the state assembly.

The governor said this in commemoration of the International Mother Earth Day, marked across the world by the United Nations

and its various organs.

According to him, the state government is working with reputable organisations and professionals as part of plans for the concession of forests for regeneration.

"We will work with qualified groups and organisations with clear plans on sustainable regeneration action plans," he said.

He noted that the state is also working with relevant security agencies to prevent illegal exploitation of the state's forest reserve.

Obaseki added, "Stakeholders including private investors and local communities must support the government's implementation of policies and guidelines to protect our forest belt.

"We are working with owners of oil palm plantations, saw millers, timber licensees and contractors, and corporate organisations in the state to keep to the international conventions on protecting the environment from degradation."

According to the United Nations, "Mother Earth is clearly urging a call to action. Nature is suffering. Oceans filling with plastic and turning more acidic. Extreme heat, wildfires and floods, have affected millions of people. Even these days, we are still facing COVID-19, a worldwide health pandemic linked to the health of our ecosystem.

"Climate change, man-made changes to nature as well as crimes that disrupt biodiversity, such as deforestation, land-use change, intensified agriculture and livestock production or the growing illegal wildlife trade, can accelerate the speed of destruction of the planet."

Reality TV star Laycon, slams FG's attitude towards ASUU strike

By **OROWO VICTORIA OJIEH**

Former Big Brother Naija lockdown housemate Olamilekan Mas-soud Al-Khalifah Agbeleshebioba popularly known as Laycon, has slammed the Nigerian government over the prolonged strike of the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU).

The Reality TV star, singer and songwriter was condemning the fact that the government and

politicians in the country were concentrating on the next general elections despite the closure of Universities.

The singer, who won the 'BBNaija lockdown' season five in 2020 made this known via his Twitter page on Monday, April 25, 2022, while reacting to the strike led by the Academic Staff Union of Universities that has left Nigerian students at home for months.

"I'm scared ooo, I'm really scared. What kind of government is this !!! Universities are closed, they have been closed for months and this mandem are focused on elections alone," he tweeted.

ASUU declared a month warning strike back in Feb.14 to press home their demands from the Federal Government.

At the end of the warning strike in March, the academic staff union extended the strike by another eight weeks.

The Joint Action Committee (JAC) has also extended the ongoing strike by the Senior Staff Association of Nigerian Universities (SSANU) and the Non-Academic Staff Union (NASU) by one month in protest against non implementation of their demands.



Olamilekan

Protest rocks community over killing of leader, two others at police checkpoint

By FRIDAY OMOSOLA, Akure

There was chaos in Kajola, Odigbo Local Government Area of Ondo State as scores of youths trooped out to protest following the alleged killing of a village head and two other persons at a police checkpoint.

The youths in their hundreds gathered outside the community's police station with the aim of setting it ablaze.

The Trumpet learnt that the ugly incident happened along Lagos/Benin Expressway on Saturday evening when the victims, David Olowofeyekun, Gbenga Abayomi, and Kola Akinduro, the Head of Korede Village, were riding on a motorcycle home from their farms and were allegedly hit by a Hilux van after being stopped at a police checkpoint along the Lagos/Benin Expressway.

The victims were said to have knocked down the police attempting to stop an oncoming Hilux van after stopping them at the checkpoint. The Hilux driver in an attempt to avoid the police crashed into the motorcycle and the victims died on the spot.

A source disclosed that the police personnel in the neighbourhood were still allegedly extorting from and harassing residents at the checkpoint. This is despite the order by the Commissioner of Police to stop illegal checkpoints and extortion in the state.

However, the state Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), SP Funmilayo Odunlami who debunked the claim said the deceased persons went against the traffic regulations which resulted in an accident.

Attorney General lauds NAPTIP for securing 500 conviction

By KELVIN OHOROR

Delta State Attorney-General and Commissioner for Justice, Isaiah Bozimo has commended the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) in charge of Edo/Delta state for the successful prosecution and conviction of 500 traffickers since 2003.

The Attorney General gave the commendation in Asaba when officials of the NAPTIP, led by the zonal commander Nduka Nwawenne, paid him a courtesy visit.

The Attorney General informed the zonal commander that an anti-human trafficking bill was being prepared by his office.

He informed the NAPTIP team that a committee set up to investigate internet fraud had submitted its report to the government.

Bozimo noted that prostitution, ritual killings and human trafficking were closely related and expressed optimism that the bill would receive speedy passage in the house of assembly when it is presented. He commended the zonal commander for the conviction of 500 traffickers and urged him to continue in the same spirit to curb the menace of human trafficking.

He promised to provide whatever assistance that is needed by the agency to discharge duties.

The leader of the delegation, Comrade, Nduka Nwawenne expressed the need for all States of the federation to have a task force on anti-human trafficking.

He explained that 20 states of the federation already had the task force to complement the efforts of NAPTIP in curbing human trafficking.

He called for the enforcement of the law to curb human trafficking in Delta State.

He explained that internal trafficking was as serious as international and that serious attention should be given to it.

Sanwo-Olu urges religious tolerance, peace, prayers for world stability

Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu has appealed for continued religious tolerance, peace, unity and safety in Lagos State, Nigeria and the world.

Sanwo-Olu, who pointed out that the entire world is gradually feeling the consequences of the ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine as well as the impact of the global COVID-19 pandemic, urged religious leaders to continue to seek God's intervention on Nigeria and the World.

The governor made the appeal when he received the leadership of the Nigeria Baptist Convention, led by its President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Rev'd (Dr) Israel Akanji, who paid him a courtesy visit at Lagos House,

Marina on Tuesday.

Sanwo-Olu, while appreciating God for safety, peaceful coexistence and religious tolerance in Lagos among people of different faiths, said Lagos State Government will continue to make the State accessible, available and livable for all the residents.

"We are thankful for the relative peace we have in Lagos. We are thankful for keeping this city for us because indeed, it is not the biggest city in the country; it is a place where the entire economy and commercial activities of our country melt. So, we do not pray or wish for any form of disturbance. As your government, we will continue to do our very best. We will continue to check

and monitor. We will continue to make the government accessible and available," he said.

Sanwo-Olu while congratulating the Baptist leaders for their ongoing 109th convention, extended goodwill to over 20,000 members who are said to be attending the event and promised to collaborate with stakeholders to see what could be done to resolve some of the issues presented to him by the leadership of the Nigerian Baptist Convention.

Speaking earlier, Rev'd Akanji praised Governor Sanwo-Olu for the successful containment of the COVID-19 pandemic and for measures put in place to ensure the security of lives and properties in the State.

He also commended Sanwo-Olu's administration for the harmony between Christians and Muslims in Lagos State and urged people to be courageous and not to lose hope in Nigeria irrespective of the current challenges in the country.

Akanji, who was accompanied by his wife, Victoria, and other top religious leaders and officials from the Nigerian Baptist Convention, including a retired Permanent Secretary in the Lagos State Civil Service, Pastor Regina Obasa, appealed to Governor Sanwo-Olu to complete the process of returning the Lagos Baptist Secondary School, Orile Agege to the Church and also solicited the support of the State government in some of the church's ongoing projects.



Lagos State Governor, Mr. Babajide Sanwo-Olu (5th right) flanked by President, Nigerian Baptist Convention, Rev Dr. Israel Adelani Akanji (5th left); his Wife, Pastor. Mrs. Victoria Akanji (4th left); Wife of the Lagos State Governor, Dr. (Mrs) Ibijoke Sanwo-Olu (4th right) and others, during a courtesy visit by the National leadership of the Nigerian Baptist Convention at Lagos House, Marina, on Tuesday, April 26, 2022.

Abandoned Emevor/Orogun road ignites protest in Isoko

•They are misguided youths, DESOPADEC chief claims

By STEPP OFFI and KELVIN OHOROR

People of Emevor community in Isoko North local government area of Delta State have barricaded the Ughelli/Asaba express road in protest over the abandoned Emevor/Orogun road.

The people of the community came out in hundreds with placards, leaves with war songs to express their pains and anger over the Emevor/Orogun road which has been abandoned for many years now.

However, the Odio of the community, HRH, Johnhost Ologbo, told *The Trumpet* that those on the protest were hired and that community was not in support of the protest. Ologbo explained that the community had been following up the issue of the road with the state government and it was yielding positive results. He said "All the community leaders are aware of Government's plans to do that and the Governor has been giving us hearing. Those protesting are just a few misguided

and disgruntled elements."

He said peace would return to the community because the DPO, Mr Omunu and the Vice Chairman of Isoko North Local Government Area, Mr Ozue were all ground to calm down the youths and women whom he described as "hired crowd".

The Royal father appealed to the protesters to disperse "because we don't want to offend the state government and jeopardize the progress that we made so far." Nonetheless, Mr Emerhana Patrick, a former Secretary, Revenue Mobilization and Fiscal Commission as well as former Secretary, Federal Character Commission, a native of the community told *The Trumpet* that the issue of the road had lingered on for two long.

He said that during the campaign rally at Emevor for the Isoko North constituency bye election to replace the Late Hon. Tim Owhefere the governor of Delta State Dr. Ifeanyi Okowa, made a promise to take over the construction of the road.

Based on the promise of the

Governor, he explained, the community voted en masse for the governor's candidate.

Since then, nothing had been done "and that's why the youths and women are angry," he explained. Mr Karo Oghogho, an indigene of the community told *The Trumpet* that, the youths, women and men of the community, were angry because the road had been abandoned in dilapidated condition for a very long time.

Agboro Moses, the President General of Emevor Community, however, tolled the line of HRM, Ologbo, insisting that the protesters were hired by a few disgruntled persons in the community.

Meanwhile in a telephone conversation with the commissioner, representing Isoko ethnic nationality in DESOPADEC Dr. Paul Owhe, said "Those who are protesting are misguided youths of the community, they are not under the control of any Emevor structure."

Dr. Owhe also said that, "Between 1999 to 2019 the community was only given less than 1km of

road but between 2019 till date that I was appointed, we have completed 4.2km of internal roads in the community."

He said that he had been following up the situation, and that the Governor had invited him to Asaba and had a useful discussion with him about the road.

He said that he informed the Traditional ruler and the President General of the community, noting that the protest was not intended for the good of Emevor community.

He also confirmed to *The Trumpet* that, the governor had called him over the protest, questioning him whether it was not the road they were preparing to start.

At the time of this report the security agents had been mobilized to the scene of protest to restore peace to the community. The DPO, Mr George Omunu, could not be reached as at time of this report.

Emevor community is on the Asaba / Ughelli Express Road and any barricade of the road at any point, could cause a serious traffic hold up for commuters from Warri and Port Harcourt.

Edo carries out free medical services for residents

By ISAAC OLAMIKAN

Edo State First Lady, Mrs. Betsy Obaseki, has kicked off a free medical outreach for over 4, 000 residents. The medical outreach which would include surgeries and surgical interventions for kidney, heart, eyes and teeth, and other ailments, is being organized in partnership with the Association of Nigeria Physicians in the Americas (ANPA). Obaseki, addressing a press conference, said the free medical care exercise was a way to give back to Edo citizens for their support to the state government, ensuring the re-election of Governor Godwin Obaseki during

the September 19, 2020 governorship poll. She said, "The motivation for this medical mission is the support received from Edo people during the governorship election, supporting the governor against all odds and ensuring he got a second term in office. No better way to say thank you than by providing free medical care for the people. "The governor set aside millions of naira monthly to settle and offset medical bills of the indigent people in the state. The governor set up the Mercy Committee for those with serious medical needs. This medical mission will address lots of the issues from the Mercy

Committee."she explained . Mrs. Obaseki said the list of indigent patients requiring medical care had all been captured for the free medical mission, noting that some of the services that the people will enjoy included cardiology, nephrology, ophthalmology and dental surgery . On her part, the Edo State Commissioner for Health, Prof. Obehi Akoria said 4,000 people had been screened for the medical mission, noting that 600 persons required surgical intervention while 300 are ready for surgeries. She noted that 65 highly qualified specialists were already in the state to team up with 200 volunteers including clinical and none clinical volunteers.



Mrs. Betsy Obaseki

One dead, soldier injured as gunmen attack military checkpoint in Bayelsa
By AHERHOKE OKIOMA, Yenagao

One person was shot dead and a military personnel was injured in an early morning attack on a Military check point in Ogboinbiri Community at a wellhead owned by the Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) in Southern Ijaw Local Government Area of Bayelsa State. The Trumpet gathered that the shoot out which lasted three hours led to the killing of one of the suspected militants. The deceased though unidentified is from Ukparatubo Community in Southern Ijaw. Sources within the community told The Trumpet that the Gunmen stormed the military check point in three boats and shot at the soldiers at about 6am on Sunday morning. The soldiers who were on duty and providing security at the SPDC wellhead , engaged the armed men in a gun battle. According to the source, "the soldiers shot dead one of the boys but one of the soldiers was wounded and his rifle taken away. Attempts to get a reaction from the spokesman of the 16 Division of the Nigerian Army in Bayelsa, Captain Victor Odukoya failed. Military sources however confirmed the development, insisting that efforts were ongoing to recover the stolen military rifle and arrest the culprits.

Okowa salutes Mama Suzanne Elumelu at 94



Gov. Ifeanyi Okowa

Governor Ifeanyi Okowa of Delta State has felicitated with the matriarch of the Elumelu family, Mrs Suzanne Elumelu, as she clocks 94. In a statement by his Chief Press Secretary, Olisa Ifeajika, in Asaba, the governor joined family and friends of the great mother of five, including Chairman of United Bank for Africa (UBA), Mr. Tony Elumelu and the Minority Leader of House of Representatives, Chief Ndudi Elumelu, in celebrating the great woman of substance, even as a nonagenarian.

He said that Mama Elumelu's dedication and commitment in raising a strong and resilient family culminated in the success of her children in their various endeavours. According to him, Mama's industry and commitment to ensuring that her children had exemplary future, is worthy of emulation by all mothers. "On behalf of the government and people of Delta, I congratulate an illustrious mother and nonagenarian, Mama Suzanne Nwabuje Elumelu, on her 94th birth anniversary.

"I commend mama for her resilient and undaunting spirit in standing in the gap to ensure that her children succeeded in life. "The story of mama's success against all odds will continue to inspire many families, just as the virtues of fear of God, dedication and hard work which she exemplified in her younger years, will continue to be an example for mothers," Okowa stated. He prayed that God would grant Mama Elumelu longer life, filled with joy and good health to further enjoy the fruits of her labour.

Police, hunters arrest suspected kidnappers

By ALEX OLISE

Nine members of a notorious kidnap syndicate terrorizing Abeokuta / Ayetoro road have been arrested in their hideout at Abule oba by men of Ogun State Police Command, in collaboration with local hunters, OPC, vigilantes and men of Amotekun corps. The command's spokesman, Abimbola Oyeyemi, in a statement, listed the suspects as; Hammed Taiwo, Kehinde Jimoh, Umar Sanda, Sanda Aliu, Ali Morandu, Usman Abubakar, Usman Mohammed, Umaru Ahmadu and Umaru Momodu were arrested, following a credible intelligence gathered by policemen at Sabo/Ilupeju divisional headquarters. It was learnt that

Hammed Taiwo and Kehinde Jimoh who are errand okada riders to the kidnap syndicate were sighted somewhere in Rounder area of Abeokuta North local government. The statement said upon the information, the DPO Sabo/Ilupeju division, SP Mustapha Opawoye, quickly mobilized his men and moved to the area, where the duo of Hammed Taiwo and Kehinde Jimoh were apprehended

By Four kids electrocuted in Ondo
with The Trumpet, revealed that six children were playing inside the shop and all of them were rushed to the hospital, four later gave up the ghost, the remaining two were taken to Trauma Centre in Ondo for treatment, one was discharged and the second child was referred to OAU Teaching Hospital for treatment. The eyewitness added that insufficient oxygen for the five victims led to the death of the other four. Speaking, the owner of the shop, Mrs Ronke Adebisi, said she was not around when the ugly incident happened, saying she rushed down

to the scene immediately when she received a call that her shop was burning. Reacting, the senator representing Ondo South senatorial, Nicholas Tofowomo, affirmed that he would make sure the parents of the victims get justice if the Benin Electricity Distribution Company(BEDC) was found culpable of the tragedy. Tofowomo urged the inhabitants of the community against building houses or shops under power supply lines, saying it is the duty of the government to make sure shops or buildings are not erected under power lines.

Confirming the incident, the Public Relations Officer Mrs Funmilayo Odunlami, said the four kids were reportedly killed, having been electrocuted in Ile Oluji/Okeigbo Local Government Area of the state, while they were playing inside a container. She said an investigation has commenced into the matter. More so, the Corporate Affairs Manager of the BEDC, Ondo State, Michael Barnabas, described the incident as deadly because the metal container shop was under the high tension electric cable. While condoling with the victims' families, he said life is very holy and should not end prematurely this way.

CHANGE OF NAME
GODWIN
I, formerly known and called: **OKO GODWIN** henceforth wish to be known and called: **WONAH EMMANUEL**. Former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and general public to take note.

HOSEA
I, formerly known and called: **SHAMAKI HOSEA** henceforth wish to be known and called: **SHAMAKI HOSEA RIKAYDE**. Former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and general public to take note.

