

Buhari Exempts Financial Services Operators from Lockdown

● *CBN suspends clearing of cheques* ● *Nigerian banks' foreign subsidiaries post strong earnings*

Obinna Chima in Lagos and **James Emejo** in Abuja

The Minister of Finance, Budget and National Planning, Mrs. Zainab Ahmed, and the

Governor of Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), Mr. Godwin Emezie, yesterday said they had obtained exemptions from President Muhammadu Buhari to allow very skeletal

operations in the financial system and money markets in order to keep the system in light operations during the period of restriction in Lagos, Ogun, and Abuja.

The president had in a broadcast on Sunday locked down the two states and the federal capital, beginning from last night in order to curb the escalation of COVID-19 in the

country. The exemption comes as the boost in lending and other business activities have propelled higher earnings for the foreign subsidiaries of four

of Nigeria's tier 1 banks, the full year audited results of the financial institutions have shown.

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NEITI: Nigeria Earned \$32.63bn from Oil Sector in 2018... Page 6

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GLO JOINS THE FIGHT...

Representative of Chairman, Globacom, Chief Mike Adenuga Jr., Mrs. Bella Disu (left), and Lagos State Governor, Mr. Babajide Sanwo-Olu, during the presentation of N500m donation by Adenuga Jr. to support the state government's fight against COVID-19 in Lagos...yesterday

President Signs COVID-19 Regulations

Our Correspondents

President Muhammadu Buhari last night in Abuja gave legal teeth to his Sunday night directive that has locked down Lagos and Ogun States as well as the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), by signing the Covid-19 Regulations 2020 in accordance with Sections 2, 3 and 4 of the Quarantine Act (CAP Q2 LFN 2004).

The regulations declared Covid-19 as a dangerous and infectious disease.

A statement by the

president's media adviser, Mr. Femi Adesina, said the regulations, which took effect from yesterday, March 30, 2020, would serve as a legal backing to various measures unveiled by the president during his national broadcast on March 29, 2020.

The statement also said such measures like the restriction/cessation of movement in Lagos, Federal Capital Territory (FCT) and Ogun State, among other decisions

Continued on page 9

NCDC Traces 6,000 Contacts as COVID-19 Cases Rise to 131

● *Deaths increase to two* ● *Lagos discharges five more patients*

● *Oyo gov tests positive* ● *Buhari applauds Tinubu, Adenuga, Enenche, NNPC, others over contributions*

Our Correspondents

The Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) is now tracing 6,000 people in Lagos and Abuja suspected of having contact or being in proximity with those that have tested positive for COVID-19.

The figure, released yesterday by the agency, showed an increment of 1,630 over the number of people being traced as at last Thursday.

Besides, the NCDC also

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FIGHTING THE PANDEMIC...

New equipment in Ogun State COVID-19 Isolation and Treatment Centre, Ikenne. Inset: Ogun State Governor, Prince Dapo Abiodun (left), and Commissioner for Health, Dr. Tomi Coker, during the inspection of the 128-bed centre...yesterday

Police IG Sets up Panel to Investigate Akure Explosion...

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Medical Facilities in 6 Geo-Political Zones of Nigeria

The world is currently battling a global health crisis as COVID-19 spreads rapidly through many countries. Currently, cases of the virus have been reported among individuals across Nigeria and there is a high risk of the virus spreading through much of the population, if we do not come together to fight this battle. Necessitating, the introduction of the Private Sector Coalition Against COVID-19 (CACOVID).

We are pleased to announce that work has begun in earnest to provide and equip medical facilities in the six geopolitical zones. This will involve the creation of testing, isolation and treatment centers, and include the provision of Intensive Care Units (ICUs) and molecular testing labs.

We have started with Lagos (1,000 beds), Kano (500 beds), Rivers (210 beds) Abuja (200 beds), Enugu (200 beds) and Borno (200 beds) and expect to be operational within 10 days. The next phase will see locations set up in Katsina, Ogun, Bayelsa, Anambra, Bauchi and Plateau to be ready within three weeks. The remaining states of the Federation will be set up in the last phase within the next five weeks.

Based on the population of Lagos, and the fact that it is the epicenter of this crisis, we will also be creating a permanent structure within the next 4 to 6 months.

Teams have been set up and world-class standards are being employed to aggressively pursue a solution to this pandemic.

**Staying
Alive
Together.**



This is a massive effort and all hands must be on deck, which is why at a time like this, it is critical we come together as one. Hence the need to channel all our efforts through the CACOVID umbrella.

A CBN account has been set up for those who wish to make a monetary contribution.

Currency	Account Name	Account Number	Correspondent Bank
Nigerian Naira	COVID-19 Relief fund Account	1000014920	Central Bank of Nigeria
US Dollars	CBN TSA USD	0017575300	CitiBank UK

We shall provide a weekly update to keep you apprised of how this life-saving initiative is being addressed and a monthly financial update to the contributors.

Please continue to follow the health and safety guidelines as mandated by the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC).

Together we can. Together we will.

God bless us all.

Isaac Okorafor

Director, Corporate Communications
Central Bank of Nigeria

For: Nigeria Private Sector Coalition Against COVID-19 (CACOVID).

March 30, 2020

NEITI: Nigeria Earned \$32.63bn from Oil Sector in 2018

● Revenues drop by 40% between 2014, 2018

Chineme Okafor and
Emmanuel Addeh in Abuja

The Nigeria Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (NEITI) yesterday disclosed that the country earned a total of \$32.63 billion from the oil and gas sector in 2018, which it said represented a 55 per cent increase on the \$20.99 billion recorded in the sector in the preceding year.

NEITI has also disclosed that Nigeria's oil revenue between 2014 and 2018 declined by 40 per cent, from \$56.6 billion to \$32.63 billion.

However, N722.3 billion was spent to subsidise petrol consumption in 2018.

NEITI in the 11th edition of the Oil and Gas Industry Audit, released in Abuja by Director of Communications and Advocacy, Dr. Ogbonnaya Orji, said that in the year under review, the country realised N2.295 trillion as proceeds from sales of domestic crude oil allocation, out of which N722.3 billion was spent on petroleum subsidy, now rechristened 'under-recovery' while N138.95 billion was expended on pipeline repairs and maintenance.

While explaining that the latest report effectively cleared the backlogs of the audits of the extractive sector, except for 2019 which will be made available this year, it added that N28.3 billion was calculated for crude and product losses.

According to the organisation,

a breakdown of the \$32.63 billion earned in 2018 showed that company-level financial flows into government coffers were \$16.6 billion, while flows from sales of federation crude oil and gas accounted for \$16 billion.

It noted that a five-year trend analysis of the earnings from the extractive sector showed a 54.6 per cent drop from \$54.6 billion in 2014 to \$24.8 billion in 2015.

The report disclosed that the earnings further dropped by 31.2 per cent to \$17.05 billion in 2016, but increased by 23 per cent to \$20.99 billion in 2017 and by 55 per cent to \$32.63 billion in 2018.

NEITI reported that though the last two years bucked the trend of persistent decrease since 2014, the revenues from the sector in 2018 were still a staggering 40 per cent below the \$54.6 billion earned in 2014 when oil prices commenced a precipitous fall.

It affirmed that the body reconciled payments by 71 companies and the Nigeria Liquefied Natural Gas (NLNG) that met the materiality threshold set for the exercise, stating that a total of eight government entities were also covered by the audit.

"Out of the \$32.63 billion earned from the sector in 2018, the sum of \$19.92 billion was transferred [directly] into the Federation Account, while \$5.21 billion and \$4.04 billion were transferred into the JV Cash Call Account and Nigerian National

Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) designated accounts respectively.

"The NNPC designated accounts are the naira and dollar accounts where domestic crude sales and the federation equity, royalty, petroleum profit tax, and in-kind oil sales are paid into respectively before remittance to the Federation Account.

"\$2.10 billion was transferred into third parties project financing accounts and \$1.37 billion were recorded as subnational transfers," the report cited.

On production, the report stated that the total crude oil production in the country within the period under review was put at 701 million barrels, representing a slight increase of 1.5 percent when compared to 690 million barrels produced in 2017.

"A breakdown showed that Joint Ventures (JVs) contributed the highest production of 315 million barrels, followed by Production Sharing Contracts (PSCs) which recorded 270.610 million barrels.

"Other funding arrangements like Sole Risk (SR), Marginal Fields (MFs) and Service Contracts (SCs) accounted for 92.2 million barrels, 22 million barrels, and 1.3 million barrels respectively.

"JV companies' production increased by 3.12 per cent in 2018 compared to 2017, while PSC operators' production decreased by 10.90 per cent.

"Similarly, SR operators' production increased by 58.72 per cent in 2018 compared to 2017. Production from the SC

decreased by 10.27 per cent while production from MF operators increased marginally by 1.18 per cent," the report stated.

The NEITI report further disclosed that total crude oil lifted for both export and domestic sales in 2018 was 701 million barrels, representing a 1.9 percent increase when compared with total lifting of 688.3 million barrels in 2017.

"Analysis of the total lifting in 2018 showed that 255.6 million barrels or 36 per cent was lifted by NNPC on behalf of the Federation, while companies lifted 445.5 million barrels or 64 per cent of total lifting.

"The lifting by NNPC indicates an increase of 5.95 per cent when compared to 241 million barrels lifted in 2017. Further analysis showed that out of 255.6 million barrels lifted by NNPC in 2018, actual sales were 255.3 million barrels valued at \$18.2 billion.

"Out of the 255.6 million barrels lifted on behalf of the Federation by NNPC, a total of 107.63 million barrels was recorded as Domestic Crude Allocation (DCA) in 2018.

"Out of this figure, 94 million barrels or 87 per cent of the DCA were utilised for Direct Sale Direct Purchase (DSDP), while the balance of 13.58 million barrels or 13 per cent was delivered to the refineries," it said.

It said that ordinarily, 160.2 million barrels (or 445, 000 barrels per day) should have been allocated for domestic consumption but only 107.63 million barrels or 67 per cent of the customary allocation

for domestic consumption was given out.

It added: "The sum of N2.295 trillion was realised as proceeds from sales of domestic crude oil allocation in 2018, out of which the following deductions were made: N722.3 billion for under-recovery of imported petroleum products, N28.3 billion for crude and product losses and N138.95 billion for pipeline repairs and maintenance cost".

The report also revealed that in 2018 "total crude oil losses due to theft and sabotage was 53.28 million barrels, an increase of 46.15 percent when compared to 16.824 million barrels recorded in 2017.

Similarly, the report put total products losses in 2018, due to pipeline breakages at 204,397.07 cubic meters.

On gas production, the NEITI 2018 oil and gas report revealed that the total gas production for the year under review was 2,909,143.69 mmscf, while total gas utilisation was 2,909,143.55 mmscf.

From the report, \$307.20 million was realised from the sales of Federation gas of 633.55 thousand metric tons in 2018. This represents increase of 7.10 per cent when compared to 721.80 thousand metric tons valued at \$286, 85 million realised in 2017.

"The national gas reserve stood at 200.79 tcf as at end of 2018. This is made up of 101.98 tcf of Associated Gas (AG) and 98.81 tcf of Non-Associated Gas (NAG).

"With the 2018 annual gas production quantity, the gas

Reserves Life Index (RLI) was estimated at 92 years", the report disclosed.

On the management of Joint Venture Cash Call, NEITI disclosed that aggregate cash call funding for 2018 amounted to \$5.98 billion, outstanding Cash Call Liabilities amounted to \$3.66 billion, comprising \$3.41 billion (93 per cent) legacy liabilities and 260 million (seven per cent) performance balance payable to JV operators.

NEITI noted that the total social expenditure (mandatory and voluntary expenditures) was \$902.67 million, comprising voluntary contribution of \$59.27 million (6.57 per cent), while mandatory contribution stood at \$843.39 million (93.40 per cent).

"The mandatory contribution was made up of NDDC's three per cent levy of \$683.38 million and NCDMB's one per cent levy of \$160.01 million. Oil and gas industry contribution to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2018 was put at 7.8 per cent. "The flows in the industry accounted for \$32.64 billion in absolute terms. This represents 7.8 per cent of the total GDP Current Basic Price of (\$ 418.12 billion)," it stated.

On contribution to exports, it said the oil and gas industry accounted for \$19.13 billion in absolute terms, representing 30.6 percent of total exports (\$62.49 billion) in 2018, adding that the employment in the oil and gas industry accounted for 19,820, representing 0.03 per cent of the total employment (69.54 million) in Nigeria.

TCN Blames Gas Shortage for Poor Power Supply

Emmanuel Addeh in Abuja

The Transmission Company of Nigeria (TCN) yesterday attributed the current poor power supply nationwide to low gas supply.

The company noted that at the moment Geregu, Sapele and Olorunsogo power stations were generating zero megawatts due to the gas supply challenge.

General Manager, Public Affairs, TCN, Mrs. Ndidi Mbah, in a statement in Abuja, noted that almost all the power stations are now faced with severe problems as a result of the shortage of gas.

"TCN hereby informs the public that the power sector has in the past weeks continued to experience power supply shortage due to serious gas constraints to most of the nation's thermal generating stations.

"TCN reported the low gas supply to many power plants a few weeks ago but the gas shortage has persisted till date.

"This has restrained optimal generation into the grid and consequently the quantum of electricity transmitted to distribution load centres," she said.

According to the TCN, the thermal power plants most affected by the gas supply constraint were Geregu Gas station now generating 0MW against 435MW; Geregu NIPP, generating 81MW with a shortfall of 354MW and Sapele NIPP now generating 0MW against 230MW.

The company added that Olorunsogo NIPP was also currently generating 0MW against 112MW and Olorunsogo Gas plant generation was 70.5MW with a shortfall of 195.5MW while Gbarian plant was generating the same 0MW against 112MW.

