

TODAY'S MEDIA TRENDS

CHANNELSTV

FEBRUARY 23, 2026

T H E G D E L T P R O J E C T

NIGERIA: CONSOLIDATION & FRAGMENTATION – LEGISLATIVE REFORM, FISCAL CENTRALIZATION, AND PERSISTENT INSECURITY (FEBRUARY 2026)

THE PIVOTAL MOMENT: POWER & LAW

CONSOLIDATION

ELECTORAL ACT 2026

ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSION (BVAS)

MANUAL BACKUP PROVISIO

FISCAL CENTRALIZATION

OIL REVENUES

FEDERATION ACCOUNT

LEGAL OVERREACH & JOB THREAT!

PENGASSAN

NNPC FRONTIER FUND (30% CUT)

EXECUTIVE ORDER TERMINATES EXPLORATION FUND

FCT AREA COUNCIL ELECTIONS: APC NEAR-SWEEP AMIDST LOW TURNOUT & ALLEGATIONS

A FRAGILE STATE: SECURITY & ELITE FRICTION

PERSISTENT INSECURITY & MASSACRES

PLATEAU & ZAMFARA ATTACKS: 50+ KILLED IN COORDINATED RAIDS. GAP BETWEEN MILITARY CLAIMS & RURAL REALITY

LASSA FEVER OUTBREAK: 70 LIVES LOST (7 WEEKS), STRAINING HEALTH SYSTEMS

ELITE POLITICAL WARFARE & "LAWFARE"

EL-RUFAI'S HOME

1BN NAIRA LAWSUIT

FORMER GOVERNOR SUES OVER RAID, SIGNALS DEEPENING RIFT IN RULING CLASS

ECONOMIC PRESSURES & STRATEGIC OUTLOOK

PRIVATE SECTOR CONCERN

HIGH INFLATION

HIGH INTEREST RATES

ECONOMIC CONVERGENCE

RECORD HIGHS

DANGOTE REFINERY: PUBLIC SHARE OFFERING & DOLLAR DIVIDENDS AHEAD

STRATEGIC FORESIGHT: SHORT, MEDIUM, LONG TERM

SHORT TERM (1-4 WEEKS): LEGAL CHALLENGES, MPC DECISION, LASSA PEAK

MEDIUM TERM (1-6 MONTHS): DANGOTE SHARE RUSH, INTENSIFIED ELITE FRICTION

LONG TERM (1-5 YEARS): LITIGIOUS 2027 CYCLE, HEALTH INFRASTRUCTURE TEST

RECOMMENDATIONS & IMPLICATIONS

- INTERNATIONAL: TARGETED INTEL SHARING, ELECTORAL OVERSIGHT (BVAS), PUBLIC HEALTH SUPPORT
- PRIVATE SECTOR: ENERGY ASSET EXPOSURE, REGULATORY RISK PREP, DIGITAL IDENTITY INTEGRATION

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NIGERIA CONSOLIDATION: LEGISLATIVE REFORM AND FISCAL CENTRALIZATION AMIDST PERSISTENT INSECURITY AND ELITE FRICTION

February 23, 2026, marks a pivotal moment in Nigerian governance as President Bola Tinubu signed the **Electoral Act (Repeal and Reenactment) Bill 2026** into law, fundamentally altering the landscape for the 2027 general elections. The day's proceedings were dominated by the fallout from the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Area Council elections, where the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) achieved a near-sweep amidst accusations of [technical rigging and voter apathy](#). Simultaneously, the administration moved to centralize national oil revenues via a sweeping Executive Order that terminates the 30% frontier exploration fund previously held by the NNPC, sparking resistance from oil and gas unions who [warn of legal overreach](#).

The security situation remains fragile, characterized by mass casualty events in the Middle Belt and Northwest. A coordinated attack in Plateau State and a [brutal massacre in Zamfara State](#), where up to 50 residents were killed, highlight the persistent gap

between state military claims and rural reality. This instability is mirrored by elite political warfare, as former Kaduna Governor Nasir El-Rufai initiated a [1 billion Naira lawsuit](#) against the ICPC, alleging an unlawful invasion of his residence, a move widely interpreted as a symptom of a deepening rift within the ruling class and the office of the National Security Adviser (NSA).

On the economic front, the convergence of high-interest rates and inflation remains a primary concern for the private sector. While the stock market continues to [hit record highs](#), the upcoming Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) decision faces immense pressure to balance inflation control with the need for [affordable capital for developers](#) and small businesses. In the health sector, the Nigeria Center for Disease Control (NCDC) is struggling with a Lassa Fever outbreak that has [claimed 70 lives in seven weeks](#), further straining a primary healthcare system undergoing slow and uneven rehabilitation.