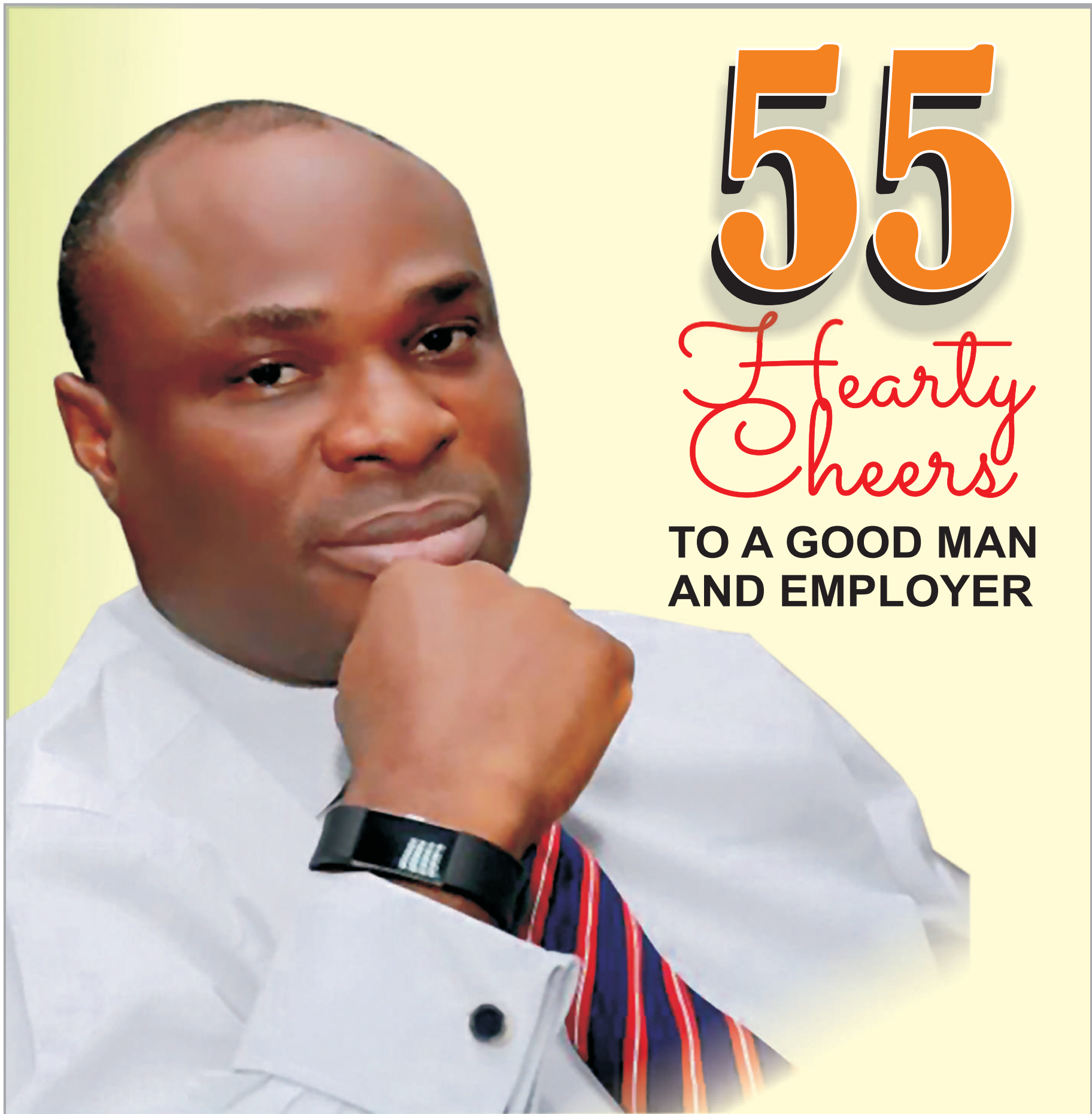
DAVID
I, formerly known and called: **TABITHA DAVID** henceforth wish to be known and called: **FAITH DAVID BEPUTDAH**. Former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and general public to take note.

MARWA
I, formerly known and called: **TERRY MARWA** henceforth wish to be known and called: **VABLA LISSAFI**. Former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and general public to take note.

IKYULE
I, formerly known and called: **AONDOHEMBA GODWIN IKYULE** henceforth wish to be known and called: **GODWIN IKYULE**. OLD D.O.B: 30/12/1965, NEW D.O.B: 15/12/1960.. Former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and general public to take note.

DANIEL
I, formerly known and called: **RUTH ANGELINA DANIEL** henceforth wish to be known and called: **RUTH DANIEL**. Former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and general public to take note.

IROAKAZI
I, formerly known and called: **BLESSING IJEOMA IROAKAZI** henceforth wish to be known and called: **BLESSING IJEOMA CHIBUZOR**. Former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and general public to take note.

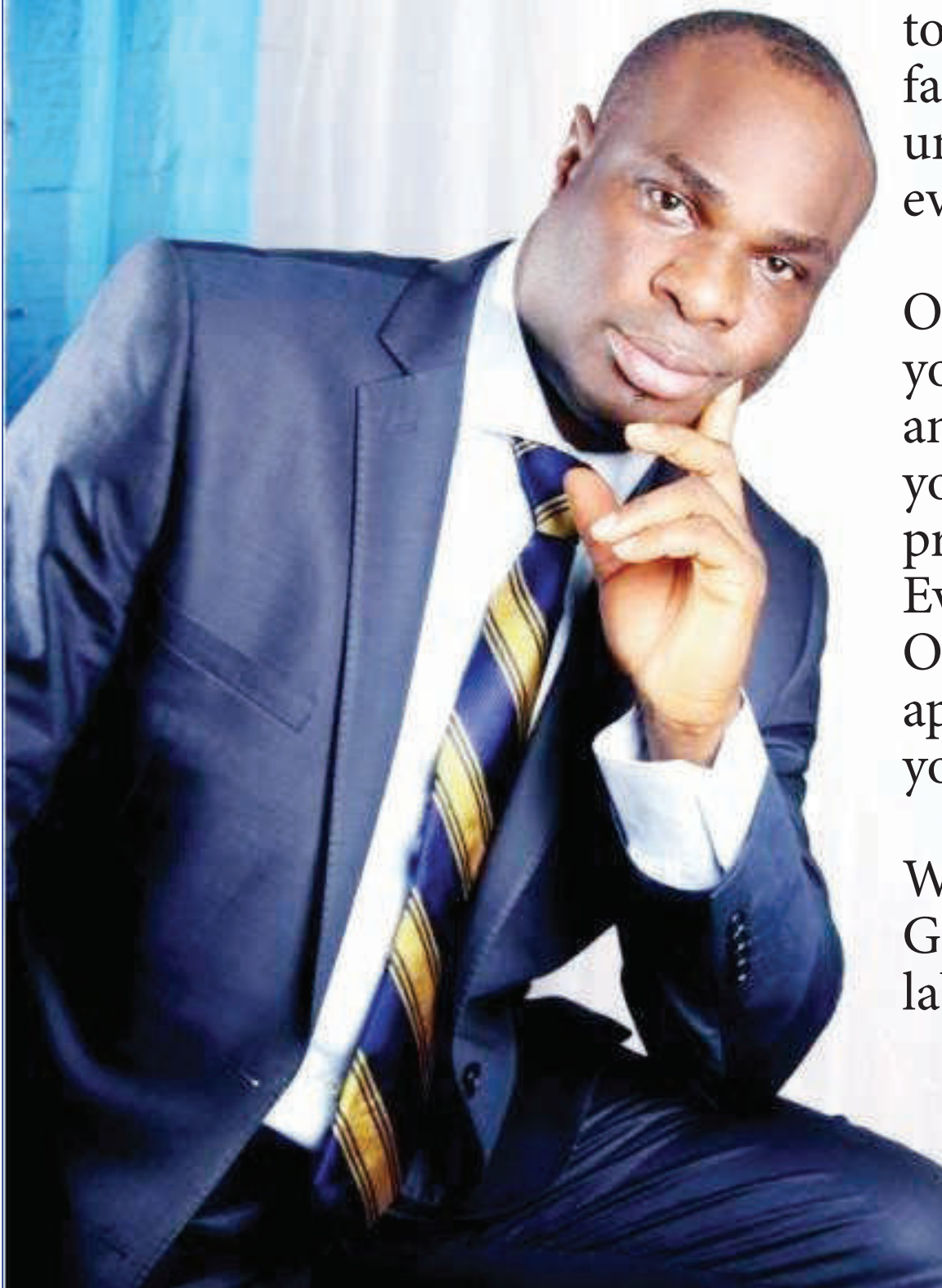


Happy 55th birthday to our Group Chairman,
Hon. Joel-Onowakpo, Thomas Ewomazino.
On this day we ask that God will grant you grace to live
and touch more lives.
Thank you for your service to humanity.
We are grateful.

From all your staff members at:
Yaaaglo Holdings Ltd & Joel-Onowakpo & Co

TO OUR SWEET DADDY

@ 55



Happy 55th birthday to the best husband, father, grandfather, uncle and brother ever.

On this occasion of your birthday, we pray and ask God to give you divine health and protection as you age. Every member of Joel-Onowakpo's family is appreciating you for your love for US.

We love you so much. God bless you for your labour over and for us.

**Hon. Joel-Onowakpo,
Thomas Ewomazino**

Signed:
Gloria and Clarkson,
for the family.

Nigerians can't continue to live in mutual suspicion - Obi

● Inaugurates Support Network coordinators

By TUNDE JOSHUA, ABUJA

A presidential aspirant of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and former governor of Anambra State, Mr Peter Obi has lamented the level at which Nigerians are presently divided along ethnic and religious lines and resolved that Nigerians can no longer leave in mutual suspicious of each other.

He said the country need a president who can unify the numerous ethnic groups across the country. The president Nigeria need in 2023, according to him must a unifier because the country has been badly divided.

Obi who spoke in Abuja at the inauguration of national, zonal and states coordinators of the Peter Obi

Support Network yesterday said that the country can't move forward when there is no trust among citizens.

He said, "we can't continue to leave in mutual suspicious of each other in this country, we must love each other, we must build a country where everybody is treated fairly, equally and Justly."

"There is nothing to share again, let start taking people out of poverty, once you are able to take people out of poverty, you can go home and rest."

"I am pleading with you people to continue to work, you are not only working for Peter Obi, but for the betterment of the nation."

The presidential aspirant expressed his readiness to make Nigeria a more united country and improve on living conditions of citizenry by alleviating

poverty and creating wealth.

He said as a governor of Anambra State, he took the state from number 26 to number one in education and provided good health care in the state.

"When I was campaigning to become governor of Anambra, I said when I become the governor, there will be difference, Anambra was number 26 in the country in the education sector, but I took the state to number one position, I built quality health care for the people of the state when I was the governor," he said.

After the his remarks, the former governor inaugurated coordinators for the Support Network group for his Presidential aspiration to take the message to the nook and cranny of Nigeria.



Obi

Resumption of voters registration in Imo misleading - INEC



Prof. Yakubu.

By TUNDE JOSHUA, ABUJA

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has described as misleading, news report that said the Commission has resumed the Continuous Voter Registration (CVR) in places where the exercise was earlier suspended in Imo State.

The Trumpet recalled that following the unfortunate incident in Imo State in which INEC staff was killed by gunmen in Ihitte Uboma Local Government Area, and reports of insecurity in other parts of the State, the Commission suspended the ongoing voter registration exercise in all the 54 additional centres created to facilitate the registration of voters across the state.

National Commissioner and Chairman, Information and Voter Education, Barr. Festus Okoye said the suspension subsists as the position of the Commission has not changed.

He said "the exercise is still confined to our State and Local Government Area offices except in Orsu, Njaba and Ihitte Uboma Local Government Areas where it is suspended indefinitely."

"While the Commission is not unmindful of the imperative of giving every eligible Nigerian the opportunity to register and vote in future elections, the safety and security of citizens involved in the exercise is a paramount concern."

The Commission appealed to the public to discountenance the purported resumption

of the CVR in the three LGAs of Orsu, Njaba and Ihitte Uboma, stressing that "such statements are capable of misleading the public and further jeopardizing the safety of registrants and officials as well as the security of the Commission's facilities."

Okoye said at the appropriate time, the Commission will announce any new decision on the matter after consultation with the security agencies and critical stakeholders.

"The Commission has an organized and official means of communication and has been upfront with providing information to the general public."

"For the avoidance of doubt, the Commission has not appointed any unofficial spokesperson on any its activities," he said.

Clerics ask APC to waive N100m presidential fee for Ayom, others

By TUNDE JOSHUA, ABUJA

Clerics under the aegis of the Middlebelt Interfaith Clerics Association of Nigeria has called on the All Progressives Congress (APC) to shelve the N100 million nomination fee for a presidential aspirant, Moses Ayom, who declared his interest for the Presidency under APC.

The clergymen said credible servants of God who have genuine interest to serve the country should not be denied the opportunity of achieving their ambitions to contest by the party's high cost of nomination fees'.

The Association which comprise of christian and Islamic clerics said it has a number of its members willing to contest elective positions on the platform of APC, hence the party should waive nomination fee for them.

It would be recalled that Ayom's declaration in Benue for the presidency as well as his onward presentation to the TIV traditional council were equally sponsored by the clerics. The clerics were also the ones that anointed Ayom as a Reverend.

The Middlebelt Interfaith Clerics Association of Nigeria which paid a courtesy call on the National Chairman of the APC, Senator Abdullahi Adamu, in his office in Abuja on yesterday, pleaded that because it's members work as non profit organisation, it was practically impossible for any of them to raise the money to buy the nomination forms.

Director General of the Association, Bishop Edward Williams Chanomi, who led the team

said, "we the Interfaith body wishes to use this same medium to request through the intervention of your good office, that as you have given the Women and the Physically Challenged Aspirants Waivers, that you will also in the spirit of love give to men and women aspirants who are Clerics of all faith, waivers to enable them exercise constitutional rights without inhibitions."

Disclosing the special interest of the Interfaith body in Ayom's presidential aspiration, Chanomi said, "we want to present to you with particular interest, one of our colleagues cleric who is a presidential Aspirant in the person of Rev. Moses Ayom, who we believe has what it takes to take Nigeria to another level of development."

"We wish to request that you grant him along with other clergy aspirants this unique privilege so that they can also effectively participate in this process without disenfranchisement."

Ayom is an international businessman, who has been honoured with the title "Outstanding Advocate of China/Nigeria Relations awarded to him by the Chinese government."

According to him, "as Clerics, we are Charitable and non profit Organizations from the two leading Religions in the Country. We reiterate that as many clerics who are members of APC be given free tickets to run for any elective posts in the forthcoming elections in 2023."

On the process that led to Ayom's

emergence as the Association's preferred candidate, he said "we are elated to inform you sir, that we were the very first to do a thorough research and find a true Nigerian, Rev. Moses Ayom whom we found to be very qualified to be the president of the Federal Republic of Nigeria."

"Some months ago, a delegation of christian Bishops came to prevail on a true Nigerian Rev. Moses Ayom whom we believe to be one of the best choices to be elected the president of Nigeria. Shortly after, a delegation of Muslim Clerics of Imams also came with the same message to him, this gave birth to the Interfaith council who have been going round the country to canvas support for this our preferred candidate. The South East/South South youths, women and the physically challenged also endorsed Ayom for the presidency."

The clerics had said that they had to embark on fasting and special prayers for God to reveal to them the person who would take Nigeria away from the path of extinction adding that at the end of their search, Moses Ayom was revealed.

On his part, Ayom had been consistent on the disadvantages of imposing exorbitant fees on aspirants to political offices.

Ayom, who is the President/ CEO of Federal Housing Authority- KETTI investment and Development company, which District was recently revalidated by the Federal Executive Council (FEC) had equally spoken on the need for the APC leadership to heed the



Ayom

advice of President Muhammadu Buhari that the ticket of the party should not be given to the highest bidder.

The presidential aspirant noted that the N100 million nomination fee has taken the contest far above the reach of many APC aspirants who had genuine interest and better plans and commitment for the upliftment of the country. Examples of such categories of people are Academicians, Journalist, retirees/pensioners, etc

"With the fixing of N100 million fee for the presidential nomination form, it is obvious that only the money bags would aspire while other potential good leaders have been blocked," the aspirant stressed," he said

Alleged N266.5m Fraud: Fake army general loses bail application

By PAUL MICHAEL, ABUJA

A fake Army General, one Bolarinwa Abiodun, who is under trial by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) for claiming to be nominated for the office of Chief of Army Staff (COAS) by President Muhammadu Buhari, thereby defrauding a Kodef Clearing Resources about N266.5m, has been denied bail by Justice Oluwatoyin Taiwo of the Special Offences Court sitting in Ikeja, Lagos.

Abiodun, who is undergoing prosecution on a 13-count charge bordering on obtaining money by false pretence, forgery of documents, and possession of documents containing false pretence, among others, had earlier applied for bail. He, however, loses on the bail application on Monday, April 25.

The Court refused his bail application on the grounds that the prosecution was able to show that Abiodun was a flight-risk.

A statement on Tuesday by the EFCC spokesperson, Wilson Uwujaren said, the Lagos Zonal Command of the EFCC, had, on April 11, 2022 arraigned the defendant on offences contrary to Section 1 (3) of the Advance Fee Fraud and Other Related Offences Act 2006.

"Justice Oluwatoyin Taiwo of the Special Offences Court sitting in Ikeja, Lagos, on Monday, April 25, 2022, dismissed the bail application filed by one Bolarinwa Abiodun, a fake Army General, who is being prosecuted on a



Bolarinwa Abiodun

13-count charge bordering on obtaining money by false pretence, forgery of documents, and possession of documents containing false pretence to the tune of N266, 500,000.

"The Lagos Zonal Command of the EFCC, had, on April 11, 2022 arraigned the defendant on offences contrary to Section 1 (3) of the Advance Fee Fraud and Other Related Offences Act 2006; Section 363 of the Criminal Law of Lagos State 2015 and Section 6 of the Advance Fee Fraud and other Related Offences Act No 14 of 2006, respectively," Uwujaren said.