"Also affected by the gas supply constraint is Omotosho NIPP, generating 110MW with a shortfall of 220MW. Meanwhile, Egbin Power Plant, Alaoji NIPP, Delta, and Okpai are equally affected by the gas shortage.

"Egbin is currently generating 596MW with a shortfall of 264MW. Delta II-IV gas is generating 306.81MW with a shortfall of 128.19MW and Okpai Gas plant is generating 159MW with a shortfall of 291MW," the transmission company said.

Similarly, TCN noted that Rivers IPP, AFAM IV-V and Paras Energy were also generating with a shortfall of 40MW, 60MW, and 30.2MW respectively, stressing that AFAM VI does not have a gas supply problem, but that one of its units was out due to fault.

It stated that presently, Azura and Odukpai power plants are the only two thermal power generating stations generating at full capacity into the national grid.

"With the current situation, therefore, a few of the distribution companies that can pick more load are unable to because what is generated into the grid is what TCN strives to distribute equitably to Discos nationwide," it explained.

TCN had earlier issued a statement that low gas supply was significantly affecting the quantum of power generated into the grid.

The company said the poor gas supply challenge had not abated but was worsening, even after the maintenance of the gas pipelines.

"TCN hereby notes that there is a need to urgently address the issue of gas shortage to thermal generating power plants nationwide to avert serious system disturbance," it noted.



MILITARY JOINS THE WAR...

L-R: Deputy Director, Defence Media Operations, Brig-Gen. Bernard Onyeuko; the Coordinator, Maj.-Gen. John Enenche; and Nigerian Navy Liaison Officer, Commander Abdulsalam Sani, during a press briefing on Armed Forces' preparedness against COVID-19 pandemic in Abuja...yesterday

ENOCK REUBEN

NNPC: Petrol Depots Remain Open Despite Lockdown

● Cautions against panic buying, hoarding

Emmanuel Addeh in Abuja

The Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) has said that it has activated measures to guarantee seamless distribution of fuel across the country throughout the 14-day lockdown announced by President Muhammadu Buhari on Sunday.

The Group General Manager, Group Public Affairs Division of the Corporation, Dr. Kennie Obateru, in a statement yesterday in Abuja, quoted the Managing Director of Petroleum Products

Marketing Company, NNPC's downstream subsidiary, Mr. Musa Lawan, as saying that the PPMC workforce had been mobilised to provide loading services throughout the lockdown.

The corporation said the action was in compliance with the presidential directive that during the lockdown products must be made available.

"If you recall, two days ago, the Group Managing Director of NNPC, Mele Kyari, stated that we have 60 days sufficiency of

Premium Motor Spirit. That is very correct.

"As a matter of fact, we have about 2.68 billion litres of petrol in-country and in marine storage. At the prevailing daily consumption rate of 45 million litres, that translates to roughly 60 days," the NNPC noted.

The corporation called on motorists and other consumers of petroleum products not to engage in hoarding or panic buying of petrol, noting that the NNPC is ready to provide

enough products across the country.

It noted that two more petrol laden vessels were expected to berth at the ports by today to discharge 250 million litres of petrol.

On the recent complaints of non-availability of personal protective equipment against COVID-19 for tanker drivers by the National Association of Road Transport Owners (NARTO), the corporation said the PPMC was engaging with the stakeholders to address the issue.



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Police IG Sets up Panel to Investigate Akure Explosion

Kingsley Nwezeh in Abuja and **James Sowole** in Akure

The Inspector-General of Police (IG), Mr. Mohammed Adamu, yesterday raised a team to unravel the circumstances surrounding the explosion that destroyed 100 houses and churches at Ilu-Abo on Akure/Owo Road in Akure North Local Government Area of Ondo State.

The team, which is headed by the Commissioner of Police in charge of the Explosive Ordinance Disposal Unit, Force Headquarters, Abuja, Mr. Maikudi Shehu, comprises police officers from the Police Bomb Disposal Squad (Explosive Ordinance Disposal Unit).

A statement issued by the Force Public Relations Officer (PRO), Mr. Frank Mba, a Deputy Commissioner of Police, said the team would work jointly with experts from the Nigerian Geological Survey Agency (NGSA).

Mba noted that as the nation's leading research and development institution and sole repository of all geo-scientific data, the agency had a state-of-the-art laboratory with the capacity and expertise to carry out a wide range of geo-scientific examinations, including laboratory/forensic examinations, geochemical analysis of rocks, minerals,

water, sewage, soil samples and site investigations amongst others.

"The IG hopes that with the involvement of NGSA, the quality and integrity of investigations into the explosion will be greatly enhanced.

"The IG, however, enjoins the citizens, especially those living around the scene of the incident to avoid the area so as not to tamper with the scene of the incident and the ongoing investigations," he said.

The IG sympathised with the government and people of Ondo State, particularly victims that sustained injuries or lost their property as a result of the incident and called for calm while assuring the people that the outcome of investigations would be made public.

The blast was reportedly caused by dynamites, which also injured over 20 persons, including some policemen who were accompanying it to a quarry in Edo State.

While the police in Ondo State attributed the incident to an explosion from the dynamites, a professor of Geophysics at the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Adepelumi Adekunle, contradicted their findings, saying a giant rock from space known as meteor impacted the location.

However, the Aare Ona Kakanfo of Yoruba land,

Chief Gani Adams, on Sunday, called on the federal government to investigate three recent explosions in the South-west.

He noted that the explosions were beyond ordinary blasts as claimed by the government.

Adams said the latest blast in Akure might be from a bomb that must be investigated.

The Deputy Inspector General of Police, Operations, Mr. Abdulmajid Ali, also spoke about the panel while briefing the Ondo State Governor, Mr. Oluwarotimi Akeredolu, on what the police have done so far.

The DIG, who visited the governor yesterday shortly after visiting the site of the incident was

accompanied on the visit by the Director-General of Geological Survey Agency, Dr. Kaka Imam.

The DIG said he had visited the scene of the incident with his team, adding that the officials of the geological survey agency had also taken a sample of the soils, adding that the committee would produce a credible report.

Ali, who commended Akeredolu for his display of maturity when he visited the scene, said the police were not sleeping on the issue and that they were working to unravel the mystery behind the blast.

The governor, while commending the police for the steps taken so far, lauded the state Commissioner of Police, Mr. Undie Adie, for

being on his toes since the tragic incident, saying he had demonstrated the capacity of his office.

He noted that while he was not against other views, particularly that of the university don, he would rely on the initial information from the police.

He said: "I am not saying the professor was right or wrong and I am not making any conclusion. I have been speaking with some experts and they said if we were unable to find debris of the shattered truck within one kilometre radius from the spot of the incident that would show the incident was not caused by explosive devices.

"Already, the debris of the truck that was carrying the explosive devices that

created a very large crater on the express road has been seen. This is not new; there are similar incidents with pictorial evidence.

"I am also relying on eyewitnesses' accounts, particularly, the driver, who drove the vehicle and who is currently recuperating at our State Teaching Hospital, Akure.

"I am very sure that if it was an asteroid, the NASRDA would have picked this when coming to earth. This is not what we can hide. I am already in touch with the Minister for Science and Technology, Dr. Ogbonnaya Onu."

The governor, however, called for calm, urging the people to wait for the results of the tests being carried out on the site of the blast.



SERIOUS MATTER...

L-R: Bayelsa State Deputy Governor, Senator Lawrence Ewhrudjakpo (left), and Governor Douye Diri during a meeting on COVID-19 in Yenagoa ...yesterday

Sultan Berates Islamic Clerics for Misleading Muslims

The Sultan of Sokoto, Alhaji Muhammad Abubakar, has described as unfortunate and misleading preaching by some Islamic clerics on government's directives for citizens to stay at home.

Abubakar spoke yesterday through the secretary of Jama'atu Nasril Islam (JNI), Khalid Aliyu.

JNI is the umbrella body for Nigerian Muslims, headquartered in Kaduna State.

The Sultan urged Muslims to avoid a repeat of the trend in Italy, "which was partly due to non-adherence to expert advice over the pandemic."

Citing Suratun-Nahl, Chapter 16:43 of the Qur'an, where Muslims are asked to "...ask those who know if you know not," Abubakar urged adherents of Islam to act only based on knowledge and not their whims.

State governments have banned large gatherings but some religious leaders, have flouted the directive.

The Kaduna State government has arrested Aminu Usman and Umar Shangel, two imams who flouted the state's directive by leading the congregational prayers last Friday.

Abubakar said this "clearly depicts sheer whims and caprices of their myopic worldview, stark ignorance of reality based on genuine knowledge and medical scholarship.

"It is, however, regrettable that the negative actions of such preachers incite innocent Muslims, who are unaware of the serious health implications of adhering to such empty dispositions that invariably endanger humanity.

"Nonetheless, it should be noted that the issue of plague and/or pandemic is not new throughout human history, either at various times or places, the Muslim world inclusive.

"For the information of discerning minds, there were prominent incidents of plagues and epidemics in Islamic history, which caused monumental mortality.

"As a result of which various safety steps were taken, so as to curtail the spread of such viruses. Such steps extended to the stoppage of congregational prayers, including Jumu'ah (Friday) prayer with an interim halt to the performance of Hajj (pilgrimage)."

Private Sector Coalition Sets up Medical Facilities in Six Geo-political Zones

Obinna Chima

The recently established Private Sector Coalition Against COVID-19 (CACOVID) last night announced that work has begun in earnest to provide and equip medical facilities in the six geopolitical zones.

The Director, Corporate Communications, Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), Mr. Isaac Okoroafor, disclosed this in a statement he issued on behalf of CACOVID.

According to the statement, the medical facilities includes the creation of testing, isolation and treatment centres, as well as the provision of Intensive Care Units (ICUs)

and molecular testing labs.

The statement explained that: "We have started with Lagos (1,000 beds); Kano (500 beds); Rivers (210 beds) Abuja (200 beds); Enugu (200 beds); and Borno (200 beds); and expect to be operational within 10 days.

"The next phase will see locations set up in Katsina, Ogun, Bayelsa, Anambra, Bauchi and Plateau to be ready within three weeks. The remaining states of the Federation will be set up in the last phase within the next five weeks."

It stated that based on the population of Lagos, and the fact that it is presently the epicentre of the crisis, it would also be creating a

permanent structure within the next four to six months.

"Teams have been set up and world-class standards are being employed to aggressively pursue a solution to this pandemic.

"This is a massive effort and all hands must be on deck, which is why at a time like this, it is critical we come together as one - hence the need to channel all our efforts through the CACOVID umbrella.

"A CBN account has been set up for those who wish to make a monetary contribution."

The account details include a naira account with account name - COVID-19 Relief fund

Account, Account Number - 1000014920 and the CBN as the correspondent bank.

The other one is a US dollar account with account name as: CBN TSA USD, Account Number - 0017575300, and Citibank UK as correspondent bank.

"We shall provide a weekly update to keep you apprised of how this life-saving initiative is being addressed and a monthly financial update to the contributors. Please continue to follow the health and safety guidelines as mandated by the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC).

Together we can. Together we will," it stated.

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PRESIDENT SIGNS COVID-19 REGULATIONS

are aimed at containing the spread of the pandemic in the country.

The statement added that in addition to measures aimed at enabling Nigerians to perform on-line transactions and use automatic teller machine (ATMs) during these restrictions, the regulations grant exemption to the financial system and money markets.

The financial system exemption, the statement added, was aimed at allowing very skeletal operations with a view to keeping the system in light operations while these regulations subsists.

The statement read: "In exercise of the powers conferred on him by Sections 2, 3 and 4 of the Quarantine Act (CAP Q2 LFN 2004), and all other powers enabling him in that behalf, President Muhammadu Buhari, Monday, signed the

Covid-19 Regulations, 2020, which declared Covid-19 a dangerous infectious disease.

"The Regulations, effective March 30, 2020, also gave legal backing to the various measures outlined in the President's National Broadcast on March 29, 2020, such as Restriction/Cessation of Movement in Lagos, FCT and Ogun States and others toward containing the spread of the pandemic in the country.

"In addition, to ensure that Nigerians can still perform on-line transactions and use ATMs whilst observing these restrictions, an exemption is granted financial system and money markets to allow very skeletal operations in order to keep the system in light operations during the pendency of these regulations."

The president's directive locking down the two states and the FCT as well as similar directives by state

governors restricting entry and movement into and within their states had been criticised as unconstitutional by some lawyers, including Mr. Ebun Olu-Adegboruwa (SAN), who argued that the restrictions were contrary to law.

Olu-Adegboruwa got partial support from the Secretary to the Government of the Federation (SGF), Mr. Boss Mustapha, who said yesterday in Abuja that the directives by state governors outside Lagos and Ogun restricting movements within and outside states were inconsistent with the president's directive.

Earlier yesterday the Minister of Justice and Attorney-General of the Federation, Mr. Abubakar Malami, had argued that contrary to the position of Olu-Adegboruwa, Buhari's directives were in order and had the legal and

constitutional backing.

Malami said that Olu-Adegboruwa misconstrued the law by stating that the president could not single-handedly declare a lockdown in the affected states.

The AGF in a statement made available to journalists maintained that by the combined reading of Section 5, 14, 20 and 45 of the 1999 Constitution and Section 2, 6 and 8 of the Quarantine Act and Article 4 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and Article 11 on Human and Peoples Right makes the declaration by the president valid, legal and enforceable.

While noting that the senior lawyer did not state any constitutional or statutory provision which the president breached in the present circumstances, he stated that the president did not make a declaration of

a State of Emergency under Section 305(1) of the 1999 Constitution (as amended) which would have required the concurrence of both chambers of the National Assembly.

He argued: "Even at that Section 305(6) (b) of the 1999 Constitution (as amended) permits a proclamation of a State of Emergency to run for a period of 10 days without the approval of the National Assembly when the parliament is not in session as in the present situation wherein the National Assembly has shut down.

