

TODAY'S MEDIA TRENDS

CHANNEL5TV

FEBRUARY 18, 2026

THE GDELT PROJECT



Navigating Legislative Power Plays, Diplomatic Deadlocks, and Multi-Front Challenges Towards the 2027 Horizon.

DAY-AT-A-GLANCE & MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

FEB 18, 2026: PRESIDENT TINUBU SIGNS ELECTORAL ACT 2026



- Rapid Consolidation (24h after Passage)
- Manual Backup Proviso (Controversial Hybrid System)
- Strategic Timing for Jan 2027 Polls

NIGERIA'S INTERNAL CRISIS & GOVERNANCE

- **Security Prevails:** 100 US Troops Arrive, Plateau Mining Tragedy (37+ Deaths, Toxic Gas), Ondo APC Violence
- **Economic Strain:** 1.76 Trillion Naira Revenue Shortfall (OPEC Quota Failure), Marginal Inflation Slowdown

KEY LEGISLATION

- Electoral Act 2026 (300-Day Notice, Manual Backup)
- Lagos Wealth Fund Bill (Subnational Autonomy)
- New Industrial Policy (Revive Factories)
- Executive Order on Oil Revenue (Direct to Federation Account)

DOMESTIC STABILITY

- Gabon Social Media Suspension (Labor Unrest)
- Lassa Fever Outbreak (45 Deaths, 300 Cases)

GLOBAL DIPLOMATIC STALEMATES

- **Russia-Ukraine Peace Talks:** No Breakthrough on Territorial Control (Donbas Issue Remains)
- **US-Iran Nuclear Negotiations (Geneva/Oman):** 'Good Progress' on Principles, but 'Gunboat Diplomacy' & Massive US Deployment (Carrier Groups) Shadow Talks. Trump Warns of 'Traumatic Consequences'
- **African Union:** Slavery/Colonialism as Crimes Against Humanity (Reparations Push)

GEOPLITICS

- US Military Presence in Nigeria (Shift to Intelligence Support)
- Turkish-Ethiopian Relations (Erdogan Visit, Horn of Africa Influence)

DEEP DIVE: TRENDS & THEMES



THE REVERSION TO MANUAL SAFEGUARDS

Managed Democracy? 'Hybrid' system with manual collation (Form EC8A) as primary backup viewed as strategic incumbency tool. Speed of enactment signals desire to formalize rules, sparking criticism of potential fraud institutionalization.



GUNBOAT DIPLOMACY & ENERGY ANXIETY

US 'Maximum Pressure' on Iran creates high-risk environment. Fragile understanding vs. demand for behavioral shift (missiles, proxies) raises risk of 'tactical accident' in Gulf, impacting 20% of global oil.



STATE FRAGILITY VS. REVENUE AMBITION

Disconnect between \$1T economy goal and state capacity. Massive oil revenue losses, underfunded intelligence agencies, and persistent non-state actor influence highlight structural decay outpacing reform.

STRATEGIC FORESIGHT & RECOMMENDATIONS

TIMELINE	SHORT TERM (1-4 WEEKS)	MEDIUM TERM (1-6 MONTHS)	LONG TERM (1-5 YEARS)
	<p>Increased Social Unrest/Litigation (Electoral Act Challenges), Heightened Security Deployments (Ondo), High Risk of US-Iran 'Tactical Accident'.</p>	<p>Focus on Budget Implementation (Security Funding), US-Iran Talks Decisive Round (Draft Texts or Strikes?), Potential Deterioration of Domestic Security.</p>	<p>2027 Election as Ultimate Test (Manual Proviso Impact on Trust), AU Reparations Push Gains Momentum, Altered Diplomatic Relations.</p>
RECOMMENDATIONS	<p>FOR INTERNATIONAL POLICY</p> <p>Security Strategy: Focus on Funding Oversight, Not Just Personnel Deployment.</p> <p>Diplomatic Engagement: Prepare for Iranian Brinkmanship, Contingent on Broad Behavioral Shift.</p> <p>Regional Stability: Anticipate More Formal AU Requests for Restitution & Artifact Returns.</p>		<p>FOR PRIVATE SECTOR/INVESTORS</p> <p>Regulatory Compliance: Verify Safety Standards in Extractive Industries (Mining Risk), Adapt to New Vara Framework.</p> <p>Market Confidence: Prepare for Fintech e-invoicing, Assess Tax Risks.</p> <p>Energy Sector Shifts: Reassess Joint Venture Structures with Direct Revenue Flow to Federation Account.</p>