The defendant is being accused of making false representations to the complainant, Kodef Clearing Resources,

that the President Buhari, had short-listed him and one other to be appointed as the COAS and that he needed a short grant to "press and process the appointment."

Abiodun, who was arrested at his house in the Alagbado area of Lagos State on Wednesday, January 12, 2022, also allegedly forged a letter of appointment as COAS purportedly signed by the President and showed the same to the victim to further prove his claim.

In the said letter, he claimed that he needed to pay a certain amount of money into the coffers of the Federal Government of Nigeria, as part of the requirements for the appointment as COAS.

Abiodun was also alleged to have, in May 2020, forged a Nigeria Army Identity Card with serial number 387140, claiming the same to have been issued to him from the Nigerian Army, and another forged Letter of Recommendation purportedly signed by Chief Olusegun Obasanjo recommending one Adebayo Rasak Adebola, with recruitment No 77RRI/OG/556/0032555 and Adeogun Emmanuel Adesola with recruitment No 77RRI/OG/352/0123751 for employment into the Nigeria Army.

He is also accused of being in possession of a forged Certificate of Confirmation dated November 7, 2018, purporting the same to have emanated from the Nigerian Army Headquarters.

EFCC's committed to fight against money laundering, terrorism financing - Bawa

● Says real estate sector vulnerable for money laundering

The Executive Chairman of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Abdurashheed Bawa, has restated the commitment of the Commission towards combating money laundering and terrorism financing in the real estate sector of the economy.

Bawa stated this in Abuja on Monday at a workshop organized by the Inter-Governmental Action Group against Money Laundering in West Africa (GIABA). He added that the Nigeria Evaluation Report shows that the real estate sector is the second most vulnerable sector to money laundering practices in Nigeria.

According to him, places like Abuja, Port Harcourt, Kano, Lagos are some of the major cities where properties are regularly purchased mostly in cash and often in foreign currencies, with no questions asked by anybody, about the legality of such transactions.

He said, "Just last year in July, the EFCC launched an App called 'The Eagle Eye' which has eased the processes of reporting economic and financial crimes and also exposed the flow of illicit funds in the real estate sector.

"This indeed has provided useful intelligence and goes to show the level of commitment that EFCC has in the real estate sector."

Bawa, who spoke through his Chief of Staff, Hadiza Gamawa Zubairu, further stressed that based on the existing realities of the real estate sector, the EFCC will leave no stone unturned in combating money laundering practices in the sector.



Abdurashheed Bawa

She restated the readiness of the EFCC to collaborate with relevant stakeholders in its efforts toward combating the menace, while also strengthening the capacity of the Special Control Unit against Money Laundering (SCUML) to

effectively discharge its responsibilities in enforcing compliance in the real estate sector.

The EFCC boss added that loopholes being exploited to launder funds in the real estate sector are caused by weak regulations, lack of strict parameters for business practices by the regulatory bodies, and poor compliance with laws, among others.

On his part, the Director of the Nigerian Financial Intelligence Unit (NFIU), Modibbo Tukur, called for collaboration and coordination among agencies, locally and regionally, in combating money laundering and illicit financial flows.

Tukur proposed stronger legislative regulations, including the need for every citizen in GIABA member states to be linked to a unified identification number, in order to make it easier to track culprits.

In his own submissions, the secretary, Real Estate Developers Association of Nigeria (REDAN), Yunusa Shuaibu, called for stricter regulation and coordination in the real estate sector, stressing that "the sector is currently free for all".

He added that "We are ready to cooperate at all times to achieving this feat and this is why we decided to sponsor a bill at the National Assembly."

Director of Evaluation and Compliance, GIABA, Bruno Nduka, thanked Bawa for taking interest in the activities of GIABA and supporting the body.

He said the real estate sector is one of the main drivers of economic growth and the engine of social development across GIABA- member states.

EFCC arrests member of syndicate for duping Kwara Monarch N33.39m

By PAUL MICHAEL, ABUJA

The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) has said its Ilorin Zonal Command has arrested a member of a syndicate that defrauded a revered traditional ruler in Kwara State, His Royal Highness, Idris Sero Abubakar, about N33.39million.

The EFCC spokesperson, Wilson Uwujaren, on Monday gave the name of the arrested suspected as Fidelis Poor, a 30-year-old man from Stwue in Konshisha local government area

of Benue State.

His arrest followed a petition dated November 30, 2021, by HRH Abubakar, the Emir of Okuta in Baruten Local Government Area of Kwara State and a former member of the House of Representatives over an alleged fraud by a syndicate.

According to Uwujaren, "The Ilorin Zonal Command of the EFCC has arrested one Fidelis Poor, a member of a syndicate who allegedly connived to defraud a First-Class Traditional Ruler

in Kwara State, His Royal Highness Idris Sero Abubakar, to the tune of N33,399,999 (Thirty-Three Million, Three Hundred and Ninety-Nine Thousand, Nine Hundred and Ninety Nine Naira).

"Poor, 30, who hails from Stwue in Konshisha Local Government Area of Benue State alongside other suspects (still at large) allegedly conspired to swindle the monarch on the guise that he had a container of goods meant to be used for the development of Okuta Community due be cleared at

Nnamdi Azikwe International Airport in Abuja.

"In a petition dated November 30, 2021, HRH Abubakar, who is the Emir of Okuta in Baruten Local Government Area of Kwara State and a former member of the House of Representatives alleged that a group of fraudsters who operate as syndicate called him on phone sometime last year that he had a container to clear in Abuja and requested for the said amount for clearance."

Domestic violence and death of a spouse: The Osinachi matter

Last week, Gospel Music singer, Mrs. Osinachi Peter Nwachukwu died suddenly in circumstances that were at best controversial. Conflicting reports followed the announcement of her death. The narrative emerging however is that Mrs Osinachi Peter Nwachukwu was a victim of long-running domestic violence. From the published accounts on social media, print and electronic media, Osinachi's husband allegedly had a practice of battering and brutalising her, even going to the extent of ordering their children to beat her too. In a report, one of the children was quoted as saying: "Our father seized mummy's car. He said that beating a woman is good; on one occasion, he pushed her out of the car: "we do not know how mummy got back home. He would pin mummy down and encourage us to beat her."

The evil of domestic violence ranges from battering, thrashings, torture, acid bath and rape which most times lead to death. It is estimated that one in every three women experiences domestic violence at the hands of the very persons, who claim to love them. Lagos State recorded 10,007 cases of domestic violence from May 2019 to August 26, 2021, according to Moyosore Onigbanjo, Lagos State Commissioner of Justice and Attorney – General. The case of late Osinachi has jolted us all out of our reverie to a shocking reality, that was either conspiratorially ignored either due to cultural, primordial sentiment or religious considerations or sheer ignorance.

Domestic Violence (DV) can be attributed to many factors, depending on the environment and the level of consciousness of the players involved. But primarily and universally, they range from substance abuse, economic pressure, sexual demands, poor parenting, and psychogenic factors. The preponderance of DV in Lagos State, the economic nerve centre of the nation indicates economic pressure is certainly not the major driver of the phenomena. Studies by Psychologists conclude that that abusive partners, particularly husbands, are

products of faulty parenting that starts from childhood. When a three-year-old son gets angry over food he does not like, throws it away and the mother shrugs it off, that is a bad precedent. When your toddler hits a person for a whatever reason and he is not discipline, he will think it is acceptable behaviour. When he grows up this way, it is like a storm gradually gathering, to be unleashed in the future.

In recent times a new variable, with dire consequences to domestic harmony was introduced into the mix. This is the Covid-19 pandemic. A report titled 'Measuring the shadow pandemic: Violence against women during COVID-19' revealed that 45 per cent of women from the countries where the research was conducted have been exposed directly

or indirectly to at least one form of violence. The research was conducted in 13 countries namely Albania, Bangladesh, Cameroon, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Jordan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Morocco, Nigeria, Paraguay, Thailand, Ukraine. Exposure to violence was highest among women in Kenya (80%), Morocco (69%), Jordan (49%), and Nigeria (48%). According to the report, about one in four women is feeling less safe at home while existing conflict has increased within households since the pandemic started. When women were asked why they felt unsafe at home, they cited physical abuse as one of the reasons.

How do we detect victims of domestic violence early enough to avoid negative outcomes and the other psychological consequences? Early warning signs which friends, family members, and co-workers can look for if they suspect a person, they care about is the victim of domestic abuse include frequent absences from school or work, numerous unexplainable injuries, low self-esteem, a change in their personality, fear of conflicts, passive-aggressive behaviour, blaming him- or herself for the problems in their relationship, isolation from others. Signs for victims to consider as red flags in a relationship include feeling demeaned, assaulted, or excessively controlled by their partner. If convinced a partner is a victim, the family and friends should show empathy and understanding. Counselling must be employed to deal with domestic abuse. If the abuse persists separation should be an option.

To minimise the risks of domestic violence, the society and government at large, should prioritise girl education, gender based economic empowerment programmes, as women are more often the victims of domestic violence, introduce toll free helpline for victims and their relations to report abuse, introduce community - based socialization programmes for youth and families as well as promote a schooling environment that promotes anger management and prevention of abusiveness in any relationship.



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For a very long time now, there have been intense speculations that ex-President Goodluck Jonathan is under immense pressure to contest the 2023 presidential election on the platform of the very party that kicked him out of office in 2015, the All Progressive Party, APC. Most Nigerians thought that it was a huge joke. This was because he came to power in 2011 on the ticket of the current main opposition political party, the People Democratic Party, PDP. It was, therefore, generally believed that he would never contemplate leaving a party that made him deputy governor, governor, vice president and president. Moreover, it was inconceivable that he would ever think of crossing over to APC, which thoroughly destroyed his reputation and rubbished his achievements in order to push him out of office in 2015. To say the least, he was roundly disgraced and humiliated. He was consequently given the ignominious name of: "a clueless president."

His only saving grace was that he 'magnanimously' accepted defeat and handed over power to his successor, President Muhammadu Buhari, peacefully. That probably explains the relatively cordial relationship between the two of them since 2015.

That notwithstanding, there has been no concrete proof that the former president has officially joined APC, let alone using it as a platform to return to power in 2023.

But the events of the last one week seem to have proven all that to the contrary. Mid week, his posters for president on the platform of

APC flooded Abuja, particularly at the party's Secretariat at Blantyre Street, Wuse 2. Just about the same time, his reliable and cerebral former spokesman, Dr Reuben Abuti, was reported to have posted on his verified Facebook page that "Ex President Goodluck Jonathan has accepted to join the APC to pursue his presidential ambition."

In a swift reaction, another consistent and dependable former media aide of the Ex-president, Reno Omokri, debunked the report. He said his former boss never authorized Abati to push out that statement. "At best it is a figment of the imagination of the famous journalist," he added. The question is: who do we now believe?

As this claim and counterclaim were going on between the two former aides, who are still very close to their former boss, various groups started besieging Jonathan's office in Maitama, Abuja, to persuade him to run for the Presidency in 2023.

Last Friday, precisely a day after his posters flooded Abuja, a group by the name, Youth Compatriots of Nigeria, YCN, filled five big buses with youths and women, and stormed his office. The Coalition of Northern Youths, were part of the demonstrators. They were chanting: "Run Goodluck Run". They also carried placards with inscriptions such as: "Declare now, Goodluck, you must run"; "Jonathan, please run" among others.

The group leader, Mayor Samuel said that "Jonathan has been tested and proven to be very capable, hence Nigerians want him back."

Later on, the former president invited their leaders in. He thanked them. He told them that

2023: Ex-president Jonathan, be wary of sycophants

he wasn't sure whether he would run. He, however, asked them to "watch out." To "watch out" is certainly pregnant with meaning.

Two days earlier, another group called Citizens Network For Peace and Development, CNDP, also besieged his office to urge him to run on the platform of the APC. It specifically said that Jonathan "is the best man for the job". It went further to issue a veiled threat that "anything short of Jonathan's ticket, will cost APC 2023 Presidency".

It will be difficult to absolve Jonathan and his staunch supporters from surreptitiously having a hand in the unusual upsurge in the call for him to run on the ticket of the APC. His supporters are saying that he would only come out openly if President Buhari promises him an automatic ticket. This is certainly day dreaming. Only last week, during the meeting of APC's National Executive Council, NEC, Buhari warned the party against the imposition of candidates. So, he will never do such a thing, brazenly. Moreover, other heavy weights of the party like its national leader, Jagaban Bola Tinubu and the Vice President, Prof Yemi Osinbajo, among others, who are already presidential aspirants will resist any imposition of a "stranger" with the last drop of their blood. Indeed, virtually all the APC's faithful will reject it outright.

Even top influencers like Ohanaeze and Afenifere, the all-embracing umbrella groups of the Igbo and Yoruba respectively, have cautioned Jonathan. They warned that he should not allow himself to be lured into APC. That the consequences would be devastating for him and his loyalists.

I think that for some years now, Jonathan and his wife, Patience, have been sleeping well after

the nightmarish experience they went through immediately they left office. Any attempt for him to stage a come back will make his numerous critics dig up all the heart-rending allegations against his administration which made life unbearable for him, his family and supporters.

He will be reminded that, during his administration, the country lost a whopping \$32 billion, which was 16 percent of our total Gross Domestic Products, GDP, to corruption. He will be reminded that he illegally withdrew \$20 billion from the NNPC account in the Central Bank to oil his political machine. He will be reminded that Boko Haram captured a very large territory, as big as Belgium, hosted their flag and named it Islamic Caliphate. He will be reminded of the billion of naira meant to equip our military, but was loaded into a private plane and flown to a neighbouring country. He will be told that under his watch, 276 girls of Chibok secondary school were kidnapped and his indelible response came from the crocodile tears from his wife of: "there is God ooo". He will also be reminded of the Dasuki's uncommon corruption escapes, which should make the Guinness Book of Records. And of course, they won't forget to remind him of his wife's stealing of huge public funds, plus much more.

Ex-president Jonathan should, therefore, not be deceived by the sycophants who are luring him into a deadly trap. He will do himself a lot of good if he ignores all those clamouring for his return to power on the deceptive ground that he was a better president than Buhari. He should beware of the Ides of March.

• Chief Araka is Chairman of the Editorial Board of The Trumpet..

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The inevitable parallel between literature and reality bulks large in the social visions of a conscientious observer. Within the context of literature's sustained tyrannical identity as an art form, one is always compelled to respond positively to its beckoning hands for guidance in social commentary and analysis. Literature does not struggle to define historical or contemporary reality. That is why Prince Hamlet's famous soliloquy in Shakespeare's play Hamlet immediately comes to mind when one considers the wavering potentialities of the 2023 general elections in Nigeria. Caught in a dilemma of choice between life and death, Prince Hamlet blurts out 'to be or not to be, that is the question'. The quote revives emotions of chaos, disarray, and inertia towards the 2023 general elections in Nigeria. Put in another way, it can be interpreted as - will it happen or will it not happen? That popular phrase by Hamlet drags us to a crossroad, the best locale for Esu, the Yoruba primal god of indecision, confusion, and uncertainty. Will there be election in Nigeria next year or not? That is the big question.

I am not unmindful of renowned legal luminary, Afe Babalola's insistence that the 2023 general elections in Nigeria should be postponed. I am also aware that the General Overseer of the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG) Enoch Adeboye recently avowed that God has not revealed to him that elections will hold in Nigeria next year. If

indeed elections will hold in Nigeria next year, the people have a responsibility to critically engage issues and educate a public obviously caught in the web of political ignorance. If in the cause of the critical analysis of these issues it becomes clear that elections should not hold, then so be it but the country must march forward towards a collectively determined favourable destination.

The 2023 general election is more significant because it will either signpost the revival of an ailing country or its final death and subsequent burial. It is so because there seems to be a near general consensus that the Mohammadu Buhari APC - led government is a colossal failure on all fronts. Every indices of failure in governance defiantly stare Nigerians in the face and on a daily basis. It is futile and at once needless to recount all the disembowelling, eviscerating conditions in the country. Such indulges numb the sensibilities and stymie the reasoning faculties of a well disposed person. In the last seven years, the country has bled and dangerously hovered over the proverbial precipice. APC and Buhari have connived to liquidate every shred of socio-political and economic association in the most populous Black Country on earth. These conditions make the 2023 general elections very interesting and also ominously intriguing. However, the 2023 general elections in Nigeria remind one of Hamlet's soliloquy 'to be or not to be, that is the question'.

Election 2023: To be or not to be, that is the question

Looking at the APC led Buhari administration, it is safe to say that no APC candidate has any moral right to ask Nigerians for votes in next year's election. Given the laceration of the Nigerian polity and all the attendant anguish, simply given that this government has plunged Nigerians into the abyss of gloomy despondency and despair, it would amount to a reckless insult to ask Nigerians to vote for an APC candidate next year. In that way, Yemi Osinbajo, Bola Tinubu, Rotimi Amaechi and other APC aspirants have no business contesting for the number one position in the country. Do this people think that Nigerians are stupid?

Those who isolate Osinbajo as being part of the seven years of Buhari's tragic government must also remember the significant role played by Tinubu in enthrone seven years of hellish regime on the polity. Yes, Osinbajo, otherwise a very brilliant, eloquent and qualified candidate, is undeniably stained with the dirt of APC rule of death in the last seven years. Bola Tinubu is as culpable as Osinbajo in the matter. In fact, Tinubu should share more of the blame because he campaigned and foisted Buhari on Nigerians. Osinbajo may have been misconstrued when he avowed that he will continue from where Buhari stopped, but as an intellectual talking to dispossessed and helpless Nigerians, to promise to advance a Buhari culture is an unprocessed, raw insult on tender nerves. Tinubu, the self-acclaimed landlord of Lagos should please stop the insult of aspiring to become the president of Nigeria because it is his life ambition. Tinubu is APC and APC is Tinubu. He has always supported the current government even when it is clear that Nigerians were groaning under an emasculating order. Anybody in any capacity that has enabled these tragic conditions in the country under APC

should hands up in apology to Nigerians and go home for proper restitution.