"The learned silk also goofed when he questioned the president's powers to restrict movement and claiming that such powers can only be exercised by the state governors and the respective state assemblies. It is clear from the president's broadcast that what his excellency

sought to address is a public emergency occasioned by a dangerous and infectious coronavirus disease. The restriction of movement came on the heels of advice received by the president from the Federal Ministry of Health and the NCDC, the two focal agencies in the fight against COVID-19.

"It, therefore, becomes obvious and clear that the restriction order is part of a national quarantine measure."

He argued further that the president acted rightfully under the powers conferred on him by the Quarantine Act 1990 CAP 384 LFN whose Long Title read thus: "An Act to provide for and regulate the imposition of quarantine and to make other provisions for preventing the introduction into and spread in Nigeria, and the transmission from

Continued on page 22

BUHARI EXEMPTS FINANCIAL SERVICES OPERATORS FROM LOCKDOWN

In a joint statement, the minister and the CBN governor explained that the move was to ease the pains of Nigerians following the 14-day lockdown and ensure that they can still perform online transactions and use ATMs whilst observing the recent restrictions of movement.

The statement said: "We are mindful of the difficulties these restrictions would bring on ordinary Nigerians and are grateful to the president for approving these exemptions, which should help ease some of these burdens.

"We urge all Nigerians to be patient, cooperative and united as all hands are on deck to defeat this virus."

It further directed all relevant staff of affected outfits and agencies to "look out for further instructions from their immediate bosses".

Ahmed and Emezie particularly applauded and appreciated "the appropriate and proactive restrictions in personal and vehicular movement directed by President Muhammadu Buhari in his speech of Sunday 29 March 2020," adding that "these restrictions are critical to significantly reduce the transmission rate of the disease and make it much easier for health professionals to trace, test and isolate patients."

CBN Suspends Clearing of Cheques

In a related development, the CBN said in view of the 14-day lockdown in Lagos, Abuja, and Ogun, it had in

the interim, suspended until further notice, the clearing of cheques instruments in the Nigerian Clearing System, effective yesterday.

The CBN stated this in a circular that was signed by its Director, Banking Services Department, Mr. Sam Okejere, that was addressed to all banks and the Nigeria Interbank Settlement System, a copy of which was posted on its website.

"For the avoidance of doubt, no fresh cheque instrument will be allowed to pass through the clearing system on March 31, 2020. Only returned cheque would be treated to the said date. However, settlement activities for electronic instruments will continue to hold during this period of suspension. Please be guided accordingly."

Limit Usage of Cash, CBN Tells Bank Customers

The CBN, in a separate statement yesterday by the Director, Corporate Communications, Mr. Isaac Okorafor, also called on customers of deposit money banks to limit their use of cash and avail themselves of the use of alternative payment channels such as mobile banking, internet banking, mobile money, point of sale and USSD.

"The public is therefore assured that financial institutions will remain operational during this period and therefore should guard against panic withdrawals

from their banks," the CBN spokesman added.

He said security agencies had been requested to grant passage to the critical staff of institutions to enable essential and strategic financial transactions to go undisrupted during the lockdown. He listed the institutions to include: the CBN; banks, the Nigeria Interbank Settlement System (NIBSS) Plc; switching companies; mobile money operators and payment solution service providers.

"We also urge all Nigerians to adhere strictly to the movement restrictions and follow stipulated guidelines by the Federal Ministry of Health, Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) and other relevant health agencies of government to curb possible spread of the virus in Nigeria," CBN added.

Nigerian Banks' Foreign Subsidiaries Post Strong Earnings

Meanwhile, a boost in lending and other business activities have propelled higher earnings for the foreign subsidiaries of four of Nigeria's tier 1 banks, the full year audited results of the financial institutions have shown.

The banks are Guaranty Trust Bank Plc (GTBank), United Bank for Africa Plc (UBA), Zenith Bank Plc and Access Bank.

For Access Bank which has subsidiaries in nine countries, their contribution to the group's performance stood at 32 per cent year-on-year,

recording a total subsidiaries' profit before tax of N37.4 billion. This represented an increase by 34 per cent year-on-year, compared with the N27.9 billion recorded as of December 2018. The bank's United Kingdom and Ghana subsidiaries accounted for 94 per cent of the total full year 2019 subsidiaries' profit before tax, up from the 88 per cent they recorded in 2018. In addition, total loans recorded by Access Bank's subsidiaries stood at N666.9 billion, which represented 22 per cent of the total loans disbursed by the group in 2019.

Similarly, total deposits from Access Bank's subsidiaries amounted to N1.1 trillion, contributing 20 per cent of total group's deposits, just as total assets from the subsidiaries stood at N1.4 trillion in the year under review.

Also, Zenith Bank in a recent presentation to investors showed that its subsidiaries' contribution to the group's revenue increased from 13.8 per cent the previous year, to 14 per cent in 2019, while profit before tax contribution from the foreign subsidiaries grew by 12.9 per cent, to 14 per cent year-on-year. A breakdown of this showed that whereas the rest of Africa contributed 10.2 per cent to the bank's revenue, its operation in Europe contributed 3.8 per cent.

On its part, the United Bank for Africa Plc (UBA) revealed growth in the contribution of its 19 African subsidiaries to the group's net earnings and

total assets. According to the pan-African bank, its entire subsidiaries contributed 46 per cent to the group's profit before tax in 2019.

A breakdown of the contribution showed that its Anglophone West Africa - Ghana, Liberia, S/ Leone contributed 18 per cent; the CEMAC region which include Cote D'Ivoire, Senegal, Mali, Burkina Faso, Benin, Guinea - 17 per cent; UEMOA region made up of Cameroon, Gabon, Chad, Congo Brazzaville, Congo DRC - nine per; and East and Southern Africa, made up of Tanzania, Kenya, Zambia, Uganda, Mozambique - two per cent.

For GTBank, its eight foreign subsidiaries contributed a total of 14.9 per cent to its profit before tax in 2019, up from 12.1 per cent contribution in 2018. While the contribution of the subsidiaries to the group in terms of loans was 13.5 per cent in 2019, contribution in terms of deposit was 22 per cent.

Commenting on the contribution of his bank's subsidiaries, the Group Managing Director/CEO, UBA, Kennedy Uzoka, recently said, "Our businesses are gaining commendable share in their markets across regions in Africa, as we deepen the scale and scope of our operations."

"I am indeed excited about the synergy we have built within the UBA Group and the significant progress we have made in our transformation drive. We have positioned the bank as a truly pan-African

banking franchise, leveraging our operations in France, the UK and the USA, to deepen intra-African trade, and facilitate capital flows between Africa and the rest of the world.

"In 2020, we will pursue the aggressive deepening of market share in all our subsidiaries, leveraging technology, rich human resources and our customer-first strategy to win in all the markets we operate, notwithstanding the challenges of our operating environment."

In a similar vein, the Group Managing Director of Access Bank, Herbert Wigwe, recently said the bank plans to be Africa's gateway to the world and expand into 22 countries over the next five years.

Wigwe said Access Bank aims to expand into Africa as a diversified retail bank.

"We want to have subsidiaries across 22 countries over the next five years, with strategic plans to be present in the major trade corridors in the African continent. Building on our successful expansion into Kenya, we will also be making entries into Angola and Mozambique."

"At the moment, Access Bank does not have a presence in the Francophone region of Africa, and we will be working to see that this is changed in the coming years. By 2023, Access Bank will have consolidated its position as Africa's gateway to the world with about 100 million customers in Nigeria and an additional 20 million customers across our African subsidiaries," Wigwe said.

NCDC TRACES 6,000 CONTACTS AS COVID-19 CASES RISE TO 131

announced 20 fresh cases of COVID-19, bringing the tally to 131.

Among the new cases is Oyo State Governor, Mr. Seyi Makinde, who confirmed that he tested positive for the virus.

The death toll from the pandemic also rose by one, bringing the number of people that have died from the virus since the index case occurred on February 27, to two.

However, five of the patients who had been receiving treatment were discharged yesterday in Lagos, the epicentre of the pandemic, after being certified free of the virus.

Amid the rain of donations from corporate organisations and individuals, President Muhammadu Buhari lauded All Progressives Congress (APC) National Leader, Senator Bola

Tinubu and Globacom Chairman, Dr. Mike Adenuga, among others, for their contributions to the battle against COVID-19.

The NCDC, while giving an update yesterday on the virus and efforts to combat it, said 13 of the new cases were from Lagos, four from the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), two from Kaduna State and one from Oyo State.

It said: "As at 09:00 pm March 30, there are 131 confirmed cases of COVID-19 reported in Nigeria with two deaths."

Of the 131 cases, Lagos currently has 81, FCT 25, Oyo eight, Kaduna and Ogun three each, Enugu, Edo, Bauchi and Osun two each, while Ekiti, Rivers and Benue have one each.

NCDC Director-General, Dr. Chikwe Ihekweazu, added that no fewer than 6,000 people are being traced in Lagos and Abuja over their contacts with

COVID-19 patients.

Ihekweazu, while fielding questions when he appeared on Channels Television, said at least 2,000 people had been tested nationwide.

He said: "We appeal to Nigerians to bear the few weeks of pain to come and let's see whether we can get on top of this.

"These weeks will allow our teams to have access to the contacts that are living around Lagos and FCT. We are following over 6,000 contacts of these 111 confirmed cases across these two cities. Every time we have a new case, we add about 50 to 60 contacts that we then have to follow every single day for 14 days.

"We hope that we can really use this time to buy some time to get ahead of the cases and ultimately see that curve start going down but in the next

few days, we still do expect an increase in cases.

"We have currently tested well over 2,000 people. We will update those figures today or tomorrow. We have increased the number of labs in our network to six.

"We are activating Abakaliki today. There would be a seventh lab in our network.

"We're maximising the opportunity of the equipment that we have and at the same time rolling out new labs. We're very focused on increasing the testing capacity. We are being boxed down by people who do not require the test."

Asked how long it takes for a test to be carried out and the result released, Ihekweazu said it took between 24 and 48 hours, but the NCDC is working on bringing it down to 12 hours.

He explained that some tests are delayed because it is carried

out twice to ensure that the results are accurate.

"Molecular testing is carried out in runs. One run can take six to seven hours. We have now almost optimised the process to do three runs a day in each lab. And that's why you have seen the numbers rise because we are testing more samples and producing more results," he added.

Ihekweazu said while the government did not resort to force to make residents comply with the restriction orders in Abuja, Lagos and Ogun States, it hoped Nigerians would voluntarily comply in their own interest.

"They need to do this for themselves and their country. "But the key thing in the president's speech like you would have noticed is that we're

Continued on page 22

TSI THISDAY STOCK INDEX			
TOP GAINERS	NGN	NGN	%
BERGPAINTS	0.60	6.70	9.8
11PLC	14.40	160.90	9.6
CADBURY	0.60	6.80	9.6
MEYER	0.04	0.50	8.7
AFRIPRUD	0.28	3.70	8.1
TOP LOSERS	NGN		%
MTNN	10.00	90.00	10
WEMABANK	0.05	0.47	9.6
INTERBREW	0.50	4.90	9.2
PRESTIGE ASSURE	0.05	0.55	8.3
UNITEDCAP	0.20	2.20	8.3
HPE Nestle Nig Plc N765.00			
Volume:	466.91 million shares		
Value:	N1.93 billion		
Deals:	3,659		
As at yesterday 30/03/2020			
See details on Page 29			

COVID-19 UPDATE...

COVID-19 UPDATE...

Osinbajo Heads Seven-man Team to Manage Post-COVID-19 Economy

Onyebuchi Ezigbo in Abuja

Vice President Yemi Osinbajo is heading a special economic policy implementation team set up by President Muhammadu Buhari to lead the country's economy out of the debilitating impact of COVID-19 pandemic, THISDAY's investigation has revealed.

The seven-man economic team is made up of ministers of Finance, Budget and Planning; Industry, Trade and Investment; Labour and Employment; Minister of State

Petroleum Resources; Governor, Central Bank of Nigeria; Group Managing Director of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) and Permanent Secretary, Cabinet Secretariat who is to serve as secretary of the committee.

THISDAY gathered that the one of the immediate task given to the economic team is to manage the economy, especially the post-COVID-19 era till 2023.

A source in the presidency told THISDAY last night that the seven-man committee

was set up as a response to the recent challenges in the economic front resulting from the fall in the prices of oil in the international market as well as the disruptive impact of the

outbreak of the pandemic that is threatening to shut down businesses worldwide.

THISDAY also gathered that the committee met yesterday evening at the Presidential Villa

where they received their letters of appointment.

"The key task of the committee is to take charge of the implementation of federal government's economic

policy, including economic management, implementation of projects and programmes targeted at lifting the country out of challenges facing it economically," he said.

IPI Faults Buhari's Directive on Media

The International Press Centre (IPC) has expressed concern that the ambiguity in the presidential directives in respect of media access in relation to the 14-day COVID-19 lockdown in Lagos and Ogun states and the FCT may constitute a threat to journalists and other media professionals on legitimate duty.

IPC stated that this is because it may give room for security agents to harass, intimidate and assault journalists who may be performing their journalistic obligations in the coverage of emerging issues relating to the COVID-19 pandemic and other related issues of national importance.

In a statement issued yesterday, the Executive Director of IPC, Mr. Lanre Arogundade, said that while all hands should be on deck to ensure curtailment of the spread of the disease in Nigeria, the media, as part of the stakeholders engaged in critical information dissemination should not be put in jeopardy as a result.

Arogundade therefore called on media proprietors, organisations

and associations to immediately seek unhindered movement for journalists once they are able to identify themselves.

He said the media bodies could also enter into dialogue with relevant government institutions and security agencies on modalities for identification, or, if necessary, accreditation to guarantee hitch-free coverage of COVID-19 and other issues of public interest at this critical period.