DAY-AT-A-GLANCE

The day was characterized by the Tinubu administration's aggressive push to finalize the legal and fiscal frameworks that will define the remainder of its term. The signing of the Electoral Act 2026 represents a double-edged sword; while it mandates the use of the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS), it introduced a controversial proviso allowing for manual results if [electronic transmission fails](#), a clause that critics argue preserves a pathway for manipulation. This legislative shift occurred as the APC consolidated its grip on the FCT, winning five of six area councils in an election marked by [robust security deployments](#) but dismal voter turnout, suggesting a growing disconnect between the electorate and the democratic process.

In the energy sector, the administration's "Federation First" fiscal model was codified through an Executive Order directing all oil revenues to the federation account without deductions for NNPC's frontier exploration or management fees. While supporters view this as a [constitutional correction](#), labor unions view it as a threat to job security and the Petroleum Industry Act (PIA). This domestic tightening coincides with an intensified synergy between the [NNPC and the Dangote Refinery](#), with plans announced for a public share offering in the refinery within months, potentially offering Nigerians a hedge against currency devaluation through dollar-denominated dividends.

MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

- **Signing of the Electoral Act 2026:** President Tinubu signed the repeal and reenactment of the electoral framework, introducing [mandatory BVAS usage](#) but sparking a walkout by opposition lawmakers over the [electronic transmission proviso](#).
- **FCT Area Council Elections:** The APC won five out of six area councils, including AMAC, Bwari, and Kuje, while the [PDP retained Gwagwalada](#). Opposition parties have formally rejected the results, citing [widespread voter intimidation](#) and vote-buying.
- **Oil Revenue Executive Order:** The President mandated [direct remittance of all oil revenues](#) to the federation account, effectively stripping NNPC of its 30% frontier exploration fund and sparking [outcry from PENGASSAN](#).

- **Plateau and Zamfara Massacres:** Armed bandits launched coordinated night attacks in [Riyom and Barkin Ladi](#), killing 10, while a larger assault in Zamfara's [Dutse Dan-Abia village](#) left between 30 and 50 people dead and several communities displaced.
- **El-Rufai Legal Offensive:** Former Governor Nasir El-Rufai filed a [fundamental rights suit](#) against the ICPC and the Attorney General following an "unlawful" raid on his Abuja home, signaling [escalating tensions with the NSA](#).

KEY GOVERNANCE TOPICS

Corruption & Governance: The administration is facing a complex "lawfare" environment. While the Nuhu Ribadu-led NSA office is reportedly [targeting political opponents](#) under the guise of security and anti-corruption, the targeted parties, specifically Nasir El-Rufai, are using [judicial instruments to stymie investigations](#). The APC-led Kaduna State House of Assembly has reportedly produced a [damaging report](#) on the former governor's activities, yet the optics of multi-agency raids on his residence are being framed by critics as a personal vendetta rather than systemic reform.

Energy Security & Investment Climate: The NNPC is undergoing a strategic shift toward "replication" and expansion through its partnership with the Dangote Refinery. The GCEO of NNPC announced that [Nigerians will have the opportunity](#) to purchase shares in the refinery within four to five months, with the option to [receive dividends in dollars](#). This is intended to stabilize the downstream subsector and provide permanent stability in the country's oil and gas space. However, the [TUC and PENGASSAN](#) argue that the President's new Executive Order on revenue remittances undermines the Petroleum

Industry Act (PIA) and could unsettle long-term investors by introducing bureaucratic instability.

Technology Policy & Digital Sovereignty:

The National Identity Management Commission (NIMC) is moving toward a "NIN-first" ecosystem. The DG of NIMC highlighted the [launch of the "NIN-Link" application](#), which allows citizens to manage their data and verify identity in real-time. This system is being [integrated with telcos, banks, and the immigration service](#) to tackle fraud and duplicity. Despite these advances, the commission admitted that the legal framework for [cybersecurity and data protection](#) is only now being fully captured in legislative amendments currently awaiting presidential assent.

Biosurveillance / Disease Outbreaks: A critical public health crisis is unfolding with a Lassa Fever outbreak. The NCDC has confirmed [318 cases and 70 deaths](#) in the first seven weeks of 2026. Alarming, there is a high rate of infection among [healthcare workers](#), attributed to a low culture of Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) and a lack of protective gear in primary health centers. The NCDC DG indicated that a [vaccine is in development](#) but may take up to 10 years to effectively reduce the incidence to acceptable levels.

LEGISLATIVE ROUNDUP

The Nigerian National Assembly and Presidency have prioritized the rapid overhaul of the electoral and fiscal legal frameworks, often bypassing prolonged civil society consultation to ensure implementation before the next major election cycle.