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NIGERIA ENACTS CONTENTIOUS
ELECTORAL REFORMS AMIDST
STALLED GLOBAL PEACE TALKS
AND HEIGHTENED REGIONAL
INSECURITY

DAY-AT-A-GLANCE

February 18, 2026, was defined by a rapid consolidation of executive power in Nigeria and a diplomatic stalemate in Europe. President Bola Tinubu signed the Electoral Act 2026 into law, a move that occurred just 24 hours after its passage by the National Assembly. The legislation, particularly the inclusion of a "manual backup" for electronic result transmission, has ignited a firestorm of criticism from opposition groups and civil society, who argue it institutionalizes potential for electoral fraud. This legislative push appears strategically timed to finalize the framework for the January 2027 elections, leveraging a parliamentary majority to bypass significant minority dissent and street protests ([Source](#), [Source](#), [Source](#)).

On the international stage, two major diplomatic efforts in Geneva concluded with mixed signals. Peace talks between Russia, Ukraine, and the United States ended without a break-

through, primarily stalled by intractable disagreements over territorial control in the Donbas region. Simultaneously, US-Iran nuclear negotiations, mediated by Oman, reported "good progress" on guiding principles, yet remain shadowed by massive US military deployments in the Gulf and President Trump's "gunboat diplomacy" rhetoric. The administration is using the threat of "traumatic consequences" to force a comprehensive deal that includes Iran's missile program and regional proxies, moving beyond the narrow nuclear focus of previous iterations ([Source](#), [Source](#), [Source](#)).

Domestically, Nigeria faces a multi-front crisis. Security remains precarious as 100 US military personnel arrived for "training and intelligence" support, even as 37 artisanal miners died from toxic gas exposure in Plateau State and violence marred APC ward congresses in Ondo State. Economically, while headline inflation showed a marginal slowdown, the government is grappling with a 1.76 trillion naira revenue shortfall due to failed OPEC crude quotas. The juxtaposition of landmark legislation with persistent internal instability suggests an administration focused on structural long-term control while struggling with immediate state capacity and public safety ([Source](#), [Source](#), [Source](#)).

MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

- **Signing of the Electoral Act 2026:** President Tinubu officially signed the repeal and re-enactment of the Electoral Act into law. The act reduces the notice period for elections from 360 to 300 days and maintains a controversial provision allowing for manual collation of results if electronic transmission fails. The President defended the "hybrid" system as a safeguard against broadband instability and hacking ([Source](#), [Source](#), [Source](#)).
- **Stalemate in Russia-Ukraine Peace Talks:** Trilateral meetings in Geneva between Russia, Ukraine, and the US ended without a breakthrough. While minor progress was made on military monitoring, the core issue of territory remains the primary obstacle, with Moscow demanding full control of the Donbas and Kyiv refusing any concessions ([Source](#), [Source](#)).
- **US-Iran Nuclear Diplomacy Under Pressure:** Indirect talks in Geneva mediated by Oman reached an "understanding" on guiding principles for a potential agreement. However, the US maintains two aircraft carrier groups in the region, and President Trump has warned of "difficult times" for Iran if a "fair deal" covering nuclear, missiles, and proxies is not reached quickly ([Source](#), [Source](#)).
- **Legal and Political Escalation Against Nasir El-Rufai:** The former Kaduna State governor was released from EFCC custody only to be immediately picked up by the DSS. He faces a three-count charge involving the alleged wiretapping of National Security Advisor Nuhu Ribadu, a development that has triggered both legal scrutiny and public protests in Kaduna regarding his eight-year tenure ([Source](#), [Source](#)).
- **Mass Fatality Mining Incident in Plateau State:** At least 37 artisanal miners are feared dead in Zurak, Wase local government area, after inhaling toxic gas deep underground. The site was reportedly operated by a Chinese-owned company, and the Nigerian Army has since cordoned off the area ([Source](#), [Source](#)).
- **Nigeria's Failure to Meet OPEC Quotas:** The NUPRC reported a revenue loss of 1.76 trillion naira due to the country's inability to meet OPEC production targets. The shortfall is attributed to oil theft, pipeline vandalism, and operational inefficiencies, highlighting significant drains on the national treasury ([Source](#), [Source](#)).

KEY GOVERNANCE TOPICS

• **Legislation:**

- **Electoral Act 2026:** Enacted to govern the 2027 general elections. Key changes include reducing election notice timelines to avoid Ramadan and the "Clause 60" proviso for manual result backup ([Source](#), [Source](#)).
- **Lagos State Wealth Fund Bill:** A proposed subnational initiative to build a savings base for infrastructure and technology, independent of external direction ([Source](#)).
- **New Industrial Policy:** Launched by the federal government to revive dormant factories and strengthen domestic manufacturing through tax remittances and private sector support ([Source](#), [Source](#)).
- **Executive Order on Oil Revenue:** President Tinubu signed an order directing all oil and gas revenues to flow directly into the Federation Account, stripping NNPC Limited of its 30% management fee and frontier exploration funds ([Source](#)).