"There is need to ensure that the media is not placed in a position where it will be intimidated or harassed as the President, unlike other stated categories of stakeholders, did not categorically exempt the media from restrictions," Arogundade added.

Arogundade said these measures are necessary because the statement by the President that 'workers in telecommunication companies, broadcasters, print and electronic media staff who can prove they are unable to work from home are also exempted,' could be arbitrarily interpreted.

Editors Condemn Harassment of Media Personnel

Dike Onwuamaeze

The Nigerian Guild of Editors (NGE) has strongly condemned the harassment of drivers of newspaper distribution vans by overzealous security agents in some states on Sunday, March 29.

The guild, in a press statement that was jointly signed by the President of NGE, Mr. Mustapha Isah and its General Secretary, Ms. Mary Atolagbe, emphasised that it should be noted that the media is a strategic partner in the national affairs of the country, with the constitutional mandate of providing information to the populace.

The statement reads: "The body of editors hereby restates that media personnel are rendering essential services and journalists should be commended for carrying out their constitutional mandate of sourcing stories and monitoring compliance with government directives in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic ravaging the world, instead of being harassed.

"The guild, therefore, implores state governments that have declared one form of lockdown or the other, being measures to contain the spread of COVID-19, to appropriately educate the security

agents drafted to enforce the restrictions on the essential nature of media duties.

"The body of editors recalls that President Muhammad Buhari's statement in a nationwide broadcast, permits 'workers of telecommunications companies, broadcasting, print and electronic media, who can prove they are unable to work from home' as being exempted from the total lockdown in Lagos, Ogun, and the Federal Capital Territory."

The NGE, according to the statement, was worried that some security agents, who might not be sufficiently knowledgeable about the operations of media houses, would find it difficult to determine the categories of print and electronic staff who could not work from home.

"In the light of this potential friction, the guild is calling on the Nigerian government to exempt all categories of media staff from the COVID-19 stay-at-home restrictions and hereby enjoins journalists to carry their means of identification as they undertake their duties, to eliminate the chances of being harassed by security operatives," the statement said.



GETTING SET TO ENFORCE LOCKDOWN...

L-R: Commander, 9 brigade, Ikeja Army Cantonment, Brigadier General Etsu Ndagi; Commissioner of Police, Lagos State Command, Mr. Hakeem Odumosu; Lagos State Governor, Mr. Babajide Sanwo-Olu; Commander, Nigeria Navy Ship (NNS) Beecroft, Apapa, Commodore Ibrahim Aliyu; and Director, Department of State Services (DSS), Mr. Abdulftai Sanusi, during a media briefing after the State Security Council meeting at Lagos House, Marina...yesterday

Abiodun, Masari, Deputy Test Negative to COVID-19

Ogun State Governor, Prince Dapo Abiodun; Katsina State Governor, Hon. Aminu Masari and his Deputy, Manir Yakubu, have tested negative for COVID-19.

Katsina State deputy governor, who made the disclosure during a press briefing at the Government House, Katsina said the results were just released.

He further announced the

setting up of a committee tagged "Katsina State COVID-19 response and emergency committee", which he chairs.

The main committee is to assist the Ministry of Health in responding quickly to challenges posed by COVID-19

Abiodun yesterday postponed its lockdown of borders and all public and private activities till

April 3 to enable residents of the state prepare adequately and stockpile their homes with basic necessities.

The lockdown was initially billed to commence on Sunday Midnight but shifted to Monday 11p.m on Monday by President Muhammadu Buhari's directive.

It has however been shifted further to Friday, April 3, after

the governor's consultation with the President.

Abiodun also disclosed that he had observed self-isolation upon returning to Nigeria after attending the March 10 party in United Kingdom, adding that he also took a step further by submitting himself to the COVID-19 test ritual and fortunately came out with a negative result.

Fintiri Locks down Adamawa for 14 Days

Daji Sani in Yola

In an effort to avoid the spread of COVID-19, the Adamawa State Government has imposed a lockdown throughout the State for 14 days with effect from midnight of Tuesday (today).

This was contained in a press

statement issued yesterday by the Press Secretary to the governor, Mr. Humwashi Wonosikou.

According to statement, the governor of the state, Ahmadu Umaru Fintiri said the decision was painful but necessary to save lives.

It further explained that

inter-state travel restriction is also imposed while the international borders with Cameroon are to remain shut during this period, adding that the ban also affects tricycle, taxis and bus operators throughout the state.

"Governor Ahmadu Umaru Fintiri regretted that the directive

to workers on grade levels 1-14 to stay at home was not adhered to in the first instance and therefore government is left with no option than to impose the lockdown in the overall interest of the people as COVID-19 continues to spread with 111 reported cases in Nigeria so far"

Ooni Prescribes Alternative African Medicine for COVID-19

Yinka Kolawole in Osogbo

The Ooni of Ife, Oba Adeyeye Enitan Ogunwusi, yesterday revealed that the cure to the COVID-19 pandemic lied in the ability to explore the potential of the alternative and natural medicine.

The monarch, who doubles as the Co-chairman of the National Council of Traditional Rulers of Nigeria(NCTRN), made the

disclosure while addressing journalists at his Ile Oodua Palace in Ile Ife, emphasising that Nigeria as a country and the world at large must look inward for alternative solution.

According to him, "A divine proclamation came out to the world on June 6, 2019, during the World Ifa Festival-Otura Meji-which foretold the impending rage of this invisible pandemic war, but few listened

us.

"Look at Cuba, a country that has a strong traditional ties with Nigeria, the kingdom of Ife in particular, they have not only defeated the COVID-19, but now rendering huge medical assistance to several countries across the world because they value their traditional heritage inherited from us here.

"As the spiritual head of the Yoruba race, I have gathered

a lot for the use of mankind. I am also currently working with Yem Kem International (Alternative Medicine Expert) pharmaceutical company for the packaging and distribution of these alternative medications globally. I also challenge researchers both in Nigeria and abroad to make these natural herbs into clinical medicine and extract the vaccines from it.

Wike Imposes Curfew in Port Harcourt

Ernest Chinwo in Port Harcourt

Rivers State Government has imposed a dusk-to-dawn curfew on some parts of Port Harcourt metropolis following the violation of its market closure order.

This is as the state granted waivers to medical and pharmaceutical personnel, food and beverages, essential oil and gas staff, petroleum products and

media workers and newspaper distributors in its restriction of movements.

In a broadcast yesterday, the state Governor, Nyesom Wike, said the State Security Council reached the decision after it monitored compliance with the state government's directive.

According to him, "With effect from March 31, 2020, there will be a dusk-to-dawn curfew from

Obiri-Ikwerre Junction (Ozuoba, Rumualogu) to Choba and from Education Bus Stop to Agip Junction, Ikwerre Road.

"All beer parlours and public drinking bars are hereby closed because they have suddenly become an extension of night clubs that were earlier shut down.

"Any beer parlour or public drinking bar found open shall be acquired by the state government

"All landlords are advised to warn their tenants who use their property as beer parlours or public drinking bars to adhere to this directive.

"Traditional rulers, youth leaders and community development committees are to ensure that beer parlours and public drinking bars in their areas remain closed."

COVID-19 UPDATE...

COVID-19 UPDATE...

DMO Suspends April FGN's Savings Bond Offer

● *FG mulls reintroduction of 2012 corporate tax exemption order*

Ndubuisi Francis in Abuja

The Debt Management Office (DMO) has announced the suspension of the FGN Savings Bond Offer for the month of April due to the effects of COVID-19

pandemic.

The DMO, however assured that the suspension of the April 2020 offer will not affect coupon payments due to investors for already issued FGN securities, adding that arrangements

have been made to ensure that all coupon payments for and redemption of FGN securities are made as and when due to investors' designated accounts.

Indications have also emerged that the federal government may reintroduce the 2012 Corporate Tax (Exemption of Profits) Order granting job-creation tax rebates for employers as part of the proposed fiscal stimulus package to mitigate against the negative impact of COVID-19 scourge.

In suspending the April offer, the DMO cited the national broadcast on Sunday by President Muhammadu Buhari where he ordered restrictions of movement in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Lagos and Ogun States.

'As a result of this development, the Debt Management Office (DMO) wishes to inform the general public that the FGN Savings Bond Offer for the month of April 2020, which was scheduled for April 6 - 10, 2020

has been suspended," the DMO said in a statement.

The debt management agency assured the general public that the offers will resume when the conditions normalise.

But, it stressed that the suspension of the April 2020 Offer will not affect coupon payments due to investors for already issued FGN securities as arrangements have been made to ensure that all coupon

payments for and redemptions of FGN securities are made as and when due to investors' designated accounts.

Meanwhile, there are strong indications that the federal government may reintroduce the 2012 Corporate Tax (Exemption of Profits) Order granting job-creation tax rebates for employers as part of the proposed fiscal stimulus package to mitigate against the negative impact of COVID-19 scourge.

Obiano Self-isolate over Pandemic

David-Chyddy Eleke in Awka

Anambra State Government has confirmed that the Governor of the State, Mr. Willie Obiano, is observing self-quarantine.

The confirmation was given yesterday by the Secretary to the State Government (SSG), Prof. Solo Chukwulobeli and the Chief of Staff to the Governor, Mr. Primus Odili.

The officials said the governor has spent 11 days in self-quarantine and has not shown any signs of the disease.

"The governor was at the National Executive Council's meeting on Thursday in Abuja and you know how the sitting arrangement is, after the Anambra State governor, you get the Bauchi State governor, who has announced his status recently.

"But they usually observe social distancing, meaning that you are in a hall with a man who has

the disease does not mean that you can be infected.

"The governor is a very enlightened person, and because he knows he has been in a meeting with such caliber of people, he decided to go into self-quarantine.

"Obiano is on self-quarantine. I have not seen him for the past one week and we only talk on phone. We had two hours meeting on Sunday using zoom. There is no fear about his health at all," the officials said.

The officials also appealed to individuals and corporate organisations to donate to the state government in its fight to keep the state free of COVID-19.

According to them, about N1 billion has already been spent to procure personal preventive equipment (PPE), which is not yet enough for a population of seven million in the state.

Buhari's Broadcast Belated, Say Afenifere, PANDEF

Deji Elumoye in Abuja

The Yoruba socio-cultural group, Afenifere, and its Niger Delta counterpart, the Pan-Niger Delta Forum (PANDEF), have given a hard knock to last Sunday evening broadcast of President Muhammadu Buhari on the menace of COVID-19 pandemic.

The two groups in separate reactions yesterday flayed the delay in the presidential address more than two months after the outbreak of the epidemic in the country, saying the broadcast was belated.

Afenifere, in a statement issued by its spokesman, Yinka Odumakin, while noting the 'overdue presidential broadcast on COVID-19', stressed that "we honestly cannot fathom why it took so long for such to come as the only thing new in it was

locking down Abuja, Lagos and Ogun States.

"The rest of the broadcast are about washing hands and sneezing on elbows and handkerchiefs which can only still be useful to the senator removing his face mask to sneeze for the consumption of his colleagues at this point."

The group wondered why enough time was not given by the government to residents of Lagos and Ogun States as well as Abuja before the lockdown became effective.

It said: "While we agree that a lockdown is necessary at this point, it should not have been done as if we were shutting down a barracks under 24 hours. The people should have been given a few days' notice before now so that they could get themselves prepared for a shutdown.

Nigeria in Unusual Times, Says PDP Senate Caucus

Deji Elumoye and Chuks Okocha in Abuja

The Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) caucus in the Senate has described as unusual what Nigeria is currently going through with the COVID-19 pandemic.

The party, however, commended the federal government efforts towards combatting the ravaging COVID-19 as contained in President Muhammadu Buhari's national broadcast to Nigerians last Sunday evening.

In a statement issued in Abuja yesterday by the Senate Minority Leader, Senator Enyinnaya Abaribe, the caucus said though

they had expected the presidency to engage the National Assembly more in some of the policy areas that are statutory, however, they have to recognise the fact that these are unusual times that may require quick policy responses.

"These are perilous times in the world and indeed an unusual situation for our dear country, so the PDP caucus described as a step in the right direction the president's broadcast and policy measures, which we believe while being short on prioritising the poor and vulnerable in our society, nevertheless, if properly implemented, will keep our people safe from this deadly virus," he said.



PANIC BUYING OF PETROL...

Long queues at NIPCO Filling State Second Gate along Kubwa expressway, Kubwa, Abuja, as motorists and other fuel users scrambled to get enough product for the duration of the 14-day lockdown of FCT... yesterday

ENOCHREUBEN

How US Doctor Treated COVID-19 Patients With Anti-malaria Drug

A medical doctor in the United States, Vladimir Zelenko has narrated how he treated hundreds of COVID-19 patients with anti-malaria drugs with no death recorded.

Zelenko, who has been in the news following his claims about the use of hydroxychloroquine in treating the infection, said he has used the drug to treat 450 to 500 patients.

In an interview with former mayor of New York, Rudy Giuliani, the doctor said he combined hydroxychloroquine

in a regimen with two other drugs after learning about the therapy being used in South Korea and France.

He said he has been treating coronavirus patients for over a week in Kiryas Joel, a New York village, and that none of those he has so far managed has died.

"I've had zero patients died, zero patients intubated and three currently admitted with pneumonia," he said, adding: "I've treated 450 to 500 patients, one third of which were from outside

(the village)."

On how he administers his treatment, Zelenko said: "I blended the two treatments from South Korea and France and made a three-drug regimen which are hydroxychloroquine, which is the common denominator by both treatments, then I used zinc, and azithromycin.

"The virus gets inside the cell and begins to hijack the cell industrial machinery. It is well known that zinc interrupts that. So, the concept is that it interferes in the replication of

the virus.

"But the problem with zinc is that it does not get inside the cell very easily, only very small percent gets in. What is interesting is that hydroxychloroquine is a ionic core; so it is the key that opens the canal and facilitates the work of the zinc.