PDP has a number of candidates who are jokers and those who are serious contenders. It is indefensible that Atiku Abubakar, a man who has been a former vice-president of Nigeria and supervised momentous economic haemorrhage in the country is still aspiring to become the president. What new things will he bring to the table? These people are simply asking for too much, testing the patience of Nigerians. Atiku is a Northerner, I expect him as a statesman, a position which he has adamantly refused to occupy, to respect on the grounds of morality a rotational scheme that will see a candidate from the South-East emerge as the party's flag bearer in the next election.

That reminds me of Peter Obi an excellent administrator and frugal personality whose record of economic performance speaks volumes. But there is a big challenge with the Peter Obi candidacy. Obi's region, the South-East is currently caught in the throes of violence unleashed on the entire zone by the dare devil unknown gunmen. The unknown gunmen have made it clear that there will be no elections in the whole South-East next year. Recently, a young Igbo man was brutally assassinated by these unknown gunmen while he was discharging his duties as an INEC staff. If there are no elections in the South-East next year, how does Obi hope to become the president of Nigeria, with the votes from other regions? His silence on this matter is disturbing. Nigerians must decide what they want. To be or not to be, that is the question.

• Dr Promise Adiele is a member of the Trumpet Editorial Board.

NDLEA arrests alleged baron behind Abba Kyari's IRT N3b tramadol saga

■ Says billionaire launders money with 103 bank accounts

By **PAUL MICHAEL**, Defence Editor, Abuja and **ALEX OLISE**, Lagos

A alleged drug baron, Chief Afam Mallinson Emmanuel Ukatu, who is allegedly behind a N3 billion tramadol deal that involves the Intelligence Response Team (IRT) of embattled suspended Deputy Commissioner of Police, DCP Abba Kyari, has been arrested by the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA).

This was contained in a statement issued on Monday by the Spokesperson of the agency, Femi Babafemi, adding that Chief Ukatu, who has been evading arrest since last year, was finally arrested on at MM2 terminal of the Lagos airport, Ikeja on Wednesday 13th April while departing for Abuja.

According to Babafemi, Chief Ukatu has been a major importer of large consignments of different brands and high dosages of illicit

drugs like Tramadol Hydrochloride, ranging from 120mg, 200mg, 225mg and 250mg.

The drug baron entered trouble after two of his staff, Pius Enidom and Sunday Ibekwete, were arrested by IRT team with five cartons of Tramadol 225mg on May 4, 2021. They were subsequently led by Kyari's men to Mallinson's warehouse at Ojota in Lagos where 197 additional Cartons of Tramadol 225mg were seized by the IRT Team. The monetary value of the 202 cartons of Tramadol seized from Mallinson in one day was over N3billion, The Trumpet gathered.

However, after the seizure, the Kyari's IRT team transferred only 12 Cartons of the Tramadol with one truck and a suspect to the Lagos Command of the NDLEA, leaving 190 cartons unaccounted for.

The statement further revealed that the billionaire drug baron operates about 103 bank accounts, mostly used for money laundering.

Babafemi said, "Billionaire drug baron behind the N3billion Tramadol deal involving the embattled suspended Deputy Commissioner of Police, Abba Kyari-led Intelligence Response Team, IRT, Chief Afam Mallinson Emmanuel Ukatu has been arrested by operatives of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency, NDLEA.

"After months of surveillance and evading arrest, Ukatu who is Chairman of Mallinson Group of Companies was eventually nabbed onboard a flight to Abuja at the MM2 terminal of the Lagos airport, Ikeja on Wednesday 13th April.

"Investigations reveal he's been a major importer of large consignments of different

brands and high dosages of Tramadol Hydrochloride, ranging from 120mg, 200mg, 225mg and 250mg, all of which are illicit. Ukatu owns pharmaceutical and plastic manufacturing companies, which he used as a cover to import illicit drugs into Nigeria. This is in addition to operating 103 bank accounts, most of which are used to launder money.

"Ukatu came under watch last year after five cartons of Tramadol 225mg were seized from his staff on 4th May 2021 when he sent them to sell to undercover police officers (unknown to Ukatu) from the then Kyari-led IRT of the Nigeria Police, Ikeja Lagos. The price of a carton of Tramadol was negotiated at N17million each as against the then black market value that ranged between N18million and N20million a carton in Lagos.

"After the arrest of Ukatu's staff: Pius Enidom and Sunday Ibekwete, Kyaris men were then led by the suspects to Mallinson's warehouse at Ojota in Lagos where 197 additional Cartons of Tramadol 225mg were seized by the IRT Team. The monetary value of the 202 cartons of Tramadol seized from Mallinson in one day was over N3billion.

"Three weeks after the seizure, the Kyari's IRT team transferred only 12 Cartons of the Tramadol with one truck and a suspect to the Lagos Command of the NDLEA, leaving 190 cartons unaccounted for. After over eight months of following the lead, anti-narcotic officers of the Agency eventually arrested Ukatu at the Lagos airport on 13th April 2022. Kyari and four top members of his team are already facing trial for a different but similar offence at a Federal High Court in Abuja."

Policeman shoots two dead at Lagos party, others injured

■ CP orders manhunt, pledges justice

By **ALEX OLISE**, Lagos

Lagos Commissioner of Police, CP Alabi Abidoun has ordered a manhunt on the trigger-happy alcoholic Police Officer who kills two people at a birthday celebration hosted by a businessman in Egbeda area of Lagos.

The alcoholic cop was attempting to give a gun salute to the businessman when he misfired, killing two people and injuring two more.

According to a witness, John Okeke, the incident occurred at La Silva Bar, Gowon Estate, Egbeda in Alimosho around 9pm, "we were celebrating in a birthday party of our friend, as he was coming out to exchange pleasantries with some of his friends when the Policeman who was drunk was trying to offer gun salute to the man, Ifeanyi (aka Asiwaju) of Computer Village. While shooting, the bullet hit some people. Two people died while two others were injured. When the policeman saw the atrocity that he committed, he took to his heels.

According to a Police officer who spoke on the condition of anonymity, "The Commissioner of Police has declared a manhunt for the trigger happy Policeman. It was gathered that the policeman was not on duty, the police boss is interested to know how a policeman who was off duty got the rifle he used that night".

It was learnt that two of the guests were arrested by policemen attached to Gowon Estate Division after the bar's owner, Sylvanus Chukwuezie made a complaint.

However, Lagos State Police spokesperson Benjamin Hundeyin, a superintendent of police (SP), said details of the incidents were still sketchy but assured that the command would not rest on its oars until everyone culpable was brought to justice.

'Why police declared 12 wanted'

By **ALEX OLISE**, Lagos

The police high command in Abuja has given reasons for declaring twelve persons wanted in connection with the murderous act in Isu-Aniocha area of Anambra state of Nigeria. The twelve suspects the Police said were declared wanted for conspiracy, murder, kidnapping, terrorism and unlawful possession of firearm; amongst others.

The declaration followed the dastardly act on January 9, 2022 during which two men were shot dead at a wedding ceremony and beheaded. The bodies were later set ablaze beyond recognition while others were kidnapped.

A statement signed by the Force public relations officer, CSP Olumuyiwa Adejobe and made available to The Trumpet said there were reasonable suspicion for declaring the suspects wanted in connection with the murderous act.

He said, "The Nigeria Police Force hereby declare wanted the following twelve (12) persons in connection with a case of conspiracy, murder, armed robbery, act of terrorism, kidnapping, cultism and unlawful possession of firearms, house breaking, burglary, malicious damage, and conduct likely to cause breach of public peace in Isu-Aniocha, Awka North LGA of Anambra State, Nigeria. The suspects are: Edward Okoye (aka Stone), Donatus Okeke, Onyemazi Ngini, Onyebuchi Nwekezu Okoye, Nonso Eboh ix. Chukwuka Onyibor, Chukwujekwu Anaeokwu, Chuka Ilodigwe Chinedu Nwoye Okoye, Nonso Awusionwu Obinna, Cosmos Okonkwo and Chukwujekwu Okoye



Emmanuel Ukatu

Navy announces success against oil theft in N'Delta

By **ALEX OLISE**, Lagos

The Nigerian Navy has said its newly launched operation Dakartad Da Barawo against crude oil theft in the Niger Delta area has yielded success as several refining sites have been deactivated while thousands of liters of stolen and illegally refined crude oil were recovered.

This is contained in a statement by the Director of Naval Information, Navy Commodore AO Ayo Vaughan made available to *The Trumpet*.

According to the statement, 7 large cooking ovens, 10 large metal storage tanks and drums all laden with about 400,000 litres of illegally refined AGO and 20,000 litres of suspected illegally refined PMS were discovered.

The statement reads in full: "In furtherance of Operation DAKATAR DA BARAWO (OPDDB) launched by the Nigerian Navy on 1 April 2022, the Service's unrelenting effort to check increasing Crude Oil Theft (COT) and related acts of economic sabotage has recorded more arrests and seizures between 15-April 23, 2012 being the third week of the operation. On 15 April 2022, Nigerian Navy Ship (NNS) DELTA at Warri, deactivated an Illegal Refining Site (IRS) around Sara creek.

"The IRS had 16 ovens, 16 metal storage tanks and 3 wide pits filled with about 500,000 litres of illegally refined AGO, as well as 700,000 litres of stolen crude oil, a generator and 4 pumping machines. Also, an IRS at Asugbo creek in Warri was discovered with 6 ovens, 12 metal storage tanks and 5 large pits all containing about 600,000 litres of stolen crude oil including 200,000 litres of illegally refined AGO and about 150,000 litres of sludge.

"Similarly, sequel to a series of air reconnaissance, Forward Operating Base (FOB) FORMOSO in Bayelsa State on 19 April

2022, raided an IRS at Ereweibio creek in Brass LGA. Accordingly, 7 large cooking ovens, 10 large metal storage tanks and drums all laden with about 400,000 litres of illegally refined AGO and 20,000 litres of suspected illegally refined PMS were discovered.

"The site also had 5 large pits holding approximately 700,000 litres of stolen crude oil. Equally, 2 pumping machines, one gasoline generator, one submersible pump and one chainsaw machine were discovered at the site and destroyed in situ. Meanwhile, on 21 April 2022, an IRS at Lelemu creek in Warri South-West was discovered During the operation, 19 ovens, 26 metal storage tanks and 2 dugout pits laden with about 250,000 litres of suspected stolen crude oil and 50,000 litres of illegally refined AGO were destroyed.

To ensure effective deactivation of IRS, NNS DELTA on 21 April 2022 conducted swamp buggy operations during which an earlier identified IRS around Egwa creek in Warri was destroyed. During the operation, 16 ovens, 31 metal storage tanks and 7 large pits all filled with about 850,000 litres of stolen crude oil were equally deactivated.

"Relatedly, on 22 April 2022, around Lelemu creek in Warri South West LGA of Delta State, personnel under NNS DELTA again discovered 22 IRS ovens, 12 metallic storage tanks and 5 large pits all containing about 150,000 litres of stolen crude oil. At another IRS off Lelemu creek, 19 ovens, 42 storage tanks and 14 large pits containing about 300,000 litres of stolen crude oil, as well as approximately 200,000 litres of illegally refined AGO, 100,000 litres of illegally refined DPK and 100,000 litres of suspected crude oil sludge were all destroyed.

"In a related but unprecedented development, NNS LUGARD at Kogi State in the course of OPDDB discovered an IRS on 22 April 2022, at a location off Akili-Ozior

community of Ogbaru LGA, Anambra State. During the operation, 4 locally fabricated ovens, 7 metal storage tanks, 4 large pits of which 2 were for storage of about 48,000 Litres of stolen crude oil were all destroyed.

"On the same day, NNS VICTORY in Calabar raided a tanker garage along Harbour road in the city and seized a storage tank containing about 45,000 Litres of suspected illegally refined AGO. Also, a tanker laden with 33,000 Litres of suspected locally refined AGO was seized and the owner was arrested. Furthermore, about 58 drums of locally refined AGO were also seized.

"Additionally, NNS SOROH at Yenagoa, on Saturday 23 April 2022 intercepted a wooden boat at Otuokpor Area along Kolo creek. The wooden boat was laden with 60,000 Litres of illegally refined AGO together with over 100 sacks of the same product. Items on the boat which included one pumping machine, one Yamaha 40HP outboard engine and one locally made boat Anchor with the products were destroyed at Ogbia waterside. The Base also conducted a search on a Market Boat heading for St Nicolas Axis from the Akassa area. About 2,500 litres of suspected illegally refined products stored in gallons and sacks were hidden inside the boat.

"Accordingly, the same were evacuated for destruction. Likewise on the same day, personnel under NNS DELTA on patrol around Jones creek in Warri South West LGA raided an IRS and discovered 33 ovens, 42 metal storage tanks and 7 wide pits all filled with about 1,200,000 litres of stolen crude oil. 250,000 litres of illegally refined AGO and about 100,000 litres of sludge. Further combing of the area off Jones creek led to the discovery of another IRS with 5 ovens, 2 metal storage tanks and 8 large pits with about 150,000 litres of sludge. Both IRS off Jones creek with the discovered items and products were destroyed



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2 x 2	24,941.96	26,812.61	2 x 2	22,588.91	24,283.09	2 x 2	18,349.89	19,716.64	2 x 2	15,147.94	16,284.03
3 x 2	37,413.09	40,219.07	3 x 2	33,987.48	36,622.04	3 x 2	27,524.84	29,589.20	3 x 2	22,721.91	24,426.05
4 x 2	49,884.02	53,625.42	4 x 2	45,177.83	48,566.17	4 x 2	36,700.09	39,452.60	4 x 2	30,295.53	32,657.70
5 x 2	62,355.15	67,031.71	5 x 2	56,472.29	60,707.71	5 x 2	45,866.19	49,315.34	5 x 2	37,863.00	40,710.09
6 x 2	76,142.50	81,853.18	6 x 2	67,975.12	73,073.25	6 x 2	55,049.68	59,178.41	6 x 2	45,443.82	48,852.10
7 x 2	87,297.21	93,844.50	6 x 3	101,962.78	109,609.99	6 x 3	54,074.55	61,200.90	7 x 2	53,017.79	56,993.61
7 x 3	166,172.00	179,229.37	6.5 x 3	110,459.64	118,744.11	6.5 x 3	89,455.78	96,164.94	8 x 2	60,591.76	65,136.14
7 x 4	197,125.00	211,909.37	7 x 2	79,304.29	85,252.11	7 x 2	64,224.63	69,041.48	9 x 2	80,454.83	86,488.95
8 x 2	99,768.24	107,250.85	7 x 3	128,456.43	138,090.67	7 x 3	96,336.94	103,562.21	10 x 2	86,147.92	92,609.02
9 x 2	112,183.69	120,597.47	7 x 4	158,608.73	170,504.38	7 x 4	145,965.10	156,912.48	14.5 x 2	124,915.92	134,284.61
9 x 3	168,358.90	180,985.39	7 x 5	198,260.25	213,129.77	7 x 5	182,500.19	196,187.71	5 x 3	56,804.77	61,065.13
10 x 3	187,065.45	201,095.35	8 x 2	90,633.42	97,430.92	8 x 2	73,399.58	78,904.54	6 x 3	68,170.86	73,283.67
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8 x 4	199,536.48	214,501.71	8 x 4	181,266.93	194,841.95	8 x 4	167,043.40	179,022.80	8 x 3	103,375.58	111,130.80
9 x 4	224,478.54	241,314.43	8 x 5	226,238.74	254,477.52	8 x 5	208,805.79	224,469.23	6 x 4	100,634.10	110,944.41
10 x 4	299,302.72	321,752.57	8 x 6	271,900.48	292,008.02	8 x 6	250,284.32	26,911.09	7 x 4	120,404.56	129,434.90
14.5 x 4	520,790.19	559,849.45	9 x 2	101,962.78	109,609.99	9 x 2	93,773.60	100,872.44	8 x 4	137,692.17	148,019.082
7 x 5	218,243.02	234,629.74	9 x 3	152,944.01	164,414.81	9 x 3	141,108.54	151,691.68	10 x 4	172,301.37	185,224.22
8 x 5	299,304.72	321,752.57	9 x 4	203,925.29	219,219.69	9 x 4	187,921.52	202,015.71	14.5 x 3	187,057.43	201,086.73
8 x 6	359,165.65	386,103.08	9 x 5	305,373.04	328,276.02	9 x 5	281,288.07	303,022.10	14.5 x 4	249,838.03	268,575.88
9 x 5	404,061.37	434,365.97	9 x 6	367,065.92	394,595.86	9 x 6	337,805.68	363,141.11	7 x 5	141,001.98	161,793.93
10 x 5	448,957.08	482,628.86	10 x 3	169,651.36	182,375.21	10 x 3	156,602.81	168,348.02	8 x 5	172,116.65	185,025.40
11 x 5	493,852.78	530,891.74	10 x 4	226,258.00	243,176.28	10 x 4	208,808.58	224,469.23	9 x 6	278,649.91	299,548.66
9 x 6	484,873.39	521,239.16	10 x 5	354,037.54	380,590.16	10 x 5	325,815.11	349,966.25	11 x 5	295,636.20	317,808.91
10 x 6	538,748.49	579,154.53	10 x 6	424,845.04	456,708.42	10 x 6	390,978.13	420,320.48	11 x 6	340,573.10	340,466.08
11 x 6	592,622.16	637,068.82	11 x 5	389,441.887	418,650.01	11 x 5	358,396.62	385,276.37	HP7.25 X 6	218,226.87	234,593.89
HP 7.25 x 6	317,178.40	340,337.5	11 x 6	447,303.49	480,851.24	11 x 6	412,916.45	443,885.19	FP14.5 X 6	379,943.00	408,438.72
FP 14.5 x 6	560,500.00	602,537.50	14.5 X 2	197,128.09	211,912.70	14.5 x 2	151,178.45	162,516.84			
			14.5 X 4	394,256.19	423,825.40	14.5 x 4	362,827.71	390,039.79			
			14.5 X 5	472,286.06	507,707.52	HP7.25 X 6	246,131.63	264,591.50			
			HP7.25 X 6	269,191.05	289,380.38	14.5 X 5	431,525.39	463,889.79			
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Judiciary: State capture and Stockholm syndrome

By EMMANUEL ONWUBIKO

Recently, a beautiful black judge, Ketanji Brown Jackson, was confirmed by 1 American Senate as the first -ever Black woman to serve on the illustrious bench of the Supreme Court of the United States of America (USA).