• **Geopolitics and International Relations:**

- **US Military Presence in Nigeria:** The arrival of 100 US troops marks a shift toward deeper security reliance on Washington for intelligence and surveillance against non-conventional threats ([Source](#), [Source](#)).
- **Turkish-Ethiopian Relations:** President Erdogan's visit to Addis Ababa signals Ankara's expanding economic and mediating footprint in the Horn of Africa ([Source](#)).
- **African Union Reparations Push:** The AU officially classified slavery and colonialism as crimes against humanity, strengthening calls for reparations and the return of artifacts ([Source](#), [Source](#)).

• **Domestic Stability and Social Order:**

- **Gabon Social Media Suspension:** The ruling junta suspended platforms like WhatsApp and TikTok, citing "false information" and cyberbullying amidst rising labor unrest ([Source](#), [Source](#)).
- **Ondo State Political Violence:** Clashes at APC ward congresses resulted in at least two deaths and several injuries, underscoring the volatility of internal party politics ahead of the 2027 cycle ([Source](#), [Source](#)).
- **Lassa Fever Outbreak:** 45 deaths and nearly 300 confirmed cases recorded across 10 states, highlighting weaknesses in primary healthcare and environmental hygiene ([Source](#), [Source](#)).

LEGISLATION/POLICY

The Nigerian legislative landscape saw a dramatic shift with the immediate enactment of the Electoral Act 2026, which effectively bypasses the "real-time" transmission require-

ment favored by opposition parties. Simultaneously, the executive is moving toward stricter fiscal control of the energy sector through new orders, while subnational entities like Lagos are attempting to create autonomous financial buffers through wealth funds.

- **Electoral Act 2026:** Replaces the 2022 Act. It mandates electronic transmission but includes a legal "proviso" that the signed Form EC8A (manual record) is the primary source for collation if communication fails. It also adjusts the election window to December 2026/January 2027 ([Source](#), [Source](#)).
- **Oil and Gas Revenue Executive Order:** Mandates that all production sharing, profit sharing, royalties, and taxes be paid directly into the Federation Account, removing the NNPC's ability to deduct fees at the source ([Source](#)).
- **National Agriculture Mechanization Program:** A policy to distribute 2,000 tractors to farmers in three phases through subsidized purchase and hiring schemes to ensure food sovereignty ([Source](#), [Source](#)).
- **Vara (Virtual Asset Regulatory Authority) Framework:** A unification model between the NRS, CBN, and SEC to tax and monitor digital asset transactions in Nigeria, aiming to power a \$1 trillion economy ([Source](#)).

HEARINGS & PRESS EVENTS:

- **2026 Budget Defense (Security):** Senate and House committees criticized the "envelope budgeting" system, noting that intelligence agencies received only 30% of their capital allocation despite a national emergency declaration ([Source](#), [Source](#)).

- **Port Concession Investigation:** The House issued a 72-hour ultimatum to agencies and concessionaires to provide documents regarding air and sea port terminal performances from 2006 to 2025 ([Source](#), [Source](#)).
- **Geneva Peace Briefings:** Negotiators from the US, Russia, and Ukraine held press events characterizing talks as "business-like" but acknowledging that key territorial coordination remains stalled ([Source](#)).

DEEP DIVE: TRENDS AND THEMES

The Reversion to Manual Safeguards: The central theme in Nigerian governance is the "managed" evolution of democracy. While the new Electoral Act includes "electronic transmission" in its text for the first time since 1960, the insistence on a manual fallback (Form EC8A) represents a significant win for the ruling party's tactical flexibility. Critics and analysts argue this "hybridity" is a strategic insurance policy for incumbents, allowing them to claim technological advancement while retaining traditional avenues for human interference at collation centers. The speed of the President's signature suggests a desire to end public debate and formalize the rules of engagement well before the January 2027 polls ([Source](#), [Source](#), [Source](#)).

Gunboat Diplomacy and Global Energy Anxiety: The Trump administration's approach to Iran and the Russia-Ukraine conflict is characterized by "maximum pressure" and "legacy-defining" goals. By positioning multiple carrier groups in the Gulf and threatening 25% tariffs on any nation trading with Iran, the US is forcing a binary choice on the global community. The "understanding" reached in Geneva on nuclear principles is fragile, as the

US now demands a total behavioral shift including missiles and proxies. This creates a high-risk environment where a single "tactical accident" could trigger kinetic conflict, impacting 20% of the world's oil supply ([Source](#), [Source](#)).