"When you have a severe viral infection, it is well known that you can get a secondary infection, so I believe the zithromax is there as a precaution and if there begins a bacteria process, it kills it before it causes a bigger problem."

FCT Sets up Palliative Committee for the Vulnerable

Olawale Ajimotokan in Abuja

The Federal Capital Territory (FCT) has announced the composition of the COVID-19 palliative committee to cater for the vulnerable in the city and the six area councils.

The FCT Minister, Mr. Muhammed Musa Bello

announced the setting up of the committee last night after the meeting of the all agencies involved in the provision of services in the territory.

The FCT Minister of State, Dr. Ramatu Aliyu Tijjani will head the committee to be supported by the chairmen of the six area councils, traditional rulers, NGOs and support groups.

President Muhammadu Buhari had imposed a curfew on the FCT and Ogun and Lagos states.

Bello vowed that the FCT will implement the President's stay-at-home order banning movement by the residents of the territory by 100 per cent. The minister said all the entries and exit points

of the FCT, including the satellite towns are manned by security operatives.

While enjoining all residents of the FCT to stay indoors and abide by all regulations of all health authorities, he vowed that security agents will arrest and prosecute the defaulters of the directive.

Cross River Bars 35 Oil Workers from Entry into State

Chinedu Eze

About 35 American oil workers were denied entry into Cross River State by the state government after their arrival into the country with a chartered flight from the United States, THISDAY has learnt.

THISDAY gathered that the Cross River Government

insisted that the Americans must be tested for COVID-19 locally before they would be allowed into the state.

According to the itinerary of the workers, they arrived Nigeria by charter flight with flight number FLT AIR X CHARTER LTD/9H-BIG/AXY2929/A 343.

But on their arrival yesterday morning by 7:26 am, the charter

flight from Lagos to Calabar arranged with Air Peace did not take place because Cross River State refused them entry and insisted that they must be tested for COVID-19 in Nigeria before they would be allowed to come into the state.

THISDAY learnt that they stayed at the Murtala Muhammed International

Airport until Air Peace decided to take them to Abuja and made arrangement for hotel accommodation for them.

THISDAY learnt earlier that the Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA) was duly notified at their arrival.

This was confirmed by the Director of Consumer Protection, NCAA, Mr. Adamu Abdillahi.

24 HOURS...

24 HOURS...

Military to Enforce Lockdown in Lagos, Ogun, FCT

Kingsley Nwezeh in Abuja

In compliance with President Muhammadu Buhari's directive, the Military High Command said yesterday that it would enforce the lockdown of Lagos, and Ogun states; and the nation's capital, Abuja as part of measures to contain the spread of the

pandemic.

It also announced that a senior military officer tested positive for the disease and is receiving treatment.

Defence Headquarters also announced the establishment of 17 treatment and isolation centres in the six geo-political zones of the country.

Briefing journalists in Abuja, Coordinator, Directorate of Defence Media Operations, Major General John Enenche, said the Armed Forces of Nigerian would implement all restrictions on movement in line with government directive.

"The Armed Forces of Nigeria is to implement all restriction on movement in line with the Federal Government of Nigeria.

"For the avoidance of doubt this include the Presidential Directive given by the President and Commander-in-Chief, during his address to the nation on the COVID-19 pandemic, on 29 March 2020", he said.

Enenche said a committee headed by the Chief of Defence Training and Operations is in place interfacing with all relevant

ministries, departments and agencies of the federal government of Nigeria managing the COVID-19 pandemic.

He urged adherence to medical and administrative guidelines being provided by government at all levels.

"The High Command of Nigerian Military hereby solicits the support of the general public in this trying period of

the fight against COVID-19. This can be achieved by adhering to all the medical and administrative guidelines being provided by government at all levels", he said.

Enenche said one senior officer tested positive and is presently receiving treatment.

He said the officer recently returned from a foreign engagement.

Private Sector Coalition Sets up Medical Facilities in Six Geo-political Zones

Obinna Chima

The recently established Private Sector Coalition Against COVID-19 (CACOVID) last night announced that work has begun in earnest to provide and equip medical facilities in the six geopolitical zones.

The Director, Corporate Communications, Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), Mr. Isaac Okorafor, disclosed this in a statement he issued on behalf of CACOVID.

According to the statement, the medical facilities includes the creation of testing, isolation and treatment centres, as well as the provision of Intensive Care Units (ICUs) and molecular testing labs.

The statement explained that: "We have started with Lagos (1,000 beds); Kano (500 beds); Rivers (210 beds) Abuja (200 beds); Enugu (200 beds); and Borno (200 beds); and expect to be operational within 10 days.

"The next phase will see locations set up in Katsina, Ogun, Bayelsa, Anambra, Bauchi and Plateau to be ready within three weeks. The remaining states of the Federation will be set up in the last phase within the next five weeks."

It stated that based on the population of Lagos, and the fact that it is presently the epicentre of the crisis, it would also be creating a permanent structure within the next four to six months.

"Teams have been set up and world-class standards are being employed to aggressively pursue a solution to this pandemic.

"This is a massive effort and all hands must be on deck, which is why at a time like this, it is critical we come together as one - hence the need to channel all our efforts through the CACOVID umbrella.

"A CBN account has been set up for those who wish to make a monetary contribution."

Govs Pledge to Guarantee Seamless Movement of Essential Commodities

Chuks Okocha in Abuja

The 36 state governors under the aegis of the Nigeria Governors' Forum (NGF) have promised to ensure that there was seamless movement of essential commodities throughout the country during this period of the lockdown following the outbreak of the COVID-19

In a communique signed at the end of the first Teleconference

meeting on the COVID-19 pandemic of the governors by the NGF Chairman and Ekiti State Governor, Dr. Kayode Fayemi, they also resolved to strengthen the private sector-led support for the COVID-19 pandemic.

According to the statement, the NGF Secretariat will serve as the coordination mechanism by tracking the COVID-19 essential needs of all states, including equipment for

contact tracing/sample collection, diagnosis and treatment.

Fayemi said that the governors also agreed to hold weekly teleconference meetings to receive regular updates from all States and maintain a coordinated response to the pandemic.

"We, members of the Nigeria Governors' Forum (NGF), at our meeting held on Sunday, March 29, 2020 deliberated on the COVID-19

pandemic in the country. "The NGF Chairman briefed State Governors on various State-level coordination with the Presidential Task Force on COVID-19, the private sector through the Food, Beverages and Pharmaceuticals Association led by the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN), as well as the MTN Foundation and the Donor Group led by Messrs. Aliko Dangote and Herbert Wigwe.

Family Offers N2m Reward for Information on Kidnapped Brother of Bauchi Gov

Segun Awofadeji in Bauchi

The family of Bauchi State Governor, Senator Bala Abdulkadir Mohammed has offered N2million reward for information leading to the whereabouts of Alhaji Yaya Adamu Duguri, the

governor's elder brother, who was kidnapped recently in Bauchi metropolis.

The family has made an offer of the sum of N2 million as compensation for any useful information that will lead to safe return of their kidnapped brother.

The state Police Command

disclosed that four gunmen armed with AK 47 rifles took away the victim from a tailor's shop in Ungwar Jaki area of the state capital about 7.30p.m. last Wednesday.

The reward on information leading to his safe return was contained in a three-paragraph press statement

signed by one Alhaji Adamu Barde, copies of which were made available to journalists.

The statement revealed that, "the family wishes to offer the sum of two million naira (N 2million) to whoever is willing to provide information leading to his safe return."



LAGOS STATE GOVERNMENT THE OFFICE OF PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS & THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH



REQUEST FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (REOI) FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A MEDICAL PARK

CHANGE IN DATE FOR SUBMISSION OF EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

The Office of the Public-Private Partnerships and the Lagos State Ministry of Health through a publication dated the 28th day of February, 2020 in The Punch and The Nation Newspapers published a Request for Expression of Interest for the development of a Medical Park on a single location of 2.1765 hectares of land (the former Nursing Hostel), 1-9 Awolowo Road, Ikoyi-Lagos (the Project).

The current prevailing conditions and the subsequent reaction to COVID-19 Pandemic informs the government to change the closing date for submission of Expression of Interest for the Project earlier published as the 31st of March, 2020 to the 30th of April, 2020.

Signed

Ope George
Director General

Lagos State Office of Public-Private Partnerships



Prudential Zenith Life protecting its customers during the Coronavirus (COVID -19) pandemic

Despite the unprecedented situation arising from the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, we at Prudential Zenith Life continue to provide our customers with additional peace of mind and assurance while observing social distancing and closing our offices in line with the recent pronouncement of the Federal Government.

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- Reduce waiting periods for new cover.
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- Set up a dedicated claims teams with remote working capabilities.
- Enable customers to buy insurance without the need for physical interface with a sales personnel.
- Deliver additional training and incentives to our sales personnel to continue to provide advice and access to insurance at this time.

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We are going to get through these trying times together. Please stay safe and support the Ministry of Health, Nigerian Centre for Diseases Control (NCDC) and other relevant authorities.

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COMMENT

Editor, Editorial Page PETER ISHAKA

Email peter.ishaka@thisdaylive.com

THE PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS ON COVID-19

Buhari's COVID-19 speech is like fine wine with a bit of vinegar, writes **Fredrick Nwabuo**

President Muhammadu Buhari was presidential in his address to the nation on Coronavirus (COVID-19) on Sunday. He got off his accustomed armchair; stood up and spoke to Nigerians like an unfeigned commander-in-chief. I could see the sense of urgency in his cadence and grimace. Really, the president's first COVID-19 "outing" is a far cry from the previous televised embarrassments. Though it was a pre-recorded broadcast, the previous ones were recorded as well yet dismal. So, there is some improvement in the president's public address.

But it is dismaying that the president had to wait until citizens gassed him out of Aso Rock with ululations before he could do his bounden duty. Weeks after coronavirus hit the country; he is just addressing citizens on this lethal threat. Be that as it may, he has spoken so I will dwell on the content of his speech.

The president said: "Based on the advice of the federal ministry of health and the NCDC, I am directing the cessation of all movements in Lagos and the FCT for an initial period of 14 days with effect from 11pm on Monday, 30th March 2020. This restriction will also apply to Ogun State due to its close proximity to Lagos and the high traffic between the two states.

"All citizens in these areas are to stay in their homes. Travel to or from other states should be postponed. All businesses and offices within these locations should be fully closed during this period."

"We will use this containment period to identify, trace and isolate all individuals that have come into contact with confirmed cases. We will ensure the treatment of confirmed cases while restricting further spread to other states."

The order to lock down Abuja, Lagos and Ogun is expected and apropos. It has been proved by the China example that the surest way to combat COVID-19 is through social distancing – and the plausible method of ensuring this is if people stay at home. The same recipe is being applied in the UK, Italy – where an entire region is quarantined – and some other countries facing this viral enemy. So, the order is a conscionable and reasoned strategy to the deal with this problem.



BEYOND HIS TAKE ON PROVIDING RELIEF MATERIALS FOR THE VULNERABLE MEMBERS OF SOCIETY – WHICH IS QUITE INSCRUTABLE I MUST SAY – THERE IS NO PLAN FOR WORKING NIGERIANS WHO WILL LOSE THE MEANS TO PROVIDE FOR THEIR FAMILIES AT THIS TIME

But I think the president's relief plan for Nigerians who will be impacted by this lockdown should have been more robust. Beyond his take on providing relief materials for the vulnerable members of society – which is quite inscrutable I must say – there is no plan for working Nigerians who will lose the means to provide for their families at this time.

Also, I would have loved to see the president roll out sustenance packages for Nigerians who will be paying rent, electricity and water bills and other essential bills during this tortuous period.

In Canada, Justin Trudeau, the prime minister, last week, announced a plan to help "workers whose income has been hit by the coronavirus. Employees inside and outside the unemployment insurance system and the self-employed can apply to receive C\$2,000 each month for four months" – according to Bloomberg. The prime minister had also announced a moratorium on rent and other essential bills for working citizens. Also, the UK and the US are implementing analogous relief plans for their citizens.

As a matter of fact, we are not as rich as those countries, but we could have borrowed from how comprehensive their plans are – not necessarily paying every citizen a certain amount.

In addition, the president said: "For the most vulnerable in our society, I have directed that the conditional cash transfers for the next two months be paid immediately. Our internally displaced persons will also receive two months of food rations in the coming weeks."

I see a bit of ambiguity in this statement. Who are the most vulnerable in our society? What is the assessment for that? Really, at this time, everyone in Nigeria is vulnerable. Some companies are among the vulnerable, most Nigerians, including those in the middle class, are on the vulnerability threshold. We are all made vulnerable by coronavirus. So, the president's relief plan should have been more detailed and encompassing.

In all, I hope the government will be more responsive to unfolding developments on COVID-19 in the country – particularly as it relates to the economy – and initiate measures accordingly, and not slither into inertia after today. **Fredrick Nwabuo is a writer and journalist.**

HOW DID IT COME TO THIS?

lyke **Ogbonnaya** writes that the allegations against the former governor of Abia State, Theodore Orji, are spurious

I am bewildered at the hue and cry which trailed the recent but unsubstantiated allegations levelled against the former Governor of Abia State, Senator T.A. Orji and his household by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC).

It is my firm belief that we will not require any intellectual sophistication to drive home the truth that a case such as the T.A. Orji's has all the composition of retrogressive embodiment.

An objective assessment of all the given sides in a matter such as Ochendo's will spare us the burden of dissipating energy on irrelevancies and channel same to more critical and life-threatening issues like security, which as it were is tearing the very fabric of our corporate existence.

The humanity in us as I attempt to generalize, should have reminded us of the possibility that Senator T.A. Orji could be hunted politically by other actors, whose initial gubernatorial drives did not see the light of day and have thus resorted to trumped-up allegations as a way of cutting their own pound of flesh.