She got her confirmation by a vote of 53-47 and replaced the retiring Supreme Court's justice, Stephen Breyer, for whom she previously served as a law clerk.

Miss. Jackson will be inaugurated after Breyer's retirement at the end of the 2021-2022 Supreme Court term.

"I have dedicated my career to public service because I love this Country and our Constitution and the rights that make us free.

"It has taken 232 years and 115 years prior appointments for a black woman to be selected to serve on the Supreme Court of the USA.

"But we have made it. We have made it, all of us...in my family, it took just one generation to go from segregation to the Supreme Court of the USA," said Jackson in comments at the White House following her confirmation.

She is a 1996 graduate of Harvard Law School but she accumulated a great deal of experiences working through the Court System of her Country.

Ms Jackson said her passion for her Country remains her inspiration for opting to be a judge and now she has been able to dismantle all the formidable racial segregation and all the scheming and subterranean plots to keep her away from attainment of such a lofty judicial height and today she has made it to the Supreme Court of the United States of America and for her the Constitution is her abiding tool.

This phenomenal appointment of such a very young, delectable and beautiful black American lawyer to sit on the bench of the highest court of the World's most powerful nation (USA), happened coincidentally at a time that a damning but factually accurate investigative report of the state of the Nigerian judiciary was released by the most powerful political department of the government of the USA known as the State Department.

This department generated the ingredients for putting up this report from a variety of sources including investigations conducted by independent observers and analysts in Nigeria and of course from a collection of profound reportage conducted by Non Governmental institutions working in the justice and human rights sector of Nigeria.

The media in Nigeria is also a fertile ground for harvesting such credible reports because those who wear the shoes and go through



President Buhari

the pains of being harassed for bribes for judgments are always speaking out one way or the other through the media of mass communication and largely through the vibrant social media.

The new report by the United States Department of State alleged that the judiciary in Nigeria remains susceptible to corruption and is constantly under pressure from the executive and legislative arms of government.

In its "Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2021," the US stated that although the constitution and law provide for an independent judiciary, political leaders influence the judges and lawyers, particularly at the state and local government levels.

The document added that there was a widespread public perception that judges were easily bribed, and litigants could not rely on the courts to render impartial judgments.

"Many citizens encountered long delays and reported receiving requests for judicial officials for bribes to expedite cases or obtain favourable rulings," the report stated.

Other challenges, the US stated, included the absence of continuing education requirements for attorneys coupled with the fact that police officers were often assigned to serve as prosecutors.

The report further alleged that judges frequently fail to appear for trials, stressing however that the salaries of court officials are low, and officials often lacked proper equipment and training.

Speaking to the issues and problems with trial procedures, the US government asserted that although defendants were presumed innocent and enjoy certain rights, authorities do not always respect these rights, most frequently due to a lack of capacity.

According to the document, in some cases, the police would demand additional payment from family members who wanted to attend a trial

even as the authorities could hold defendants in prison awaiting trial for periods well beyond the terms allowed by law.

The US state Department report alleged that Nigeria's anti-corruption agencies, the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) as well as the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) were mainly focused on pursuing low and mid-level corruption cases.

The US stated that although there had been a few indictments of active top level government officials, the cases were being hampered by administrative delays.

Although the law provides criminal penalties for conviction of official corruption, the government, the US report stated, did not consistently implement the law, and government employees, including elected officials, frequently engaged in corrupt practices with impunity.

Speaking if Nigerian government's posture towards human rights abuses, the report noted government officials sometimes cooperated and responded to such cases, but generally either dismissed allegations, did not provide substantive response, or did not publicise outcomes of investigations.

The document added that in the north-east, there had been reports that the military threatened civil society groups and humanitarian organisations after aid provided by the organisations purportedly reached insurgent groups.

Even though the law establishes the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) as an independent non-judicial mechanism for the promotion and protection of human rights, it noted that the role of the body has been largely advisory as well as for training and advocacy purposes.

"During the year, there were no reports of its (NHRC) prior investigations having led to accountability. The



CJN Mr. Walter Samuel Nkanu Onnoghen.

law provides for recognition and enforcement of damages awarded to plaintiffs, but it was unclear whether this happened," the report stated.

Well, what the writers of that report may have forgotten to include as a factor militating against having a vibrant and an independent judiciary in Nigeria is the angle of the political reality of State capture and the sad reality that the man who heads the judiciary today became the chief justice of Nigeria not through the constitutional means of selecting the head of the Court System which is the National Judicial Council but he got railroaded by the President Muhammadu Buhari's administration through a contrived prosecution of the then substantive CJN Mr. Walter Samuel Nkanu Onnoghen.

Onnoghen was practically chased out by the Executive arm that deployed the code of conduct Tribunal with a chairman tainted by allegations of a N10 million bribery case with the EFCC. So the process of selecting the head of the judiciary in Nigeria today remained tainted by executive rascality and corruption.

Another aspect of corruption is how those judges are even appointed in the first place and especially judges picked to head the different Federal divisions of the Court System just as appointments of judges in the state judiciary are contaminated by politics of bribery and corruption.

Recently, the Abia State judiciary was in the news on how some nominees to the bench were made by politicians to cough out huge bribes to secure their slots. One of these aspiring judges in Abia State reportedly sold her house to raise the bribes to give to the appointing authority, but she was duped as she couldn't get the appointment nor was she refunded the bribe money she paid.

Judges in the Federal High courts and the Abuja High courts are mostly appointed based on nepotism and their

connections to the political forces running things in Abuja.

Ordinarily, this report from the USA should be a wake up call, but those entrenched gangsters in the judiciary who are benefitting from the dysfunctionality have already started showing signs of suffering from Stockholm Syndrome and are showing aversion for any patriotic and altruistic move to demand accountability and transparency. They are deluding themselves with the thinking that the Executive arm of government does not interfere in the affairs of the judiciary but they are liars.

I think they need to be awakened from their heavy dose of Stockholm Syndrome.

These delusional reactionary elements embedded in the hierarchy of the Nigerian judiciary need to be told that they are indeed suffering from Stockholm Syndrome of falling in love with the forces that have ensured state capture of the judiciary for manipulating them to achieve their selfish political goals at the risks of destroying the independence of that arm of government that ought to play critical role as the last hope for the common man. Nigeria judiciary is now anything but the last hope of the common man. One example will suffice.

We in Human Rights Writers Association of Nigeria initiated a litigation against the near moribund Police Service Commission to get the court to issue to us a mandates compelling the police service Commission to investigate the December last year's invasion by hooded armed non uniform wearing men confirmed to be police into the Imo State's Anglican Church and shot several live bullets that dispersed worshippers all in an attempt to arrest an opposition politician, who attended the church and is even guarded by a retinue of DSS and Police men. But the Federal High Court refused to assign this case to a judge for one whole Month. We were then forced to withdraw

the matter and this incident of invasion of the Church by policemen is now swept under the carpets.

So, I laughed scornfully at the news that President Muhammadu Buhari had said the Executive arm of the government will continue to respect the judiciary within the boundaries laid out in the Constitution in order to strengthen the country's democracy.

Speaking at the Iftar dinner he hosted for the leadership of the nation's judiciary, at the end of the daily fasting, President Buhari said: "I assure you that I have tremendous respect for the judiciary," adding that order and discipline in society can only be established when the law applies to all, irrespective of position or status, who you are or who you like and without fear or favor.

"I try to keep my distance from you to avoid the perception of interference," adding that he was satisfied with the painstaking adherence to due processes by our courts."

The Chief Justice of the federation, who got into office through an ex-parte order of the code of conduct Tribunal controlled by the executive arm of government, Justice Ibrahim Tanko Mohammed attested to the President's non-interference in judicial matters, saying that "in all your years in office, at no time, no moment did Mr. President or any other person from you attempt to talk or ask for favours from the courts. We can recall no such attempt by you or anyone on your to interfere with judicial decisions.

"This is a mark of your maturity and sagacity. I am convinced that as you do with the judiciary, so is the case with ministries and other agencies of government.

"With leaders like you who do not interfere with judicial decisions the country can rest assured that all is well."

Justice Mohammed assured the President that justices of the Supreme Court and judges across the court system were doing their best in handling cases before them.

"We try not to delay. No case whatsoever is unduly delayed and all are delivered within the times allotted by the constitution. We are satisfied that we are discharging our responsibilities the way the constitution wants them to be done," reassured the Chief Justice.

If this is not a sign of Stockholm Syndrome, what is it then? The judiciary is definitively a victim of State capture just like the lame duck and lackeys running the National Assembly who are sycophants of President Muhammadu Buhari. The ordinary citizens are on their own.

•Onwubiko heads Human Rights Writers Association of Nigeria (HURIWA)

Sagay's autobiography for launch

A book titled: "All will be Well", the autobiography of the Chairman of the Presidential Advisory Committee Against Corruption (PACAC), Prof. Itse Sagay, SAN will be presented to the public on Thursday, May 12, 2022.

According to a statement by the learned silk and professor of law, the presentation will take place at the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs, Kofo Abayomi Street, Victoria Island, Lagos by 11:00a.m prompt.

SAN expresses worries over NIWA's alleged disrespect of court verdict

A Senior Advocate of Nigeria (SAN), Mr Gerald Ezeuko, has expressed worries over what he called flagrant disrespect of a Federal High Court, Awka judgment by the National Inland Waterways Authority (NIWA).

Ezeuko, who was reacting over complaints on the alleged deployment of Police, Army and Navy by NIWA to appropriate the property of Lake Petroleum Limited Onitsha, said the matter has since been decided by Federal High Court Awka, against NIWA.

The lawyer who addressed newsmen in Onitsha, alleged that NIWA's disrespect to court judgment and orders has become worrisome, wondering why a Federal Government agency should involve itself in activities that could lead to break down of law and order.

Ezeuko urged the Federal Government to call NIWA to order and avoid enthrone anarchy with some of its activities in Onitsha, Anambra State.

He stressed that once a court judgment is obtained in a matter, it is sacrosanct that it ought to be respected and obeyed by everybody.

The learned silk claimed that he got a judgment against NIWA before Justice Nnamdi Dimgba at the Federal High Court Awka, in suit marked FHC/ AWK/CS/51/2020, with Lake Petroleum Limited, as plaintiff while NIWA and Chris Orajekwe are defendants.

He explained that the court made the following orders: "A declaration that the defendant, which is NIWA, has no statutory power/right of any kind to appropriate/expropriate the private property of the plaintiff, which is Lake Petroleum Limited, for its own use.

He said: "A declaration that the act of the defendant in claiming ownership of the plaintiff's private property is unconstitutional, ultra vires, null and void.

"That the right of way as conferred on the defendant by NIWA Act, does not disturb/interfere with the right of ownership vested on the plaintiff, and an order directing the defendant to desist forthwith /immediately from appropriating the plaintiffs property.

"The sum of N5 million is hereby awarded in favour of the plaintiff against the defendant as a general damages."

Group tackles Tunde Bakare over hate speech, genocidal incitement

•To initiate legal action against cleric, writes UNHRC, ICC, ICJ

Stories **ONYEBUCHI SAMPSON**

A group, The Igbo Board of Deputies, has tackled Pastor Tunde Bakare of Citadel Global Community Church, Lagos State, over his alleged hate speech and genocidal comments against the Igbo people of Nigeria.

The group through their lawyer, Austin Okeke Attorneys, said it would "approach the appropriate forum, both local and international, for all available legal relief," saying the action will be at his account.

The Igbo Board of Deputies, comprising stakeholders of South-East extraction, in a pre-litigation letter addressed to the cleric, urged him to recant his statements, using the same pulpit within seven days from the date hereof.

The letter was copied to the United Nations Human Rights Commission; the International Criminal Court and the International Court of Justice.

The letter was copied to 76 different national and international organisations as well as personalities.

It was also sent to President Muhammadu Buhari, Chief



Tunde Bakare

Justice of Nigeria, Senate President, Nigeria, Embassy of the United States of America, the European Union, and the African Union among others.

The letter reads: "We act for Igbo Board of Deputies, a Non-Profit Company "NPC" and its Trustees for the time being "our clients" under whose instructions we address this letter to you.

"We have waited reverently for Lent and Easter period to end before addressing this letter to you. It is our instruction not to join you in the desecration of a very



George Obiozor

sacred and holy Lenten season; it being the bedrock of the Christian faith all over the world. Your hate speech and your premeditated incitement designed for ethnic cleansing of the Igbo people in Nigeria were aired and viewed right at the heart of Lent. You are a pastor of a church indeed.

"We have waited without success for you too, on your own accord, recant your hate speech and/or withdraw the incitement of genocide against the Igbo people. It is very obvious that your speech on

the day was well thought out, planned, and executed so as to achieve the purpose it was designed. These comments were made deliberately at a very fragile and tense period in the history of Nigeria when insecurity and killings are rife.

"We are advised that on and about April 2022, you on the pulpit of Citadel Global Community Church in Lagos, Nigeria "your church" and before a multitude of congregants, worshippers, and viewers all over the world, made inciting comments against the Igbo people in the following manner: 'on the day the late Tafawa Balewa was killed the Igbo soldiers arrested him, removed his turban, poured wine on his head, and forced him to drink and then shot him. While he was being killed, he cursed the Igbo race; that they would never govern Nigeria. "We are of the view that your comments on the day were calculated to rouse and stoke hatred against the Igbo by a region of the country. These were the sort of falsehood sold to other regions of Nigeria as part of the hate campaign that justified and resulted in the mass murder and subsequent pogrom against the Igbo before, during and after the 1967 Nigeria-Biafra civil war that reportedly claimed over

3 million lives of the Igbo.

"We are advised that your own account of the 1966 military coup and in particular the death of the then Prime Minister of Nigeria; Alhaji Tafawa Balewa is false because you were not present and therefore cannot qualify as a credible witness.

"In the circumstance, we have been instructed to demand from you, as we hereby do, to recant your statements using the same pulpit within seven days from the date hereof. Failing this, we have instructions to approach the appropriate forum, both local and international, for all available legal relief. "These actions shall be on your account. We hope the above does not become necessary, and we do not wish you to enter into this quagmire.

"Kindly note that our clients shall enforce their rights and their resolution within the ambit of both domestic and international laws, unless and until you have publicly withdrawn your false comments.

"The fact that we have not exhaustively dealt with this matter at present should not be construed as a waiver, omission, and/or novation of our client's rights. All our clients' rights are fully reserved. We hope you find the above in order as we await your prompt reply."

'\$10b arbitral award underscores need for ADR's consolidation'

• ICCN holds ICC Africa Regional Arbitration Confab

Chairman, Arbitration Commission of International Chambers of Commerce Nigeria (ICCN), Mrs. Dorothy Ufot (SAN), has called for for consolidation of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) particularly in the country and Africa generally.

She stressed that recent legal moves by the Federal Government to overturn the \$10 billion arbitration award against it in Process and Industrial Developments Limited (P&ID) case has made the need more pronounced.

Ufot spoke at a briefing heralding the 6th ICC Africa Regional Arbitration Conference slated between July 1 and 3, 2022 in Lagos.

She said Nigeria and in-

deed Africa are losing billions of dollars because the ADR centres are not held in their domain..

According to her, with the abundance of natural resources, most investors, who do not want to subscribe to rigorous legal processes of the countries of their operations, opt for arbitration as a means of resolving disputes, which is inevitable in business transactions.

Unfortunately, London, Paris, Geneva and New York, she said, are preferred designations for ADR, with attendant loss to Nigeria and other African countries.

The learned silk, said the ICC Arbitration conference, which is in its 6th year is changing the narratives, as

Nigeria and Africa countries can now boast of chartered arbitrators, while Nigerian judges are now arbitration friendly.

She also said the challenges occasioned by the reluctance to make Nigeria seat for arbitration by many foreign firms are now easing out.

Ufot noted that the conference, themed: "African Arbitration: Consolidation and Transformation", is aimed at deepening gains made in the last six years, since enforcement of awards is still a challenge, as many lawyers have not really understood its operation.

She stressed that the first woman President of the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) International Court

of Arbitration, in its almost 100-year history, Claudia Salomon, will lead other high profile speakers to the conference.

Also, chairman of the conference planning committee, Prof Gbolahan Elias (SAN) said senate president, Dr. Ahmed Lawan, Lagos State Governor, Babajide Sanwo-Olu, judges and other stakeholders are expected to grace the occasion to provide perspectives that will help consolidate African Arbitration.

According to Elias, with the growing number of arbitration cases in Nigeria and other African countries, there is a need to consolidate and expand the practices so as to gain the confidence of investors to sit for arbitration within the continent.

Elias said the conference would feature a training session for young arbitrators on June 1 at Eko Hotel, while the conference will kick off properly on June 2.

He stressed that the Director-General of World Trade Organisation (WTO), Dr Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, top business executives and other international business leaders across the globe are expected in the two-day programme.