State Fragility vs. Revenue Ambition: A glaring disconnect exists between Nigeria's ambitious fiscal targets (the \$1 trillion economy goal) and its current state capacity. The loss of 1.76 trillion naira in oil revenue and the "sorry state" of security training schools reported during budget hearings indicate that structural decay is outpacing policy reform. The government's new industrial policy and the centralized control of oil revenues are attempts to plug these leaks, but the persistence of artisanal mining tragedies and the failure to meet OPEC quotas suggest that "non-state actors" and criminal syndicates still hold significant sway over the nation's core assets ([Source](#), [Source](#), [Source](#)).

STRATEGIC FORESIGHT

- **Short Term (1-4 Weeks):** Increased social unrest and litigation are expected in Nigeria as opposition parties and civil society challenge the Electoral Act 2026 in court. In Ondo State, expect heightened security deployments following the violence at APC ward congresses. In the Middle East, the risk of a "tactical accident" remains high as US and Iranian naval forces operate in close proximity near the Strait of Hormuz ([Source](#), [Source](#), [Source](#)).

- **Medium Term (1-6 Months):** The focus will shift to budget implementation for security agencies. If the "supplementary funding" requested by intelligence services is not granted, Nigerian domestic security may continue to deteriorate despite the presence of US advisors. US-Iran talks will likely move to a decisive third round where draft texts must be exchanged or face a return to "maximum pressure" strikes ([Source](#), [Source](#), [Source](#)).
- **Long Term (1-5 Years):** The 2027 election, now set for January, will be the ultimate test of the new Electoral Act. If the "manual proviso" is frequently invoked, it could lead to a permanent erosion of public trust in democratic institutions. Regionally, the AU's push for reparations and the repatriation of artifacts may gain momentum, potentially altering diplomatic relations with former colonial powers in Europe ([Source](#), [Source](#), [Source](#)).

RECOMMENDATIONS & IMPLICATIONS

For International Policy:

- **Security Strategy:** Western allies should recognize that while Nigeria is inviting advisors (US troops), the internal security architecture is chronically underfunded. Policy should focus on "funding oversight" rather than just personnel deployment ([Source](#), [Source](#)).
- **Diplomatic Engagement:** The US-Iran "understanding" is contingent on a broad behavioral shift. Diplomats should prepare for Iranian brinkmanship regarding the Strait of Hormuz as a counter-lever to US tariffs ([Source](#), [Source](#)).

- **Regional Stability:** The AU's resolution on colonial crimes signals a more assertive African diplomatic bloc. International bodies should anticipate more formal requests for artifact returns and economic restitution ([Source](#), [Source](#)).

For Private Sector/Investors:

- **Regulatory Compliance:** Companies in the extractive industries (mining and oil) in Nigeria face extreme risk from "state-level" revenue shortfalls and insecure operations. Investors must verify "Chinese-owned" mining site safety standards following the Plateau tragedy ([Source](#), [Source](#)).
- **Market Confidence:** The new Vara framework for virtual assets offers a path toward legitimacy but also introduces new taxation risks. Fintech firms should prepare for NRS e-invoicing by 2028 ([Source](#), [Source](#)).
- **Energy Sector Shifts:** The direct flow of oil revenue to the Federation Account may reduce the NNPC's autonomy. Joint venture partners should reassess their payment structures and financial exposure to the Nigerian treasury ([Source](#)).

ABOUT THIS REPORT

Today's Media Trends is a public interest experiment in applying deep thematic trend analysis to television news coverage from around the world to explore how responsibly applied advanced AI can help journalists and scholars better understand the overarching

trends, themes and patterns of our global world.

No data is used to train or tune any AI model.

Each morning, in collaboration with the Internet Archive's TV News Archive, we apply Google's Gemini 3 to deeply examine yesterday's coverage from each television news channel to tease out the overarching themes and trends of its news coverage into a richly annotated thematic analysis. Each high-level insight is connected back to the original broadcast, allowing journalists and scholars to understand the dominate themes and trends and instantly click out to the underlying sources for details.

By helping journalists and scholars see the broader trends and patterns of global news coverage, this analysis helps them identify relevant stories and coverage they might not otherwise have encountered and uncover connections, emphases and narrative shifts that enable more comprehensive reporting and deeper, evidence-based research.

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