A critical but objective-minded appraisal of the allegations against Orji, will drive home the truism that the N525 billion alleged to have been misappropriated, was spuriously manufactured. That allegation could not have been the true position given the obvious reality that the sub-heads they were purported to have been drawn from were not in existence, during the gubernatorial stewardship of Senator Orji.

The ingredient of the point being advanced is that Abia under T.A. Orji did not know what is today's 'Paris refund' as banded and the consequent of which is that financial resources could not have accrued to the state vide those concocted channels.

Gone are the days when financial documents and transactions are shrouded in secrecy, else the likes of Sam Onuigbo now a House of Representatives member and Maxwell Adindu both of whom superintended over the finances of the state as commissioners could not have boldly and publicly disclaimed the Paris account allegation.

Shouldn't we be amused therefore at the recent comic relief carried out by a motley gathering of conscripted hackers whose demand is that Ochendo's household be rounded up and thrown into gaol irrespective of what they will weigh legally at the pendulum of justice?

I sincerely sympathize with the constitutional provision that promotes our peoples right of association, but it should be administered without having to vent misguided resentments and tantrums on other innocent Nigerians and consequently delude ourselves into believing that every crap will be accepted and swallowed hook line and sinker.

These fixation on what seems right in our own conceit, has on different occasions beclouded our ability to fairly situate that aside from opponents and their willing collaborators conspiring to politically dent and diminish Ochendo's credentials, he could ordinarily not have misappropriated a whopping N525 billion as presently being accused.

Curiosity compelled me to painstakingly consult and research on allocations brought to public domain by the National Bureau of Statistics referencing figures from the office of the Accountant General.

Abia's buoyant month for any federation allocation never exceeded N4.5 billion before deductions for mandatory debt services. If left at a monthly gross of N4.5 billion, it could still not have amounted to N525

billion as alleged. Otherwise, payment of workers' salaries, largely believed to have hovered around N2.6 billion monthly and which the Government of T.A. Orji never owed, would have ended in catastrophe.

Perhaps, we may be oblivious of the expository reality that blue chip and thriving companies operating in Nigeria are mandatorily required to register with Companies and Allied Matters Act (CAMA) under the control of federal government of Nigeria and saddled with the responsibility of auditing and governance.

I have to rightly observe therefore that the companies being associated with Ochendo's family could not have been operating without meeting CAMA's conditionality.

It also did not occur to us that the companies under focus have been in business for a period spanning over a decade, preceding the gubernatorial stewardship of Senator Orji.

As mandatorily constituted, limited liability companies do not operate without the inclusion of other actors, who must bring their initial equity shares for a seamless pursuit of various business interests. My take in this regard therefore is that Mr Chinedum Orji and his siblings are old enough to engage and partner with investors with the fidelity and bullish business permutations and financial wherewithal to jointly pursue and clinically deliver on any business interest.

Persecutors of the former governor, did not consider it appropriate to reconcile their claim with what is domiciled in Code of Conduct Bureau as should have been the case, before tactlessly drawing conclusion.

It is our duty no doubt, to conscientiously follow up on how the governor administered the use of security votes, but we should not be unmindful of the lacuna created by the

Constitution to the effect that it is largely not accounted for.

However, that is beside the point, knowing that the governor whose stewardship recorded peace and tranquility like Ochendo's, attained that by expending billions of naira in maintenance of security. Our memory will not fail us to at this point to hurriedly recall the menace of a kidnap king pin in Abia State: "Osisikankwu" who terrorized and gave our business moguls, a run for their money.

Exceeding the red line was what became the national challenge of daring to kidnap a group of journalists who were returning from a professional programme which held in Cross River and how the then government of T.A. Orji deployed state of the art technology to free his captives, contain, and eventually nipped him in the bud.

We should also have been agitated with how Abia under T.A. Orji could have chronicled some enduring infrastructural milestones viz: Goodluck Jonathan 144 Battalion Barracks Ohafia, Nigerian Army School of Languages Isuikwuato, Ultra-Modern State Secretariat, imposing and prestigious High Court complex in Umuahia and Aba, 5000 Capacity International Conference Center, classical JAAC and ASUBEB building, Ubani Modern and spacious market, New Umuahia Timber market, Abia Specialists Hospital, roads infrastructure, etc., and still cornered 525 billion! I am beginning to wonder when Abia's economy became this incredibly buoyant.

I am not averse to the entitlements of our individual and collective opinions as it affects what we feel about Senator T.A. Orji and his household. But let us think before we talk and critically consult before we draw conclusions.

Ogbonnaya wrote from Lagos

A CASE FOR CONDEMNED INMATES

The practice of keeping convicts perpetually on death row is a violation of their rights

It is an inherent violation on their rights and dignity to keep people interminably on death row, especially for cases that have been concluded by the Supreme Court. It is therefore little surprise that this category of inmates, according to the Nigerian Correctional Service (NCS), were becoming difficult to control. "We have a crisis on our hands. We have 2,745 condemned persons in our facilities across the country. This category of inmates is very difficult to maintain or control. They are afraid of nothing because they know that they are already destined to die," said the NCS Public Relations Officer, Francis Enobore.

The practice of keeping convicts perpetually on death row is not only inhumane, it is a violation of their rights. To put it in context, prisoners on death row are condemned to a kind of existential limbo, existing as entities in cold storage rather than living as human beings. The NCS Controller General, Mr Ahmed Ja'afaru recently bemoaned the fact that majority of the condemned inmates have spent a decade and more waiting for death, living under suspense and mental torture.

IT IS AN INHERENT VIOLATION ON THEIR RIGHTS AND DIGNITY TO KEEP PEOPLE INTERMINABLY ON DEATH ROW, ESPECIALLY FOR CASES THAT HAVE BEEN CONCLUDED BY THE SUPREME COURT

"Out of the number, a greater percentage of them may have finished appeals and are still waiting for the determination of the approving authority to either approve their execution or commit them

to life imprisonment," said Ja'afaru.

Statutorily, governors are not bound to sign the warrants for the execution of people on death row. They can exercise their prerogative to commute such sentences to lifetime in jail or reduced the jail terms. The delay in carrying out this executive function is breeding congestion that has impacted significantly on the administration of justice in Nigeria. That is



aside the helplessness endured in the roller coaster of emotions for these condemned inmates who have practically been reduced to the status of the living dead. They can also grant such convicts state pardon, therefore putting a closure to the matter. But it is unacceptable for them to leave inmates perpetually on death row.

The obligation on the governors is specifically enshrined in Section 212 of the 1999 Constitution as well as Section 221 of the Penal Code and Section 319 of the Criminal Code. All this prescribes capital punishment for murder while sections 37 and 38 of the Criminal Code prescribe the same punishment for treasonable felony. There is of course a global campaign against capital punishment, but it is still applicable in Nigeria. Majority of these death row inmates are in solitary confinement, having been convicted for such offences as murder, treason, treachery and armed robbery. Some states in the country have also enacted capital punishment for those convicted of kidnapping.

It is an inherent violation on their rights and dignity to keep people interminably on death row, especially for cases that have been concluded by the Supreme Court. Such practice is antithetical and capable of inflicting traumatic shock on the condemned inmates awaiting an imaginary death in solitary confinement. We therefore imagine the harrowing spell condemned prisoners go through daily in solitary cells, humbled by the force of an impending death that seems to be an eternity.

Against the background that the NCS Act provides for some mitigations, we urge Ja'afaru to liaise with the judiciary on how to operationalise Section 12(2c) which specifically provides that "where an inmate sentenced to death has exhausted all legal procedures for appeal and a period of 10 years has elapsed without execution of the sentence, the Chief Judge may commute the sentence of death to life imprisonment."

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Letters to the Editor

TO OUR READERS

Letters in response to specific publications in THISDAY should be brief (150-200 words) and straight to the point. Interested readers may send such letters along with their contact details to opinion@thisdaylive.com. We also welcome comments and opinions on topical local, national and international issues provided they are well-written and should also not be longer than (950-1000 words). They should be sent to opinion@thisdaylive.com along with the email address and phone numbers of the writer.

ABBA KYARI: THE HALLMARK OF LEADERSHIP

It was the last paragraph of Abba Kyari's press statement on the status of his health that inspired this letter. It was a stark reminder of the fact that in Covid-19 we have a mortal enemy that could not be bothered about class, race or tribal sentiments.

The President's Chief of Staff wrote: "This is a disease that recognises no difference between north and south, men or women, rich or poor. We are all in this together."

This was pure class from a man who had over the past few days been the subject of death wishes and conspiracy theories about his whereabouts.

The statement would reveal what for me had been the missing link in the puzzle and enigma called Abba Kyari. It clearly demonstrated how the seasoned lawyer and administrator has been able to strategically steer the office of the Chief of Staff with unprecedented tact, grit and candour.

Kyari's secret is simple. He has surrounded himself with professionals, not lackeys; people who are sold to the cause of giving all to support President Muhammad Buhari to lead Nigeria effectively. Hear him: "I have a team of young, professional, knowledgeable and patriotic colleagues, whose dedication has been beyond the call of duty, who continue to work seven days a week, with no time of the day spared. We will continue to serve the President and people of Nigeria, as we have for the past five years."

This is statesmanship and leadership at its best. The statement indeed provides a window into the mind of Abba Kyari - how his focus, in spite of having tested positive for the corona virus is to galvanise Nigerians to unite against this dreaded monster. Leaders see temporary impediments

as opportunities. Leaders rise above partisanship bickering in a time of crisis. Leaders keep their eyes on the ball; looking for the right team mates to empower for sustained activity, even when they are not physically available. Leaders inspire those under their watch to be the best they can be. Abba Kyari has demonstrated this quite commendably.

This is not a time for politicking; Nigeria is at war like other nations, against an unseen enemy that is ravaging lives and economies with the unkindest cut.

Medical experts suggest we may witness much more cases in the days and weeks ahead. We shouldn't wish the impending danger away as a nation. Much more than ever, we need the famed resilient Naija spirit to confront Covid-19 together. Individuals, the government and companies are already giving to the cause of helping the nation overcome the virus. This is great.

We mustn't forget to heed all precautionary measures like washing our hands frequently and practicing social distancing. The government should do all within its power to coordinate a robust response that will see Nigeria through this challenging period. One will also add that this is equally a good time to reach out to the Almighty to seek divine intervention.

Finally, it is heartwarming to see that even amid his period of self-isolation, Abba Kyari's statement shows he has the wellbeing of Nigeria at heart. "I hope to be back at my desk very soon," he declared. From his lips to God's ears, I wish Abba Kyari a speedy recovery.

Justus Iheanacho, Enugu

RIGHT BUT WRONG

There have been a number of articles about how Covid-19 has spread so far and one of the possible causes are the Millennials who are still going to the beach or out partying with groups of friends. They seem to think the world owes them a favour because of how fantastic they are. They don't get it because they haven't had to face any challenges without mum and dad telling them how great they are and denouncing anyone who dares doubt that. The sad reality now is that they may be giving their parents a fatal illness.

I hope they improve because I need them working and paying taxes for my pension.
Dennis Fitzgerald, Melbourne, Australia



SOKOTO STATE GOVERNMENT

MINISTRY OF WORKS & TRANSPORT, SOKOTO

RE:-INVITATION TO TENDER FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF FLYOVER BRIDGES, DUALIZATION OF SOME ROADS AND CONSTRUCTION OF SCHOOLS, HOSPITALS AND SPORTING STRUCTURES IN SOKOTO STATE

Following the receipt and evaluation of Letters of Expression of Interest by various contractors/firms in response to our earlier advertisement in relation to the above dated 8th January 2020 in some National dailies.

The Sokoto State Government wishes to invite all the Engineering firms/contractors who submitted Letters of Expression of Interest to tender for the following projects:

A) PROJECTS TO BE TENDERED FOR:

DESCRIPTION	LENGTH (km)	LOT No.
CONSTRUCTION OF FLYOVER BRIDGE (9 SPAN) AT RIJIYA ROUND ABOUT, SOKOTO	362M	LOT 1
DUALIZATION OF TASHAR ILLELA-ROAD BLOCK AND CONSTRUCTION OF NINE (9) SPAN BRISGE	3440M	LOT 2
DUALIZATION OF MAI TUTA ROAD	600M	LOT 3
DUALIZATION OF WAZIRI ABBAS ROAD	200M	LOT 4

A2: BUILDING WORKS:

DESCRIPTION	LENGTH (km)	LOT No.
CONSTRUCTION OF SPECIAL GOVERNMENT GIRLS SCIENCE ACADEMY KASARAWA, SOKOTO	362M	LOT 5
CONSTRUCTION OF NEW ABDULLAHI BARA'U SECONDARY SCHOOL, DOGON DAJI	3440M	LOT 6
CONSTRUCTION OF PREMIER HOSPITAL, TAMBUWAL	600M	LOT 7
CONSTRUCTION OF PREMIER HOSPITAL, S/BIRNI	200M	LOT 8
CONSTRUCTION OF SOKOTO STATE UNIVERSITY TEACHING HOSPITAL, SOKOTO	600M	LOT 9
CONSTRUCTION OF NEW ULTRA MODERN IN-DOOR SPORTS ARENA, SOKOTO	200M	LOT 10
CONSTRUCTION OF MORDERN SPORTS/ARENA SOKOTO AND CONSTRUCTION OF NEW INDOOR SPORT HALL SOKOTO	600M	LOT 11

B) SCOPE OF WORKS

The scope of works essentially involves but not limited to the following:-

- i. Site clearance and earth works (where applicable)
- ii. Roads works and payment
- iii. Culverts and drainage
- iv. Bridges
- v. Construction of School/sporting Structures
- vi. Constrction of Hospital Structures
- vii. Construction of mordern sports/Arena Sokoto
- viii. Construction of New Indoor Sport Hall Sokoto
- ix. Any other works related to the project.