For the ICCN Secretary, Mrs. Olubunmi Osuntuyi, the conference is opened to seasoned arbitrators, academia, legal practitioners and users of arbitration, parties and persons interested in arbitration, who had the opportunity to critically analyse issues facing arbitration in Africa.

According to her, the yearly event is very strategic for the Nigerian arbitration community, to the extent that it keeps creating a growing awareness of the importance of arbitration in the dispute resolution processes.

She also said the conference will be bilingual with the active participation of Francophone African countries.

Nwadioke, others join CIARB Nigeria EXCO

A council member of the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA) Section on Public Interest and Development Law (NBA-SPIDEL), Mr. Emeka Nwadioke, has been elected into the executive committee of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators (CIARB), Nigeria Branch.

Others elected into the committee are a Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) registered capital market expert, Mr. Kamar Raji; former NBA Lagos Branch Legal Adviser, Mr. Harry Ukaejiofor and a chartered secretary, Mrs. Olushola Adeniran.

The election came on the heels of the retirement of some members of the Branch executive committee at its

inaugural meeting held on April 21, 2022.

The newly elected members were inaugurated at the 2022 yearly general meeting of the branch, which held last week at its headquarters in Lekki, Lagos.

Mrs. Josephine Akinwunmi (FCIARB) was elected as the branch secretary, while Dr. Adeyemi Agbelusi (FCIARB) retained his position as the Public Relations Officer.

Nwadioke was elected the Branch Treasurer, while Adeniran is the new Assistant Secretary.

Aside from the newly elected members, other members of the Executive Committee of the branch for the year 2022-2023 are

Chief Akingbola Akinola (SAN)(Chairman); Mr. Olatunde Busari (SAN) (immediate past Chairman); Mrs. Olusola Adegbonmire, (1st Vice Chairman); Prof. Paul Idornigie (SAN) (2nd Vice Chairman); Mrs. Obosa Akpata, (3rd Vice Chairman/Chair, Membership Sub-Committee); Mr. Seyilayo Ojo (Chairman, Training Sub-Committee) and Mr. Olumide Sofowora SAN, (Regional Representative).

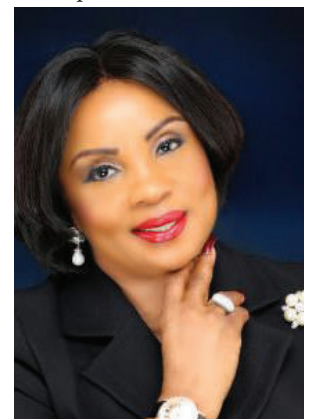
Others are Mrs. Miannaya Essien (SAN); Mr. Charles Musa; Mr. Omoyemi Akangbe; Prince Lateef Fagbemi (SAN)(Chairman, Ibadan Chapter); Hon. Olusola Ephraim-Oluwanuga (Chairman, Abuja Chapter); Mr. Tonye Krukruko, (Chair-

man, Port Harcourt) and Mr. Emoubonivie Majemite, (Chair, YMG Nigeria Branch).

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Mrs. Dorothy Ufot

Concerns mount over extortions, illegal businesses, checkpoints at Lagos ports

■ Expert decries 'Apapa pass yahoo' new extortion slogan



Stories by **ADAKU WALTER**

Port users have expressed hope and confidence that as the Port Standing Task Team (PSTT) began the third phase of Operation Free The Port Corridor, specifically designed to dislodge illegal checkpoints and hoodlums extorting truck drivers along the ports access roads, some level of order will be instilled on the port corridors.

The PSTT is an offshoot of the Nigerian Port Process Manual (NPPM), which was unveiled in 2021 by Vice President Yemi Osinbajo to improve Nigeria's ranking on the global corruption index. Accordingly, the team comprises 180 personnel drawn from various agencies and security organisations to ensure that access roads to the ports are free of traffic congestion.

But the PSTT revealed through investigation that apart from the Tin Can Island Port area, there are over 26 illegal checkpoints between the Apapa Port corridor and Sifax Bonded Terminal at Ijora.

Executive Secretary of Nigerian Shippers Council (NSC), Emmanuel Jime, affirmed that the ports' corridors do not have free flow of traffic due to unnecessary checkpoints, which has been fuelling extortion, illegal businesses and other corrupt practices.

Also, the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) had raised concern over the rising corrupt activities in the nation's ports, which it said, was causing foreign investors to shun doing business in Nigeria and patronising neighbouring countries.

ICPC Chairman, Prof. Bolaji Owasanoye, said such corrupt practices had led to reputational damage of the country and caused the economy to bleed.

While inaugurating the PSTT project at the NSC headquarters in Apapa, Lagos on April 14, 2022, Permanent Secretary of the Federal Ministry of Transportation, Mrs. Magdalene Ajani, said freeing the port corridor must be done holistically and with the support of other agencies to achieve ease of doing business in the Nigerian ports and

along the corridors.

Following the development, the Lagos State government and the Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA), streamlined extortion points on the port corridors and feeder routes to eliminate illegal checkpoints.

Special Adviser to the Lagos State Governor on Transportation, Oluwatoyin Fayinka, said the checkpoints at Apapa and Tin Can axis have been assigned to specific agencies, as part of the government's efforts to eliminate gridlock and curb illegal extortions.

The checkpoints were assigned to NPA, Lagos State Government, Lagos State Traffic Management Authority (LASTMA), Rapid Response Squad (RRS) and the Nigerian Police Force (NPF) to manage independently without interference from the other agencies, while all military checkpoints were disbanded.

Also, trucks would no longer be stopped for ETO at Ijora Badia (LPC axis), Mile 2 under, UBA (TCIPC corridor), while truck movement would not be interfered with at NAGAFF, Area B, RRS Marine Bridge, 7up, Fidelity Roundabout, Etisalat Roundabout (LPC axis) and RRS (TCIPC corridor).

But the report of streamlining and assigning checkpoints to government agencies did not go down well with port users, as they decry more hardship in movement of cargoes along the port corridors.

They lamented that previous committees set up by the Federal and state governments to address traffic flow, turned the ports into a cash cow, while expressing reservations that the development could worsen the situation.

They said majority of the extortions are perpetrated by security operatives, particularly the police and LASTMA, which is contributing to the traffic congestion at the Apapa and Tin Can port.

The Trumpet recalled that NPA had last year identified over 30 toll points manned by various security personnel, where tips are allegedly collected before trucks are allowed into the Apapa and Tin Can ports.

National President, Council of Maritime Transport Union and Association (COMTUA), Adeyinka Aroyewun, questioned the manning of checkpoints by government agencies, when the electronic call-up system was already set up to discourage human interference responsible for extortions and traffic jam along the port access roads.

"Setting up of the checkpoints and using the same personnel that we have been complaining about to man these positions is still trying to give a medium for reward system."

"It has been an issue of who is in charge of what point between police and LASTMA. Now they are trying to share it among themselves so that the collection would be easy and the process of sharing the proceeds will not be difficult," he said.

He pointed out that for each checkpoint at Mr. Biggs and Eleganza, truckers pay N15,000 for empty and N20,000 for trucks with exports, adding that for the hoodlums who claim to be union representatives, they have about 50 points in Amuwo Odofin alone, which is increasing by the day, as they are being aided by the police and local government officials and therefore, urged Governor, Babajide Sanwo-Olu to disband the state enforcement team on the Apapa gridlock.

Aroyewun said the state government does not have any business determining checkpoints on Federal roads, especially LASTMA's 200 metres checkpoints on the port access roads, which has been a major concern for truckers.

On the implications for truckers, Aroyewun explained: The return on a truck is not even up to N5,000 or N10,000 in some cases and it still falls into the hands of LASTMA and the agency on abandoned vehicles.

"For instance, you charge N200,000 to move a cargo from the port, you buy gas of N60,000, the driver collects N30,000, the conductor and manager collect their own fees and at the end of the day you will be left with about N50,000. Then the checkpoints

manned by both state and non-state actors on the road collect between N2,000 and N5,000 and at the end, you are left with little or nothing.

"If your truck breaks down on the road or falls into the hands of LASTMA or the abandoned vehicles agency, they tow the vehicle and charge you N150,000 or a fine of N50,000," he explained.

Also, National Publicity Secretary of the Association of Registered Freight Forwarders of Nigeria (ARFFN), Taiwo Fatomilola, described assigning of checkpoints to the agencies as 'business as usual'.

He said these agencies have been accused of engaging hoodlums to extort truckers and owners of the cargoes being moved.

Adding that the after effect is that the amount spent would be added to the cost of goods, which will cause inflation.

Responding to the development, President, National Council of Managing Director of Licensed Customs Agents (NCMDLCA), Lucky Amiwero, said Lagos State has no powers to manage federal roads, as it has limitations in ports operations.

"The ministers of finance and transportation could set up such committee to man the port roads and not Lagos State and the NPA. Lagos State cannot streamline the activities at the ports, because the Federal Government owns the ports. The Port Act does not give the state government powers to do what they just did," he said.

Amiwero maintained that the state government should be concerned with assigning lands for holding bays and truck parks to the NPA, rather than duplicating operations of the port standing task team.

He lamented that the Federal Government concessioned the ports without a law that regulates and enforces concessionaires to provide holding bays and truck parks for their operations, which he said, was responsible for the menace being experienced at the nation's ports.

Meanwhile, Port Manager, Lagos Ports Complex of NPA, Mrs. Funmilayo Olotu, lamented that a popular slogan: "Apapa pass yahoo" was being used among the extortionist committees and their members in the manner of Internet fraudsters, popularly known as yahoo yahoo boys.

She pointed out that the collapsed portions of the road network between the Lagos port and Orile, gave room for camp boys and hoodlums to extort truckers, adding that they were all fronting for different agencies.

She said the Tincan port corridor calls for a national concerns because the boys operating on the road enjoy backups from powerful operators.

Olotu charged the PSTT to be resilient and unwavering in the task of ridding the Apapa port access road of corruption and extortion.

A chieftain of the National Association of Road Transport Owners (NARTO), Abdullahi Inuwa, said a lot of truck drivers have received beatings from hoodlums at the checkpoints aside the delays and unfriendly issues causing foreign investors to shun the nation's ports.

He said many trucks have been kicked out of business as they can no longer continue the business after experiencing loss due to the situation and expressed the hope that the new format would bring positive feedback in tackling the menace at the ports, especially the ICPC involvement in the PSTT Committee.

Fatomilola urged the Federal Government to facilitate the construction of the road, which extortionists are leveraging, noting that the workers should be made to work 24 hours every day to ensure its speedy completion.

Stakeholders seek end to dumping of plastics, wastes on waterways

By ADAKU WALTER

Stakeholders have raised alarm over the rising menace of dumping plastics and various wastes and human on the country's waterways.

They blamed plastic production and consumption for devaluing the nation's marine ecosystems, choking aquatic wildlife, carbon emissions and accidents of transport systems on the waterways.

They stated this during the commemoration of the World Earth Day by Nampak Bevcn Nigeria in collaboration with the Lagos State Ministry of Environment and Water Resources.

Sales Account Manager, Nampak Bevcn Nigeria, Ikemefuna Chidi, said there was the need for collaboration between the private sector and the government to protect the ocean, being threatened by plastics and other wastes.

He said most of the accidents on the waterways are due to the waste from land that are flushed into the seas and rivers thereby hampering the movement of boats and other vessels.

"Our waterways have been quite polluted. The oceans are filled with plastics and other wastes along with man-made activities, which is making it more acidic. When there is a single drop of rain, you see plastic bottles, bags and other wastes clog our waterways.

When this happens, flooding becomes easier, because there will be no channel for rain water to flow into the sea," he said.

He lamented that while the world was striving for a carbon and plastic-free ocean and environment, Nigeria should ensure it was not left behind, adding: "Whatever we



throw out on the streets will end up in the ocean and it will come back to haunt us. When we abuse the ocean, we are reducing our life expectancy.

"We need to protect our oceans and have almost zero emissions, reduce carbon foot prints and plastic wastes, which is why we are promoting the use of cans, as they are recyclable, safer and environmentally sustainable."

Chidi solicited more partnerships between the private and public sectors to ensure that suggestions and ideas to tackle waste problem in oceans, were formulated as policy for sustainability of a safer environment.

Responding, Permanent Secretary, Lagos State Ministry of Environment and Water Resources, Gaji Omobolaji Tajudeen, said the amount of plastics and other wastes being removed from the waterways on daily basis by the government was

enormous.

He attributed the development to the inability of people to dispose their wastes properly, which he said, always ended up in the waterways, thereby causing problem for transportation, sea animals and the entire society.

"The challenge is how our people dispose wastes generally. Our people need to know how to sort their wastes and do other things about it. Lagos is on the low side of the Atlantic and most wastes come from the hinterlands and sub-regions into the state and that is why we have so many wastes in our waterways," he said.

He disclosed that the state government was creating a circular economy around waste management, as well as working and collaborating with individuals and organisations in the private sector to create value and wealth through more employment opportunities.

Kebbi government commends FG for reopening Kamba border

Kebbi State Government has commended the Federal Government for reopening the Kamba Border and expressed support for the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) Area Command in the state for effectively discharging its duties.

Governor Atiku Bagudu's commendation, which was contained in a statement issued by the Customs Public Relations Officer for Kebbi State Command, Nasiru Manga, also expressed appreciation to President Muhammadu Buhari for the gesture.

Bagudu, who was represented by the Commissioner for Commerce and Industry, Garba Geza, expressed support for the Nigeria Customs Service in ensuring lawful trade through the border during a sensitisation programme.

He also expressed the hope that the reopening of the border would impact positively on Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and youths in the state, who would benefit most from the reopening of the border post.

Earlier, Customs Area Controller for Kebbi Command, Comptroller Joseph Attah, told the stakeholders and indigenes of Kamba that the reopening of the border presented an opportunity for legitimate business activities in the area.

He said reopening the border was not an invitation to illegitimate trade or permission for importation of all manner of goods, especially those that could compromise national security, but was rather to allow trade that could improve the economy and impact positively on people.

Attah said his officers and men were ready to facilitate legitimate trade and do everything within the ambits of the law to make trade across the Kamba Border seamless, as long as stakeholders import what was allowed by the law, make proper declarations and pay appropriate duties to the Federal Government.

NAC levy contravenes finance act, automotive policy, Amihero insists

President, National Council of Managing Director of Licensed Customs Agents (NCMDLCA), Lucky Amihero, has urged the Federal Government to review the National Automotive Council (NAC) levy of 15 per cent on imported vehicles, which he said, contravenes the Finance Act.

In a letter addressed to President Muhammadu Buhari, Amihero argued that the Finance Act 2020 and 2021 did not make provision for a NAC levy of 15 per cent by the Nigeria Customs Service

(NCS), which was neither passed by the National Assembly nor signed into law.

The letter, dated April 23, 2022 is titled: The Duty Rate and Levy Approved for Motor Vehicles in Finance Act of 2020 in Contravention of the NAC 15 Per Cent Levy Inputted by the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) for Import Duty and Levy Collection.

Amihero, who was a member of the Ministerial Committee on Import Clearance Procedures and Implementation of Fiscal Policies, said the Finance Acts specifically approved duties and levies for vehicles, but were yet to be implemented by the NCS.

He said the amendment of the first schedule of the Finance Act 2020 provided a reduction in duties and levies on imported vehicles, as contained in part VI of the act under Customs And Excise Tariff (Consolidation), section 38, sub-sections A to D.

According to him, the act stipulated that duty on tractors (HS Heading 8701) be reduced from 35 per cent to five per cent, duty on motor vehicles for transportation of over 10 persons (HS Heading 8702) and transportation of goods (HS Heading 8704) be reduced from 35 per cent to 10 per cent.

He said the act also provided reduction of levy on vehicles for transportation of persons (cars) with (HS Headings 8703) from 35 per cent to five per cent.

Amihero also noted that the NAC levy was not part of the 10-year action plan of the National Automotive Industry Development Plan (NAIDP) approved by the Federal Executive Council (FEC) in October 2013 on duty assessment and levies.

He further explained that the national automotive policy was adopted after the government and major automobile importers and manufacturers agreement for the development of the nation's automobile industry.

"Under the National Automotive Design and Development Council (NADDCC) Act Section 10, subsection 1-(a) specifies two per cent as collection and not part of the Finance Act 2020 and 2021, which was referred in the circular by the NCS.

"But with the collapse of the auto policy in 2021 and removal of the protective regime of duties and levies, there is the need for total review to ascertain the possible shortfall within the seven years of implementation of the auto policy," the letter reads.

Lekki Port appoints Bello-Koko, Lianjiu board directors

The Lekki Port LFTZ Enterprise Limited has announced the appointment of Managing Director of the Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA), Mohammed Bello-Koko, to represent the authority on its board of directors.

Similarly, Executive General Manager of the investment business unit of China Harbour Engineering Company, Zhang Lianjiu, will serve as director of the Lekki Port to represent the interests of China Harbour, which is a majority shareholder of the Lekki Port.

Management of Lekki Port, which said the appointment took effect from April 20, 2022, also disclosed that NPA holds a five per cent equity shareholding in the Lekki Port, while the other shareholders are China Harbour Engineering Company (CHEC), with 52.5 per cent stakes, Lagos State Government with 20 per cent and Tolaram with 22.5 per cent.



Lucky Amihero



MTN notifies NGX, investors on N127b series 1&2 commercial paper

MTN Nigeria Communications Plc has notified the Nigerian Exchange Limited and the investing public of its N127 billion series 1 and 2 commercial paper insurance under its N150 billion registered commercial paper programme.

In a statement released by NGX Exchange information portal, the Company Secretary, Uto Ukpanah, stated that the issuance comprises two tenors of 184-day series issuance period at a 7.50 per cent yield and a 345-day series 2 issuance priced at 8.50 per cent yield.