BILLS DISCUSSED/DEBATED:

- **Electoral Act (Repeal and Reenactment) Bill 2026:** Repeals the 2022 Act. Key features include [mandatory BVAS usage](#), a dedicated electoral fund for INEC, and a [two-year jail term](#) for RECs who withhold documents. It also sets new campaign spending limits, including [10 billion Naira for presidential candidates](#).
- **Cybersecurity Act 2026 Amendment:** Currently sitting with the Clerk of the National Assembly, this bill seeks to align Nigeria's [cybersecurity protocols](#) with international standards and the 2023 Data Protection Act.
- **Executive Order on Oil and Gas Revenue Remittances:** Mandates direct remittance to the federation account and [eliminates the 30% frontier exploration fund](#) deduction by NNPC.

HEARINGS & PRESS EVENTS:

- **NIMC DG Press Briefing:** Detailed the rollout of the [new digital identity card](#) and the transition to a mobile-based NIN system.
- **Arawa Youth Assembly Conference:** Dismissed allegations of DSS involvement in a [minor abduction case](#), calling it misinformation.
- **Yaga Africa Election Briefing:** Reported late opening of polls in [55% of FCT polling units](#) and noted the reassignment of voters without adequate notice.
- **GCPR Conference, Cape Town:** Nigeria's Minister of Information represented President Tinubu to [discuss Nigeria's reform agenda](#) and democratic journey with global leaders.

DEEP DIVE: TRENDS AND THEMES

The Erosion of Trust in Electoral Integrity: Despite the technological upgrades touted by the government, the FCT elections demonstrated a [profound voter apathy](#), with turnout estimated at only 15%. This trend is driven by a perception that [votes do not count](#) and that the legal framework (specifically the manual backup proviso in the 2026 Act) is designed to favor incumbents. The [opposition walkout in the House](#) during the Act's passage further underscores the lack of bipartisan consensus on the "rules of the game."

Centralization of Fiscal Power: The Tinubu administration is systematically dismantling the financial autonomy of state-owned enterprises like the NNPC. By removing the [frontier fund deductions](#), the presidency is reclaiming control over trillions of Naira to bolster the federation account. While this may provide subnationals with [additional revenue for infrastructure](#), it risks stifling long-term exploration projects in mature and frontier basins, potentially impacting future energy security.

Security Fragmentation and "Reactive" Policing: The massacre in Zamfara and the [coordinated night raids in Plateau](#) demonstrate that non-state actors continue to operate with impunity in rural flashpoints. The state's response remains largely [reactive and post-event](#), such as the deployment of personnel only after "distress calls." This is contrasted by the [breakthroughs in Kaduna](#), where the police dismantled a gun-running network, suggesting that while urban-adjacent security is improving, deep rural areas remain abandoned to banditry.

STRATEGIC FORESIGHT

Short Term (1-4 Weeks): Expect a flurry of legal challenges to the FCT election results and the Electoral Act 2026. The MPC meeting results will likely [maintain or slightly cut interest rates](#) (25-50 bps) as the CBN attempts to balance inflation against a slowing real estate sector. The Lassa Fever outbreak is expected to [peak in high-burden states](#) like Ondo and Edo, requiring immediate federal intervention in primary health gear.

Medium Term (1-6 Months): The Dangote Refinery share offering will be a major market mover, likely triggering a surge in [retail investment among Nigerians](#) looking for dollar dividends. Friction between the NSA's office and the "El-Rufai camp" will likely intensify as the 2027 alliance-building begins in earnest, potentially leading to further [targeted prosecutions of former officials](#).

Long Term (1-5 Years): The structural changes in the Electoral Act 2026 will lead to a more litigious 2027 cycle, as the "manual backup" clause becomes the primary [locus of election petitions](#). The success or failure of the PHC rehabilitation in states like [Oyo and Lagos](#) will determine whether Nigeria can break the cycle of seasonal epidemics like Lassa Fever and Meningitis.

RECOMMENDATIONS & IMPLICATIONS

For International Policy:

- **Security Assistance:** International partners should pivot from generalized military aid to [specific intelligence sharing](#) targeted at the gun-running and logistics networks that fuel Middle Belt violence.

- **Democratic Oversight:** Diplomatic missions should closely monitor the implementation of the [Electoral Act 2026](#), specifically the procurement and deployment of BVAS, to ensure the technological safeguards are not bypassed via the manual transmission proviso.
- **Public Health Resilience:** Support for [Lassa Fever vaccine development](#) and primary healthcare infrastructure is critical to prevent regional spillover of infectious diseases.

For Private Sector/Investors:

- **Energy Sector Positioning:** The upcoming [Dangote Refinery share offer](#) represents a significant opportunity for institutional investors to gain exposure to the most critical asset in Nigeria's energy transition.
- **Regulatory Risk:** Companies operating in the oil and gas sector must prepare for a [more stringent fiscal environment](#) with direct federal oversight of revenues, potentially impacting existing Joint Venture (JV) and Production Sharing Contract (PSC) arrangements.
- **Digital Identity Integration:** Businesses should accelerate adoption of the [NIMC E-KYC protocols](#) to mitigate the rising risk of cybercrime and identity fraud in the financial sector.

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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