C) COLLECTION OF TENDER DOCUMENTS

- i) The bid/tender documents are to be collected at Ministry of Works & Transport upon presentation of a receipt of payment/Bank teller of non refundable fee of N250,000.00 for each project payable into Consolidated Revenue Account Number 5030063938 with Fidelity Bank Plc; Sort Code **070221068**.
- ii) The duly completed documents should be signed, sealed and Lot tendered for indicated and submitted not later than 2 weeks from the date of this publication, together with evidence of payment.
- iii) Closing date for submission of tender is Wednesday 15th April, 2020 by 12:00pm. Tender will be opened on the same day by 12:30pm at the Auditorium of Sultan Muhammad Maccido Institute for Qur'an & General Studies along As-Sudais road, Sokoto. Bidders or their representatives are invited to witness the opening.
- iv) Documents are to be submitted to the Office of the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Works & Transport-usman Faruk Secretariat, Sokoto.

SIGNED:

Permanent Secretary
For: Hon. Commissioner,
Ministry of Works & Transport,
Sokoto

CORONAVIRUS: Three Scenarios for Nigeria in 2020



Scenario	Assumptions	Possible Outcome
Coronavirus Eases (No new cases)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oil price rises above US\$40 pb Economic activities pick up in the second quarter Demand for Nigerian crude improves as economies recover - Nigeria produces 1.9 million barrels per day Government capital spending at N1 trillion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GDP Growth at 2% Inflation Rate at 12.2% External Reserves at US\$34bn Exchange Rate at N400/US\$
Coronavirus Fades (Spreads at a slow pace as situation improves gradually)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oil price falls between US\$30 and US\$40pb Partial and temporary lockdown of cities, schools, airports, businesses, etc. Sluggish demand for Nigerian crude - Nigeria produces 1.5 million barrels per day Government capital spending at N700 billion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GDP Growth at 1.4% Inflation Rate at 12.6% External Reserves at US\$32 billion Exchange Rate at N420/US\$
Coronavirus Worsens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oil price below US\$30 pb Complete lock down of major cities, schools, airports, businesses, etc. Weak demand for Nigerian crude - Nigeria produces 1.2 million barrels per day Government capital spending at N300 billion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GDP Growth at -0.4% Inflation Rate at 15.5% External Reserves to average US\$29 billion Exchange Rate at N450/US\$

Government Policy Interventions

Given the transmission channels, government interventions need to target these five cardinal areas:

Improve external reserves	Enhance government revenue	Attract foreign/local investments	Address rising inflation	Limit impact on sectoral/overall GDP growth
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Naira devaluation to ease pressure on Reserves – CBN recently adjusted the Naira to N380/US\$. High interest rate environment will be essential in attracting investments inflows; however with expected downside risk on economic growth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review 2020 budget benchmarks – Oil price, exchange rate, revenue estimates, etc. Review budget items to prune out unwarranted expenditures. Display prudence in the use of borrowed funds. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Harmonisation of interest rates. Address critical issues of policy inconsistency and ad-hoc policy making. Intensify reforms on ease of doing business across states. Target specific non-oil products for exporters to take advantage of the devalued exchange rate. Create instruments for maturing OMOs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The government has reduced fuel price to N125 per liter. Proper enforcement of this policy could slow down growth in inflation rate. Address structural issues of infrastructure, power supply, logistics etc., which increases the cost of production. Provide support packages for vulnerable households. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disbursement of intervention funds for affected industry - CBN announced N50bn intervention fund. Map out and support industries with substitutes for imports. Support industries that will benefit from a devalued Naira via increasing output for the local and/or export market.

Stay Home. Stay Safe



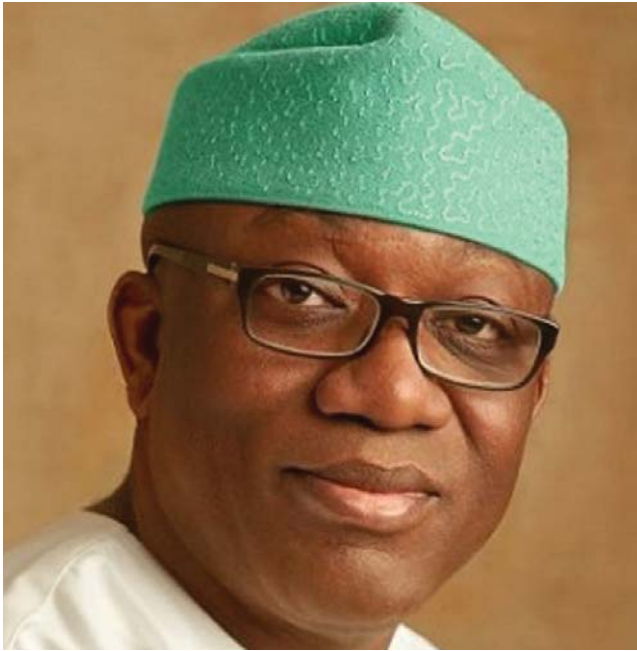
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Segun Oni's Defection Changes Political Permutations in Ekiti

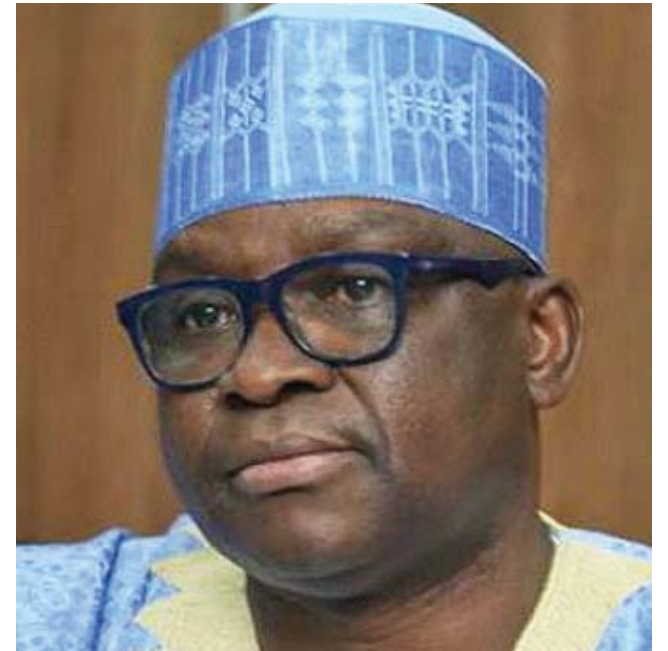
Victor Ogunje writes former Ekiti State Governor, Chief Segun Oni has made clear his intention to switch political party loyalty from the All Progressives Congress to the Peoples Democratic Party to register displeasure about how his supporters and himself were ostracised from all engagements in APC



Fayemi



Oni



Fayose

Though, the rumour has been rife since his suspension last year from the All Progressives Congress (APC) in Ekiti State that former Governor Segun Oni will be returning to his former party, the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), what many thought was a dream has started to manifest after a few months of conjecture. The covert political games have been finally been unmasked with the imminent political events of the present times.

Several reasons were adduced for this political move. Some close associates said Oni mooted the idea following his suspension from the APC at his ward in Ifaki Ekiti for alleged anti-party activities. Rumour also had it that pursuit of his future ambition among other issues prompted the defection that has been brought to the fore as this issue gains traction and forms the kernel of discourse among interested parties.

Oni, after his defection to APC in 2014, had held the coveted position of Deputy National Chairman of APC and still remains Chairman of a federal board being an appointment offered him by President Muhammadu Buhari.

Apart from the issue of suspension, Oni was said to have been rattled and felt betrayed by the way Governor Kayode Fayemi came like a Tsunami in the March 26, 2018 governorship primary of APC and trounced all the 33 aspirants in the keen and pulsating contest. Oni came second in the election.

What fuelled such feeling of betrayal was that, Oni was said to have got assurances from Fayemi, who was then a Minister that he won't be contesting the governorship. That made his dream look good, but he eventually got a forlorn and botched hope with Fayemi's last minute interest in the race.

Most worrisome to Oni was the fact that he was well positioned among the aspirants to clinch the ticket before Fayemi suddenly plunged into the race and altered the political equation in a manner that was deleterious to his political future. The former governor is still licking the wound of that epochal defeat.

Putting it in the right perspective, this must have propelled Oni to go to court to challenge Fayemi's eligibility for the primary. Oni claimed in his originating summons that Fayemi ought to have resigned 30 days to the primary as a Minister to be eligible to participate. But he got unfavourable verdicts from the High court up to the Supreme court.

In actual fact, Oni's proposed defection has automatically altered the political permutations

for the 2022 governorship election in Ekiti State. Aside from that, the decamping has also elicited surprises that have made some pundits to be gaping about the development and confirmed the age-long axiom that politics is about interest with no permanent friend or foe.

The present reorganisation and realignment has brought foes to be friends and friends and known political allies are gradually turning into enemies, thereby making the scenario look more convoluted and exhilarating.

From 2003 when Governor Ayodele Fayose suddenly forayed into Ekiti political hemisphere and captured everywhere like a whirlwind, he and Oni have never hidden their hatred for each other. Throughout the three and half years Fayose superintended over Ekiti before his illegal impeachment, Oni, though a member of the PDP was the leader of opposition against Fayose. He also contributed financially, physically and mentally to Fayose's abrupt ouster on October 16, 2006.

The acrimony was taken to the highest pedestal in 2014, when Oni had to defect to APC to help Governor Kayode Fayemi secure a second term, after Fayose controversially clinched the PDP ticket to seek reelection.

Today, the same Fayose that was perceived as an arch rival is preparing a solid ground for Oni to return to his party. This is a replica of

the event of 2009 rerun election, when Fayose, a PDP person had to work with Fayemi, the then candidate of the defunct Action Congress of Nigeria against Segun Oni of the PDP.

Like a repeat of history, in the 2022 election, Oni will be forming alliance with Fayose to wrest power from Fayemi like the saying goes "what goes round comes round."

The permutation among political gladiators in the PDP is that, Oni will be offered the governorship ticket on account of his popularity among the rural dwellers and civil servants. Fayose's former Deputy, Prof Kolapo Olusola, who narrowly lost to Fayemi in 2018 governorship contest will be prevailed upon to take the deputy governorship slot.

The feelings among those arranging the chess game is that, Oni will be 68 years in 2022 and the likelihood of recontesting will be low, having spent three and half years as a governor before being hammered by the Judiciary on October 15, 2010.

As of now, agitation for the governorship slot is becoming deafening among the politicians of the Ekiti south extraction. The Senatorial district has not produced the governor since 1999. Since Oni is from the North, some PDP influential members opined that it would be easy for Olusola, who is from Ikere Local Government to take up the baton of leadership in 2026.

The altering of the political calculus is not limited to PDP with this defection, APC too might be affected. An insider in APC told THISDAY that it would be suicidal for Fayemi and his party to underrate Oni, if given the ticket.

One can't contest the fact that he has enormous ties with the grassroots and well loved by civil servants. Putting it succinctly, Oni enjoys the support of those that can produce the swing votes and even the sympathy of some APC members, who can decide to stay inside and rock the boat.

The source said the best way to launch a counter move by APC, is to pick an established politician from either Ekiti Central or South as governorship candidate, rather than narrowing the choice down to the south alone, since Fayemi is from the North.

The realignment has thrown confusion in the ranks of APC and triggered suspicion about the loyalty of some Fayemi's appointees. As of now, Oni's strong allies are still holding positions in government. Though, some might decide to shift allegiance, but their loyalty will be doubtful because of Nigeria's variant of politics that perceives every politician as chameleonic.

Because of the high moral standing accorded the former Governor in the scheme of things, he has been trying hard to justify his action and rationalise the reason why he decided to dump APC.

In conduct and deeds, people respect Oni for being above board. He doesn't act like a typical Nigerian politician and for this reason, he would have to try hard to convince the populace that he has not joined the bandwagon of politicians who scout for greener pastures desperately.

Oni said he had commenced the process of rapprochement with critical stakeholders in the Ekiti PDP, like ex-governor Ayodele Fayose and Senator Biodun Olujimi about his resolve to return to his former party.

Rationalising his position, Oni said he took the decision to return to the PDP as a way of acceding to the request of his people, who were desirous of taking the political step. In a brazen manner, he expressed displeasure about how himself and his supporters were being ostracised from all engagements in APC, including appointments and privilege to contest elections.

NOTE: Interested readers should continue in the online edition on www.thisdaylive.com

After his defection to APC in 2014, Oni had held the coveted position of Deputy National Chairman of APC and still remains Chairman of a federal board being an appointment offered him by President Muhammadu Buhari. Apart from the issue of suspension, Oni was said to have been rattled and felt betrayed by the way Governor Kayode Fayemi came like a Tsunami in the March 26, 2018 governorship primary of APC and trounced all the 33 aspirants in the keen and pulsating contest. Oni came second in the election

Understanding the Titanic Battle for the Soul of Kwara APC

Hammed Shittu writes that the simmering crisis raging in the Kwara State chapter of the All Progressives Congress for over seven months has split the party into two camps



Abdulrahman



Mohammed



Bolarinwa

It seems this is not the best of times in the Kwara State chapter of the All Progressives Congress (APC) as the internal crisis that rocked the party after it successfully overturned the Saraki dynasty political structure during the last general election has continued unabated.

The simmering crisis which has been raging for over seven months now according to THISDAY investigations has snowballed into a full blown one as it has split the party into two camps in the state.

During the last general election in the state, all the elective positions from state to the national levels were won by the APC courtesy of the commitment of purpose that cut across the 16 local government councils of the state, which assisted the members and leaders of the party to achieve the unprecedented electoral victory in the political annals of the state nicknamed 'State of Harmony.'

The reason for this feat in the elections of that year was also because of the zeal of the opposition groups that had been in existence in the state which finally culminated in the coming together of these groups into one political movement called "O to Ge" which gave them the enabling platform to win.