According to the report, Stanbic IBTC Capital Limited acted as the lead arranger and Dealer, while Chapel Hill Denham Advisory Limited, Coronation Merchant Bank Limited, FBN QUEST Merchant Bank Limited, FSDH Capital Limited, Standard Chartered Capital, Advisory Nigeria Limited and UCML Capital Limited acted as joint dealers.

Ukpanah stated that the issuance was in line with the company's strategy to diversify its funding options with the proceeds being deployed towards working capital and general operations purposes," the statement said.

ASCSN greets members on 2022 Workers Day

The leadership of Organised Labour in civil service under the aegis of Association of Senior Civil Servants of Nigeria (ASCSN) has charged Nigeria workers, especially under the payroll of the Federal and state governments to remain steadfast in their work.

In his 2022 May Day message, its President, Comrade Tommy Etim Okon, commended the workers for always striving to uplift the union through their unity.

Also in a statement issued by Okon and Secretary-General, Alade Bashir Lawal, they said: "Today, as we join millions of workers throughout the world to celebrate the 2022 May Day, we wish to use this opportunity to commend the esteemed members of our t union for remaining steadfast and united, which had enabled the association to always overcome organisational challenges whenever they arise.

"We wish to assure you all that the current national leadership of the association is committed to the pursuit of welfare issues including the restoration of gratuity to public service employees. In the same vein the labour leaders said, on behalf of the central working committee and the National Executive Council, we you all a very pleasant may day celebration."

AfDB cautions African countries against looming food crisis

Stories By **JOHNMARK UKOKO**

President of the Africa Development Bank (AfDB), Dr. Akinwunmi Adesina, has warned African countries to prepare for an inevitable global food crisis in the next few years.

Adesina was speaking on Africa's priorities, as guest at the Atlantic Council's Africa Centre recently in the United States of America (USA).

Fielding questions from the council's Africa Centre Chair, Ambassador Rama Yade, Senior Fellow, Aubrey Hruby and Jeune Afrique, he advocated an increased sense of urgency amid what he described as a "once in a century convergence of global challenges for Africa."

He maintained that the continent's most vulnerable countries had been hit hardest by conflicts, climate change challenges and the COVID-19 pandemic, which had disrupted economic

and development progress in Africa.

He said Africa with the lowest Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth rates had lost as much as 30 million jobs on account of the COVID-19 pandemic.

On the impact of the Russia and Ukraine war on Africa, Adesina lamented the killing and displacement of Ukrainians, describing their suffering as 'unimaginable,' adding that the war's ramifications would spread far beyond Ukraine to other parts of the world, including Africa.

The AfDB boss explained that Russia and Ukraine supply 30 per cent of global wheat exports, the price of which has surged by almost 50 per cent globally and reaching identical levels as during the 2008 global food crisis, adding that fertiliser prices and energy prices had tripled fueling inflation.

Adesina warned that the tripling costs of fertiliser, rising energy prices and rising costs of food baskets could worsen in Africa in



Akinwunmi Adesina

the coming months.

He noted that 90 per cent of Russia's \$4 billion exports to Africa in 2020 comprised wheat and 48 per cent of Ukraine's near \$3 billion exports to the continent was made of wheat and 31 per cent of

maize.

Adesina cautioned that to fend off a good crisis, Africa must rapidly expand its food production, saying: "The AfDB is already active in mitigating the effects of a food crisis through the African Food crisis Response and Emergency facility, be-

ing considered by the bank to provide African countries with the resources needed to raise local food production and procure fertiliser.

"My basic principle is that Africa should not be begging. We must solve our own challenges ourselves without depending on others.

He highlighted the importance of the technology sector as a driver for growth in Africa, and prospects for young people on the continent.

He described African youth as one of its greatest assets and commended the contributions of young entrepreneurs in the Fintech, digital, creative arts and entertainment industries.

Adesina added that the need of young entrepreneurs for innovative financing was responsible for the bank's decision to engage with stakeholders and established specialised youth entrepreneurship investment banks to unlock potential and engender economic growth.

Good nutrition beneficial, achievable, UNICEF insists

The United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF) says good nutrition is beneficial to and achievable for all Nigerians.

Nutrition Officer of (UNICEF), Nkeriuka Enwelum, made the assertion, yesterday, in Enugu at a two-day dialogue on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as Child Rights, while presenting a paper on child malnutrition situation in Nigeria: An overview.

Enwelum said some

benefits of good nutrition include increase in school participation by one year and adult wages by between five to 50 per cent, among others.

She said that the consequences of malnutrition include impaired brain development and lower Intelligence Quotient (IQ), low birth weight, weakened immune system leading to increase in infectious diseases and premature death.

She said about 45 per

cent of child deaths were linked to poor nutrition which mostly occur in low and middle-income countries adding that malnutrition in children include wasting, stunting, underweight, while overweight was visible among adults.

Enwelum stressed that malnutrition should be avoided at all cost through provision and eating of all classes of foods, maintaining that failure to prevent and treat

malnutrition could result in long-term cognitive and growth impacts and loss of income for households and up to 15 per cent loss in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for Nigeria.

In his presentation, Dr. Chidi Ezinwa of the Department of Mass Communication, Enugu State University of Science and Technology (ESUT), said Nigeria ranked 160th on the 2020 world SDGs index from 159th in 2019.

He said SDGs could not

be realised without fulfilling the rights of children in SDG index from 159th in 2019 to 160th in 2020 adding: "The SDGs index above shows that many rights of children are yet to be fulfilled in Nigeria, hence Nigeria is far from realising the SDGs."

He stressed that the SDGs included several rights of children to be fulfilled without which progress would not be made in achieving them.

SEC urges NESG to support capital market economic development roles

The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) has restated the vital role the capital market plays in the development of any country through the provision of long term funds for infrastructure development among others.

Director-General of SEC, Lamido Yuguda, stated this when a team from the Nigerian Economic Summit Group (NESG) visited the commission in Abuja recently, to collaborate with the SEC towards the development of the economy.

The SEC boss said that the capital market can actually do more in the areas of provision of

necessary infrastructure for the country in a bid to support the government in its developmental efforts.

"Our collective economic power is bigger than the government and in many countries the capital market actually funds the government. When you save, the finance is used to create economic value that actually enhances living and this translates to a win-win."

While stressing the need for collaboration with the NESG, he said both organisations could do more for the economic development of the country, he said: "You get financial returns and also utility from the investment and this is

actually achievable."

"On the capital market, it is a welcome development that we are talking with the NESG for there is something that really needs to happen in this country. When you look at our policy environment, in many areas it is not conducive for the return of capital to investors and we are working hard to tackle this."

He noted that the telecommunications companies are successful because no one is getting the service for free as everyone pays adding: "We all pay for the services, no one gets the services for free, but when we move on our roads, we

say we don't want to pay for it. In other countries, people pay for their roads and they are happy doing so, because the roads are good.

"We need to collaborate with a group like NESG. Once we are able to put things right, investors will be willing to put in money and there will be returns."

Speaking, Chief Executive Officer of NESG, Laoye Jaiyeola, who expressed concern that the banking sector was being overstressed, urged the Federal Government and corporate organisations to look towards the capital market for their funding needs.

Jaiyeola stated that transactions could be restructured to raise bonds, bills and all the things that would fund whatever is needed to be funded without going through the banks.

He said: "The securities market needs to take the bull by the horn otherwise, we are going to be in perpetual debts as a nation and that will not help us. That is one of reasons we advocating an Investments and Securities Act that will ensure that the needed funding for development in Nigeria is given priority and then we can find Nigeria for a long term."

CIIN stresses family values at Ramadan Tafsir

Stories By **JOHNMARK UKOKO**

The Chartered Insurance Institute of Nigeria (CIIN) has once again demonstrated its commitment to raising professionals, who should display professionalism at

home and at the work place.

To ensure insurance professionalism across board, the institute in its 2022 Ramadan Tafsir focuses on Nurturing Families: Panacea To Societal Ills And Youths Restiveness, which helped to clarify the role of parents

in building good families as viable units of society.

President of CIIN, Dr. Muftan Oyegunle, explained that Tafsir was derived from the Arab word 'FASARA,' which means to lift the curtain, to make clear, to show the objective, stressing that by

analogy, it aims to clarify the true meaning of Quran and its injunctions.

"We are in a season where we should reflect on the wisdom and guidance that comes with the Islamic faith, the responsibility that human beings should have for one another, and to God.

It is also a time of intense devotion to Allah.

"With these reasons, I urge us to continue the holy month of Ramadan to stay close to Allah by seeking for forgiveness of our sins, praying for our country, families and entire humanity," he stressed.



From left to right: Vice President, Federal Republic of Nigeria, Prof. Yemi Osinbajo, Secretary to the Government of Federation, Boss Mustapha, Minister of State, Federal Ministry of Industry, Trade & Investment, Amb. Mariam Katagum and Executive Director/CEO, Nigeria Export Promotion Council (NEPC), Dr. Ezra Yakusak; at the National conference on Non-Export 2022 titled "Export for Survival Optimising Nigeria's Non-Oil Export Potentials yesterday in Abuja.

Now that Tobacco Control Fund has been

By **PHILIP JAKPOR**

Sustainable funding is crucial to winning the tobacco control war and no one understands this better than the tobacco industry. Realising that low-and middle-income countries like Nigeria devote meagre or zero allocation to implementing tobacco control policies, the tobacco industry has cleverly etched its footprint in sectors where government agencies are financially crippled.

The industry is particularly active in the agricultural sector and so-called youth empowerment and skills acquisition trainings that are well choreographed to garner endorsements from public officials who see them as openings for partnerships with a supposed "stakeholder" to achieve "societal good".

But such endorsements and the partnerships that follow are exactly what the World Health Organisation (WHO) discourages and cautions Parties to the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) to be wary about. Article 5.3 of the FCTC specifically urges parties to protect their public health policies from the commercial and other vested interests of the tobacco industry.

The WHO also encourages governments to ban all tobacco industry Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities, establish and/or enforce a code of conduct with the aim to limit interactions between government officials and the tobacco industry, and when such interactions are strictly necessary, they must be transparent. It also suggests that where a code of conduct exists, regular trainings and awareness on tobacco industry inferences in line with Article 5.3 must be conducted for public officials, among others.

But the tobacco industry is also smart albeit in the negative. To circumvent the recommendations of the Convention, tobacco corporations yearly deploy huge financial war chests into compromising and creating conflicts of interest with public officials especially in sectors where government intervention is non-existent or inadequate. In this way, the tobacco industry effectively clips the hands of governments in regulating the tobacco business. They also pump huge resources into tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorships that seem harmless on the surface but are in fact, subtle ways of recruiting the next generation of smokers.

CAPPA cautions FG against accepting Philip Morris' COVID-19 vaccine

The Corporate Accountability and Public Participation Africa (CAPPA) has alerted the Federal Government to the possibility of the Canadian government approaching it to accept the Medicago COVID-19 vaccine (Covifenz), which has not been approved by the World Health Organisation (WHO).

The WHO refused to approve the Medicago vaccine because Philip Morris is a major shareholder in the pharmaceutical company. Public health groups across the globe including in Canada support the WHO decision and have called on the Canadian government to find a suitable investor to replace Philip Morris in the company's shareholding.

Medicago has also signaled that it is seeking alternative investors

and want the Canadian and Quebec governments to help facilitate such a transition. Unfortunately, the transition has not happened.

In a statement issued in Lagos, CAPPA said that as signatory to the WHO's first public health treaty - the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO-FCTC) Nigeria should remain committed to its obligations including Article 5.3 which advised Parties to insulate their public health policy from the vested and commercial interests of the tobacco industry.

Guidelines for implementing this obligation make clear that "the tobacco industry should not be a partner in any initiative linked to setting or implementing public health policies, given that its interests are in direct

conflict with the goals of public health.

"Parties are directed that they "should not endorse, support, form partnerships with or participate in activities of the tobacco industry described as socially responsible."

Executive Director of CAPPA, Akinbode Oluwafemi said: "In as much as we appreciate the Canadian government for supplying COVID-19 Vaccines to Nigeria, we urge our government to be circumspect and ensure the product is not the Philip Morris funded Covifenz. An industry that kills its customers and the rest of us who are exposed to tobacco via secondhand smoke cannot lead the way in solving either the tobacco menace or the coronavirus pandemic."

Oluwafemi explained that Philip Morris is

primarily a manufacturer of lethal products and continues to actively oppose smoking reduction measures across the globe including in Nigeria where its executives through well publicized articles promote heated tobacco products as a less harmful alternative to cigarettes despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary.

Through an initiative called the Conrad Nigeria Challenge, Philip Morris-funded Foundation for Smoke-Free World (FSFW) supports young people in the education sector, who are subtly brainwashed into believing that the tobacco company is socially responsible and a stakeholder in public good.

"With at least nine other WHO-approved vaccines that are not tainted by tobacco companies' funding in COVAX kitty, Nigeria is

not obliged to accept vaccines tainted with industry funding. In fact, Nigeria can contact COVAX directly to obtain the approved products"

Echoing the position of public health groups in Canada, Oluwafemi said rather than pose as a front for Philip Morris that the Canadian government should stand for public health by replacing Philip Morris shareholding in Medicago and stop partnerships that violate its FCTC obligations.

"The control of one pandemic should not compromise another. COVID-19 vaccines or any other health product from companies with ties to the tobacco industry are not welcome in Nigeria. The acceptance of the Philip Morris vaccine and its use violates the FCTC Article 5.3," he insisted.

Shanghai fences up Covid-hit areas, fuelling fresh outcry

Shanghai authorities battling an outbreak of COVID-19 have erected fences outside residential buildings, sparking a fresh public outcry over a lockdown that has forced much of the city's 25 million people indoors.

Images of white hazmat suit-clad workers sealing entrances of housing blocks and closing off entire streets with roughly two metre-tall green fencing went viral on social media, prompting questions and complaints from residents.

"This is so disrespectful of the rights of the people inside, using metal barriers to enclose them like domestic animals," said one user on the social media platform Weibo.

One video showed residents shouting from balconies at workers trying to set up fencing before relenting and taking it away. Other videos showed people trying to pull fences down.

"Isn't this a fire hazard?" asked another Weibo user.

Many of the fences were erected around compounds designated "sealed areas" – buildings where at least one person tested positive for COVID-19, meaning residents are forbidden from leaving their front doors.

It was not clear what prompted authorities to resort to fencing. A notice dated Saturday from one local authority shared online said it was imposing a "hard quarantine" in some areas.

Reuters was not able to verify the authenticity of the notice or all of the images but saw green fencing on a street in central Shanghai on Sunday.

This week, Reuters has also seen police in hazmat suits patrolling Shanghai streets, setting up roadblocks and asking pedestrians to return home.

The Shanghai government did not respond to a request for comment.

MISERY

China's most populous city and most important economic hub is battling the country's biggest COVID-19 outbreak with a policy that forces all positive cases into quarantine centres.

The lockdown, which for many residents has lasted over three weeks, has fuelled frustration over access to food and medical care, lost wages, family separation and quarantine conditions.

It has also dragged on the world's second-largest economy, with factory production disrupted by snarled supply chains and difficulties faced by locked-down residents returning to work. read more

Shanghai is carrying out daily citywide COVID-19 tests and accelerating the transfer of positive cases to central facilities to eradicate virus transmission outside quarantine areas.

In the past week, authorities have also transferred entire communities, including uninfected people, saying they need to disinfect their homes, according to residents and social media posts.

Many residents have turned to the internet to vent about the lockdown and express dissent, using euphemisms and other means to battle government censors who often remove content critical of the authorities.

Videos of "Do You Hear The People Sing?", a protest anthem from "Les Misérables", have been widely reposted, with the title of the French musical receiving over 90 million mentions on WeChat on Saturday, the chat app's data showed.

Evolution of healthcare service in Nigeria

By **BY SHARON O. ISAALAH**, Head, Science, Technology and Health Desk

For a proper understanding of the current health situation in Nigeria, it is very important to historicize the evolution of its healthcare system and within that framework examine some of the pitfalls that are associated with various policies.

Before the coming of Europeans to Nigeria, the indigenous peoples that made up the country relied entirely on indigenous herbal and fauna knowledge to solve various health conditions. The healthcare system was based on the quality knowledge of practitioners as well as defined ways of apprenticeship to qualify as a healer.

With the coming of Europeans from the fifteenth century and the subsequent introduction of Western medicine, healthcare services became monetized so that health services were rendered for a standard fee. Although the colonial government did not overtly introduce Western medicine to rural folks, the importation of Western-trained medical doctors as well as Western medicine coupled with the influx of missionaries that used Western drugs as a means of evangelism, the seeds of drastic change in traditional medicine were sown. One key factor that led to the undermining of traditional medicine and its subsequent neglect was the missionaries' association of traditional medicine with witchcraft, Satanism, and evil. By 1960 when Nigeria gained her independence, Western medicine

had been firmly established in urban centres, while missionary activities had also penetrated some rural communities. It was this skeletal framework that the governments built on after independence.

The underpinning philosophy of the First Republic was to ensure that Western-styled healthcare delivery became the primary source of health service in the country and to achieve this, the government invested heavily in health by awarding scholarships to students to study medicine, nursing, and other allied professions abroad. At the same time, the government of the day was also building hospitals both in capital cities in the states and key urban centres. Equipping hospitals with personnel and consumables became the priority of the government. On their return from overseas, the early trained medical doctors were placed in key positions in the health sector, while the public was encouraged by the government to patronize public hospitals and Western pharmaceuticals that were provided free or heavily subsidized by the government.

This welfare orientation of Nigeria's First Republic, incidentally, could not be sustained for long due to the downturn in oil prices and the increasing corruption in political circles. The consequences of this development were dire: consumables became scarce commodities in hospitals, epileptic payment of salaries of health workers became the order of the day, and a deteriorating condition of service increased the mass migration

of medical personnel out of the country. At the same time, most health posts in rural and semi-urban communities were abandoned, and the rural folks who had initially had access to Western medicine and government generosity were left to fend for themselves. On the other hand, the patronage of Western medicine at the expense of traditional medicine had led to the scarcity of highly skilled and knowledgeable traditional medical practitioners as most of them died without passing on their knowledge to the younger generation. Even if they had wanted to do so, it was difficult for them because a majority of the younger generation had been introduced to Western education and religion, which influenced their perception of traditional medicine as inferior to Western medicine and evil in their religious conviction.

The confusion that these developments generated led to the rise of private medical practice both in urban centres and rural communities. The need to meet Nigeria's health challenges and the gap that was created by the exodus of qualified Western-trained practitioners as well as the dearth of skilled traditional medical practitioners paved the way for the increase of quacks and fake drugs from the 1980s onward.

The introduction of private health practitioners led to the informal introduction of user fees in healthcare delivery followed by a rise in the cost of healthcare services. However, because of the economic downturn in the country starting from the late 1970s and

the structural adjustment program that was initiated in the mid-1980s leading to the mass retrenchment in both the public and private sectors, fewer people could access private healthcare services. This situation led to the massive importation of sub-standard drugs into the country. Furthermore, the breakdown of state machinery and the poor coordination of activities in the health sector encouraged unqualified personnel to set up health centres, quasi hospitals, chemist shops, and drug hawkers. This situation generated an outcry for the complete overhaul of the health sector which culminated in the promulgation of Decree 34 of 1999 which established the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS).

Healthcare services have undergone tremendous transformation since Nigeria's independence in 1960. While significant progress was made in the first two decades, the economic downturn resulting from the plunging oil price on which Nigeria was dependent led to a series of twists and turns in the health sector. The structural adjustment program signalled a significant shift from a predominantly welfare scheme to the introduction of user fees and the subsequent proliferation of private healthcare provision. The chaos that followed this highly unregulated private healthcare and the introduction of fake drugs into the market increased the rate of maternal and child mortality as well as a general reduction in life expectancy in Nigeria.

WHO recommends vaccination of Under-5 children against Malaria

As part of strategies to reduce malaria, especially in endemic communities in Africa, the World Health Organisation (WHO) has endorsed the use of vaccines to prevent the disease among children aged six months to five years.

While highlighting the devastating impact of the malaria scourge which was estimated to have risen to 228 million cases in Africa, with 602, 020 reported deaths, WHO expressed concern that the newly developed vaccine was of limited supply to countries that needed it.

In its message to mark World Malaria Day 2022, WHO's Regional Director for Africa, Dr Matshidiso Moeti, said there was an urgent need to scale up the use of vaccines against malaria.

She said: "The past year has seen significant breakthroughs in malaria prevention and control, in spite of the COVID-19 pandemic. Landmark recommendations on the use of the first vaccine against malaria – RTS, S – were released by the WHO late last year.

"This vaccine will be used to prevent malaria among children aged six months to five years, who live in moderate- to high-transmission settings."

She said this year's theme, "Harness innovation to reduce the malaria disease burden and save lives," aligned with an earlier call to urgently scale up innovation and the deployment of new tools in the fight against malaria, while



Dr Matshidiso Moeti

advocating for equitable access to malaria prevention and treatment tools, within the context of building health system resilience.

Moeti expressed worry that despite the groundbreaking advance in the development of new tools to fight malaria, with the potential to save millions of lives, supplies are currently limited.

She, therefore, said that it was important to ensure that the vaccine doses that are available are utilised for maximum impact while ensuring the continued availability of other preventive measures to those most at risk.

According to the WHO Regional Director, malaria remained a significant public health and development challenges.

For instance, she said: "In the last year, about 95 per cent of the estimated 228 million cases occurred in the WHO/ Afro Region, along with 602 020 reported deaths. Six of our countries, the worst-impacted by malaria in the region, are reported to have accounted for up to 55 per cent of cases globally, and for 50 per cent of these deaths."

She added that despite some

slowing of progress to reduce malaria cases and deaths, and the disruptions to health services caused by COVID-19, the situation was still better than it was in 2000.

"We need to reignite that momentum and build on the recent advances. For example, seasonal malaria chemoprevention (SMC) campaigns were implemented as planned in 2021, ensuring protection for an additional 11.8 million children. Indoor residual spraying was also carried out, and long-lasting insecticidal nets were distributed, largely as planned.

"Other notable achievements include the scaled implementation of RTS vaccine pilots in Ghana, Kenya and Malawi, which reached up to 900 000 children.

"The ultimate goal is to reduce the number of people catching and dying from malaria. This requires a focus on research and on leveraging available evidence to ensure that our targeted interventions are an efficient use of resources, which produce measurable results," she said.

Moeti further said there was the need to work on drug and insecticide resistance, as well as focus on new strains of malaria arising in the region, which are more difficult to detect and treat.

World Malaria Day is marked annually on April 25th to focus global attention on malaria and its devastating impact on families, communities, and societal development, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa.

NCF head coach, Asanka Gurusinha resigns

Head Coach Asanka Gurusinha has resigned his appointment with the Nigeria Cricket Federation (NCF) on health grounds.

Asanka, who is also the High-Performance Manager of the federation, through his resignation letter dated March 31, 2022, revealed that the complicity surrounding his health is affecting his effectiveness in the game.

According to the statement by NCF, Asanka whose service was secured two years ago on December 1, 2020, has tremendously added value to the cricket team especially by inculcating the culture of discipline in the cricketer.

The NCF emphasising the feat recorded by Asanka in establishing a coaching template to help prospective cricket coaches to excel in the sports affirmed that Asanka's job will be allowed to run until June 30, 2022, according to the contract terms.

The NCF statement signed by the Secretary-General, Taiwo Oriss, read: "This is to inform

the general public and all cricket stakeholders in Nigeria that Asanka Gurusinha has resigned from his role as Head Coach & High-Performance Manager of the Nigeria Cricket Federation.

"In a letter sent to the Board of the Federation dated 31 March 2022, Asanka's resignation is in connection with health complications which made him unable to effectively conduct his role.

"Asanka was employed in the role on 1st December 2020 and within the short period, he made significant impacts in the game in Nigeria, notably bringing in more discipline to players' approach to the game and establishing a coaching development template that has been rolled out for Nigerian coaches.

"In accordance with the terms of his contract, his resignation becomes effective on 30 June 2022. He would spend the next couple of months working with the Federation on a smooth transition and agreeing on a plan with his coaching team for the Federation's upcoming activities.

"The Board thanks Asanka for the immense contributions he has made to the development of the game in Nigeria, whilst wishing him the best with the surgery he expects to undertake and the subsequent recovery.

"Asanka Gurusinha is well noted for the stellar role he played in helping Sri Lanka clinch the 1996 World Cup. As he returns to his base in Melbourne, Australia, the Federation would explore options to develop future sustained relationships in one form or another," the statement said.



Sexual Assault: 'China excluded from WTA Tour'

WTA chief Steve Simon said no tournament will be held in China in 2022 until they find a common ground in the dispute between the Peng Shua and China Vice Premier, Zhang Gaoli.

Peng has accused Zhang of sexual assault in November last year through a post that alerted the WTA which are very much concerned about her wellbeing.

Though the former doubles world No 1 had denied such an incident, WTA undeterred by the tennis star's claims insist that none of its tournaments will take place in China until the issue is resolved among the concerned parties.

Peng, who had earlier announced her retirement from professional tennis made a shocking return in February to the Winter Olympics held in China where she had a meeting with the WTA CEO.

Following Peng's accusations of being assaulted sexually, the WTA in a swift reaction suspended all its games from China, a move that saw the women's elite tennis governing body losing millions of dollars in broadcast rights and sponsorship.

In a statement by Simon, he said that the WTA Tour for the year 2022 will be announced soon and predicated that the event will hold on the fairly solid ground according to Tennis Podcast.

Steve stressed that until a resolution is reached with the Chinese government, WTA, and Peng whose whereabouts are unknown after the winter Olympics, none of its events will be held in the Asian country.

Though the ATP Tour will be held in the country despite the synergy that exists with WTA, CEO Steve Simon adjudged that the men's tennis world governing body has no athlete that was abused.



Antonio Rudiger agree a four-year deal with Real Madrid



Chelsea defender, Antonio Rudiger, has agreed on a four-year deal to join Spanish giants, Real Madrid, next summer after refusing to sign a contract extension with the UEFA Champions League defending champions.

Antonio, whose contract comes to an end this summer in the West London club, will join Real Madrid on a free trans

Though there have been growing speculations of the

player heading to Italy to join Juventus, Madrid seems to have won the race to get Rudiger's signature.

More so, Los Blancos arch-rivals Barcelona, which are undergoing a rebuilding process were also interested in the former Roma defender who joined Chelsea in 2019 through a deal worth £29million.

According to reports, Chelsea was ready to make the player the highest-paid defender in the club's history with over £200,000 earnings per week, but signing-on and agent fees shattered the agreement.

However, with the news of the player heading to Spain, Chelsea manager Thomas Tuchel lamented that the player was an integral part of his plans for next season.

Speaking to Sky Sports after West Ham match, where

Chelsea narrowly grab a win, Tuchel said: "The situation is that he wants to leave the club. He informed me of this in a private talk.

"We gave everything, me and the club, but we could not fight anymore because of the actions. Without the sanctions we would at least be able to carry on fighting, but our hands are tied. We don't take it personally. It is his decision.

"He is a key figure and will stay that way until the end of the season. But it is disappointing. We will miss him a lot.

"He gives courage in the dressing room. The kind everyone is afraid of, but the kind to play 50-55 games at an outstanding level. He is a top defender in the last one-and-a-half years for me. We then need to find another solution," he added.

Manchester City defeats R'Madrid in a 7-goal CL thriller

Manchester City has beaten Real Madrid 4-3 in the first leg of the UEFA Champions League.

An early minute goal from the Belgian Kevin De Bruyne and a second by Gabriel Jesus were able to hand Manchester City a lead over Los Blancos in the first half.

The Carlo Ancelotti side, who displaced Chelsea in the quarter-final, responded to Pep Guardiola's team in search of their first European elite trophy through Karim Benzema to end the first 45 minutes on a 2-1 scoreline.

Real Madrid and Manchester City have met seven times in Champions League history, today's inclusive, with the English side that once tallied the same number of wins edging the Spanish giants by one today.

Both teams have drawn twice from records but Madrid in the three seasons they have clashed with the Blues of Manchester, have won two of the three on aggregates.

Consequently, the second half recorded four extra goals to end the match in a 4-3 win for Manchester City as they prepare for the return leg at Santiago Bernabeu.



Former Nigeria Minister, Graham-Douglas dies at 82

Alabo Tonye Graham-Douglas, a former Nigeria Minister of Youth and Sports have been reported dead, The Trumpet gathered.

The former minister whose death was confirmed by Emmanuel Ogbache, President of the Abuja chapter, Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ), died at the age of 82.

Graham-Douglas, an indigene of Kalabari Kingdom in Rivers State until his death, was the paramount head of the Oribibi Douglas Group of the Houses of Abonnema.

The former Federal Minister served the country in various capacities right from General Ibrahim Babangida's regime where

he was the Minister of Aviation in 1989.

Following, during the advent of the country's nascent democracy, Graham-Douglas who played a key role in the Peoples Democratic Party's successes in the 1999 general elections where he was a member of the board of trustees, was appointed by former President Olusegun Obasanjo as the Minister of Labour and Productivity.

Sequel to this, the now-deceased Kalabari renowned chief was moved to the Ministry of Tourism by former President Obasanjo in 2001 after the latter reshuffled his cabinet.

According to reports, Graham-Douglas,

who was a one-time Commissioner of Tourism in the 1980s, organised an ancient festival in Port Harcourt called CANIRIV. The seven days festival was held in Rivers State during the Christmas season.

Though The Trumpet is yet to unravel the cause of the death of Nigeria's elder statesman and a founding member of the PDP, it is worthy to state that Graham-Douglas was instrumental to the creation of Akuku-Toru Local Government Area in Rivers State.



Tonye Graham-Douglas

'The greatest discovery of all time is that a person can change his future by merely changing his attitude'

— Oprah Winfrey.

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High school students with U.S. Embassy Intellectual Property Attorney Tanya Hill during the two-day IP symposium organized by the U.S. Mission in Lagos

U.S. Mission promotes intellectual property rights protection in Nigeria

By **OROWO VICTORIA**
OJIEH Foreign Affairs
Correspondent

United States government is committed to promoting public awareness of the importance of protecting and enforcing intellectual property rights (IPR) as a strategic resource for bolstering economic growth in Nigeria.

The U.S. Mission in collaboration with the American Business Council, hosted the second edition of its Intellectual Property (IP) Symposium on "Intellectual Property and Youth: Innovating for a Better Future," the theme for World IP Day 2022.

The two-day symposium, led by the United States Department of Justice's INL-funded Office of Overseas Prosecutorial Development, Assistance and Training (OPDAT)'s International Computer Hacking and Intellectual Property Attorney Adviser (ICHIP), brought

together key stakeholders in Nigeria's IPR protection framework, including leading entertainment and creative industry leaders.

Delivering remarks during the opening ceremony of the symposium in Lagos, U.S. Ambassador Mary Beth Leonard noted that protection of intellectual property rights is critical for any economy that wants to foster a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship.

Ambassador Leonard noted that strong intellectual property rights protection is essential to creating jobs and opening new markets for goods and services. She encouraged stakeholders in the intellectual property space to shore up Nigeria's IPR legal framework and lay a solid foundation for youth to drive innovation and engender a more prosperous Nigeria.

"Nigerian youth are an incredible source of ingenuity and creativity," Ambassador Leonard said. "A strong system of intellectual property rights assures inventors, industrial

designers, musicians, and artists alike that their creative content will be protected and valued."

The symposium featured a plenary session, thematic panel discussions and exhibitions with particular focus on Nigeria's burgeoning entertainment and creative industries. Participants discussed how intellectual property rights can support their goals, help transform ideas into reality, generate income, create jobs, and make a positive impact.

Leading industry, legal and academic speakers explored options for making Nigerian IP infrastructure work for innovative youth in Nigeria, on one hand, while creative industry pioneers discussed negotiating opportunities for Nigeria's creative industry.

The symposium featured a spirited secondary school debate on the relevance of IPR protection for Nigeria's better future, as well as thought provoking art performances to spotlight the place of creativity.

Through economic

diplomacy overseas, the United States encourages host-nation governments to establish predictable legal regimes to ensure intellectual property rights can be secured.

OPDAT's ICHIP Attorney at the U.S. Embassy in Abuja serves as the sub-Saharan African regional hub for developing and administering technical and developmental assistance programs designed to enhance the capabilities of foreign justice sector institutions and law enforcement to prevent and combat intellectual property offenses and cybercrimes.

The U.S. Mission Nigeria organized the first intellectual property symposium in 2019 on "Counterfeit Pharmaceuticals and Piracy." The Embassy-funded original film, Fishbone, premiered at the 2019 symposium.

This valuable awareness-raising film on the dangers of counterfeit pharmaceuticals has now been translated into French for the benefit of IP stakeholders in Francophone African countries.

Male contraceptive pill could enter human trials in just two months, inventors say, after study on mice showed it could prevent 99% of pregnancies

A male contraceptive pill could be tested in humans in just two months, scientists say — after it showed promise in trials on mice.

Researchers at the University of Minnesota, who invented the drug, say it could enter clinical trials as early as this July.

The non-hormonal pill, medically named YCT529, blocked 99 per cent of pregnancies in mice during tests — putting it on a par with the female birth control medication.

It also did not trigger any visible side-effects, such as weight gain, and male mice were able to father pups four to six weeks after administration was stopped.

Dr Gunda Georg, a chemist at the Minneapolis-based school, revealed to Vice that the drug could enter human trials in 'the second half of this year'.

She said the previous trials showed it had the 'desired effect' in mice, while also ensuring they remain 'viable and healthy'.

'Of course, you have to be careful with this analysis because they are mice and not humans, but nevertheless the effect was very, very promising,' he said.

YourChoice Therapeutics — the manufacturer which says it aims to 'revolutionize' contraception — will apply to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for permission to begin the trials.

The number of participants being recruited and their ages were not revealed.

Scientists have been trying since the 1950s to develop an effective male oral contraceptive, including pills, gels and injections.

None have been approved, and even the most promising options are still thought to be years away from being

widely available.

A major hurdle is that the female contraceptive works by preventing ovulation, which happens once a month.

Any male contraceptives would need to interrupt the production of millions of sperm made by men every day.

Most of the drugs undergoing clinical trials target testosterone, blocking the male sex hormone from producing healthy sperm cells.

Doctors say, however, that the testosterone-blocking action can trigger weight gain, depression and increase cholesterol.

'We wanted to develop a non-hormonal male contraceptive to avoid these side effects,' Abdullah Al Noman, who helped create YCT529, said.

YCT529 targets retinoic acid receptor alpha (RAR-α), a protein heavily involved in the development of cells, including sperm formation.

When they gave the drug orally to mice for four weeks, it 'dramatically reduced' their sperm counts, the researchers said.

It was also 99 percent effective in preventing pregnancy and worked 'without any observable side effects'.

'The mice could father pups again four to six weeks after they stopped receiving the compound,' the scientists said.

Condoms, which are 'prone to failure', and a vasectomy — a surgical procedure that permanently prevents pregnancy — are the only effective birth control options for men.

Men need 'an effective, long-lasting but reversible contraceptive, similar to the birth control pill for women', they said.

• Culled from Daily Mail of UK