Shortly after the election and subsequent swearing in of the state governor, Alhaji Abdulrahman Abdulrasaq and his deputy, Mr. Lekan Alabi, some unforeseen situations started to emerge within the leadership of the party which at the end led to the current situation that the party is experiencing in the state now.

The outcome of this simmering situation in the party has allegedly brought allegations and counter allegations over the conduct of elections as some leaders of the party have been questioned over certain issues that bothers on their activities during the polls.

When the issue came up according to sources close to the party, some top members of the party in Abuja were said to have intervened on the allegations which they claimed bothers on financial impropriety but which the officers of the party asked those milling such rumours to stop the tall tales, reminding everyone that the party won all the seats in the state and that what should be paramount now is on how to provide dividends of democracy to the doorsteps of the populace and not to cause any crisis.

This was the submission of the echelon of the party but some stakeholders in the state said to be loyal to the power that be allegedly refused to let the matter died down and this has continued to cause perceived crisis in the party.

The development according to THISDAY checks might not be unconnected with the non involvement of some party leaders in the composition of the members of the state executive council of the state and the appointment of some key officials of the state by Governor

Abdulrahman Abdulrasaq, especially the Chief of Staff and the Secretary to the State Government among others.

The ugly situation according to the political pundits in the state has led to the division of the state executive council committee of the party thereby blowing off the crisis in the party in the state.

However, some leaders of the state defended the action of the governor for not allegedly carrying some stakeholders along in the appointment of his key officials and composition of the state executive council.

They claimed that, the governor is the leader of the party and government in the state, he has all rights to choose anyone he feels that could work with him in the day to day running of affairs of the state.

This controversy however prompted some groups in the state to call for the resignation of the state chairman, Hon. Bashir Bolarinwa who some stakeholders of the party claimed was moving beyond his boundary in the day to day running of the state.

The two groups include Orisun Igbomina and Congress of Kwara Youths in the state where they accused the chairman of arrogance and therefore should resign so as to pave way for a new chairman.

The chairman, Hon. Bolarinwa in his reaction then described the outburst of the two groups as uncalled for, saying that, the call for his resignation from office was comical and political adventure taken too far.

Since then, the party leadership had been divided into two groups in the state. One group led by the state chairman of the party, Hon. Bolarinwa is said to be loyal to a leader

of the party and Minister of Information and Culture, Alhaji Lai Muhammed while other group led by the state deputy chairman of the party, Alhaji Abdullahi Abubakar is said to be loyal to the state governor Alhaji Abdulrahman Abdulrasaq.

The ugly scenario led some members of the state executive committee of the party led by Hon. Bolarinwa have distanced themselves from the day to day affairs of the state while some state executive committee said to be loyal to the governor have been attending the state functions.

As this is going on in the political arena of the state, some state executive council committee led by Hon. Bolarinwa recently decided to embark on thank-you-tour of the 16 local government councils so as to thank the members of the party for their unalloyed support and to call on them to continue to support the income government in the state.

As this tour was going on, the visit of the Chairman and his team to Shao town in Moro local government council area of the state however turned sour as some members of the team were attacked by the suspected hoodlums in the town.

Reports also had it that windscreen of the bus was shattered by the attackers who were said to have also threatened to inflict bodily harm on the party chairman and his team.

Confirming the development, the state vice chairman of the party, Sunday Oyebiyi, described the attack as unfortunate, saying it could lead to disintegration of the party in the state.

He said that police permit was sought and obtained for the tour of the 16 local government areas of the state, particularly when some

members of the party loyal to the governor stood against it.

Oyebiyi, who is also zonal chairman, (Kwara North) of the party was also among entourage of the party chairman to Shao, saying that members of the party are eagerly waiting for outcome of intervention being done by elders of the party into the crisis.

He called on members of the party to remain calm and embrace peace and love in their dealings.

Meanwhile, Governor Abdulrasaq has condemned the attack on party chairman and his entourage to Shao, calling on the police command to fish out all the perpetrators and prosecute them.

In the statement issued by the governor's Chief Press Secretary, Mr. Rafiu Ajakaye, governor described the attack as disturbing.

"We condemn in strongest terms possible the alleged attack on the state chairman of the APC Hon. Bashiru Omolaja Bolarinwa allegedly by some hoodlums in Moro local government. This is very disturbing. The Governor is very proud of the peaceful atmosphere in the state and seriously frowns at any action that might heat up the polity under whatever guise.

"He calls on the security agencies to not just fish out those behind the attack but to also make sure they face the full weight of the law. For the record, the state faces many developmental issues and the Governor has no time for anything that does not add value to the lives of the people he's been elected to govern".

However, as party in the state is battling with this attack on the state chairman, Hon. Bolarinwa and his team at Shao town in Moro local government council area of the state, a new twist to the ugly situation in the party ensued.

This time around, some aggrieved state executive council committee loyal to the governor addressed a press conference on the true position of things in the party in the state.

The group led by the state deputy chairman of the party, Alhaji Abdullahi Abubakar accused the state chairman of the party, Hon. Bolarinwa of high handedness in the day to day running of the party.

Speaking at a press conference in Ilorin, the spokesperson of the group, Alhaji Abubakar said that, "all the actions and attitude of Hon. Bolarinwa were acted against the constitution of the APC".

He said that, "this ugly internal crisis in the party in Kwara State was occasioned by dissatisfaction expressed by a bloc of the state executive committee against the leadership of Hon. Bolarinwa"

Shortly after the election and subsequent swearing in of the state governor, Alhaji Abdulrahman Abdulrasaq and his deputy, Mr. Lekan Alabi, some unforeseen situations started to emerge within the leadership of the party which at the end led to the current situation that the party is experiencing in the state now. The outcome of this simmering situation in the party has allegedly brought allegations and counter allegations over the conduct of elections as some leaders of the party have been questioned over certain issues that bothers on their activities during the polls

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Championing Women's Rights

David-Chyddy Eleke writes that Dorothy Njemanze, a women's rights advocate, who doubles as an actress and radio personality, through her foundation, has continually championed the cause of women's rights, especially for the under privileged

Several, she has been branded prostitute, arrested, criminalised and made to suffer trauma because of her fight against the violation of rights of commercial sex workers in Nigeria. Welcome to the world of Dorothy Njemanze, a women's rights advocate, who doubles as an actress and radio personality.

In Owerri, Imo State recently, where was a media trainer during the gender reporting project for media professionals, an event held by an NGO, TechHerNG, she shared about her Dorothy Njemanze Foundation and the daily struggle she faces.

According to her, on a daily basis, the rights of women are violated, either by individual male or by state actors. "This menace is very high, and these are some of the reason we decided to float the Dorothy Njemanze foundation, because we needed a group that is a legal entity, that can sue and be sued. This is the only way we can fight this injustice squarely.

"You may not know the depth of the damage that police and other state actors do on our young girls every day. I have people who have been picked on the streets of Abuja, right in front of their houses in the name that the police is fighting prostitution. I have been a victim severally, and I know how it feels, that is where I derive my power to fight for the injustice against women. I have personally been raped over 20 times, and I have vowed to fight this.

"There are women who have taken their lives because they do not wish to live with the stigma of being identified as rape victims. Not all women are as strong as myself, emotionally, but what we are doing is to find them, strengthen them with our own stories and if possible, seek redress for them where we have to."

Addressing the branding as a prostitute a typical male gives to a woman she asked, "Is there any woman that has never been branded a prostitute or called one before? Just do a Google search of my name, and all that you will find to it is prostitution because of what people branded me because I am fighting for my right and the right of other women. If you search my name on Google, the first result you will find is that I am a prostitute. I have severally been branded, so much so that people now withdraw from me.

"I suffered also suffered huge trauma because of such branding because people did not want to associate with me any longer. You know the interesting thing? The branding was done by your fellow journalists, either because they are not very competent in reporting gender issues, or because they out rightly set out to do so because they are induced.

"You know Ann Njemanze, Officer Sankey in the movie TV soap opera, she is my sister, and she almost lost her job because of my ordeal. The company producing the movie simply told her they don't want controversies in their production, especially as my name was already everywhere as an arrested prostitute. She is an actress, and I am an actress too, so people may mistake us as the same, and the TV production will come under controversy, so I do not blame the company for thinking that my travail may affect their production."

Speaking on her 2012 travail which triggered the controversy she said: "It was 2012 at about 8pm, and I just parked my car behind a bus in a street in Abuja, not knowing that the bus belonged to a task force from the Abuja Environmental Protection Board (AEPB). I had one woman in my car, and she had just been featured on my television programme as a victim of violation. As I parked my car, stepped out of it, going past the bus, I was arrested by some officials who said I was a prostitute, and they had mandate to arrest prostitutes.



Njemanze

I did all the explaining I could, but they ignored me.

When the lady I had in my car came out to explain to them that I was not a prostitute, but a journalists, and that she had just featured on my show, they ordered her back into the car with the threat that they will arrest her too, if she did not.

"I suffered a lot of trauma because of that because I insisted I must be freed, and that further aggravated my troubles, and I was published in several newspapers as a prostitute, locked up and denied many things. I had my certificates, I had skills but I could not get a job because my name had been so smeared all across the country. Even journalists helped to injure my reputation with their reports. Journalists must learn how to report gender issues correctly.

"Do not sensationalise your report. There are some terms that should not be used in your stories. For example, it is not right to refer to a woman as a 'victim' because she was raped. By merely addressing her like that, you find out that it will evoke more emotions in her if you do. Why not try referring to her as a 'survivor'? That will make her feel strong. Again, instead of referring to a woman as a prostitute, why not call her a commercial sex worker?"

"Many journalists are killing women with their reports, but they do not know, and everyday, the violation against women keeps increasing because the state actors think they can get away with everything. Through our advocacy, more women are now aware and ready to stand up for their right. When I led a protest against the raid of some women in Abuja in a strip club last year, all that our media could report was that - prostitutes protest arrest of their colleagues in Abuja.

"During the last year protest, after the raid of night clubs and arrest of strip dancers, I led a march, against security operatives and the way they were treating ladies. Because of the 2012 incident, I didn't think up to 30 ladies would show up for the march, but behold, we had over 2,000 ladies who turned up for the march. What does that tell us? I found out that more people were being violated by our security operatives on a daily basis, and that they were ready

to come out and be identified, and let their voices be heard, unlike before now.

"Some of them who spoke to us said they came out because they cannot continue to keep quiet and be violated by police officers. One of them even said, 'The body na my own, even if I want use am do prostitute, I go do because na my own, but for police people to de arrest us, make us to look like criminals, and after that, the same reason wey them arrest us say we dey do prostituting, them go still sleep with us and no go pay us sef, na that one we no gree.

"So, I think gender perception and biases is still a problem in our society. Even if one was a sex worker, is it enough to violate the person? Many ladies that I know have taken their lives because of this. It was the same with me during my ordeal, I only started feeling relieved after 'Silent Tears' documentary was produced. People now saw the true story of what actually happened and how I was ill treated. Only then did people start taking my calls again, and even interacting with me."

Addressing the issue of why daily arrest of ladies in Abuja has continued Njemanze said: "

"I know why it is like that. This a cartel that is working to cover a N5billion budget dedicated for the rehabilitation of prostitutes and they have to keep arresting women to give the impression that they are working. It is a racket, and I was working to unravel that racket when I was arrested in 2012.

"From the video footages we showed you during the lectures, you will see that some of these women from their confessions are innocent. How did I get the footages you watched? I got some from members of civil society organisations who reached out to the AEPB people on the guise that they wanted to help them in exposing the prostitutes by taking video recordings of them, while they are being arrested They didn't know that these people were working on something different.

"This people got the video recordings, unknown to the Abuja Protection board people that they were working with us. That was how all the atrocities these police people perpetuate in the name of fighting prostitution was unraveled.

What is funny is that even the CSO members who were female who came back in the evening and join them to go for the evening raid were arrested and branded prostitutes, so they had to start explaining that they were from the CSO and actually working with them, before they were freed.

"That shows you how the ladies are arrested. Anyone who is a woman and seen outside at a particular time is arrested and tagged a prostitute. That is why a woman who just left her house to buy something from a shop down the road can be arrested and branded a prostitute, and taken to cell and made to part with money and even assaulted too. When they arrested you, some people will come and justify the arrest and say - 'What was she doing outside by that time, or what was she wearing?' What even makes it wrong for a woman to decide to go to the club to unwind? Does a woman going to the nightclub to unwind mean she is a prostitute?"

"By the way, they are people who have been arrested while going to night vigil too, how do they justify that? As for those who were in the strip club, they do it as professionals to put food on their table. If you must arrest the women, why leave out the men who came to watch? During that raid, I can tell you that even ladies who came with their boyfriends and men who came with their wives had the women among them arrested, so what is the justification in what they are doing if it is not to cover up for the N5billion budget?"

"Women have been so ill treated that even when a women is raped, some people come out to ask, What was she wearing? What concerns what a lady is wearing with the action of a man which is not right? If you say that, what it means is that you are justifying the action of the man by raping a woman. These are some of the rights that have been denied women, which we are asking that it be addressed. That is the reason for this workshop, so that journalists like you will report women fairly.

"To this day, they is an average of 45 to 100 persons who are arrested on a daily basis in Abuja. Even at that, no one is speaking up, and when you dare speak, you are branded a prostitute, and they unleash the media against you. They are media people who have also been co-opted into this racket, and if you dare try to fight against the regular raids, especially for women like us, they start saying you are a prostitute and that is why you are fighting for your people. You cannot fight them because they have all the money. If you speak to one radio station, they have the money to speak to more than 10 stations. They do all these to justify the N5billion budget mapped out for the rehabilitation of prostitutes."

Noting that there is still a long way off in terms of equality between men and women in Nigeria she shared her personal experiences in that regard.

"Let me tell you a story - I derive a lot of joy driving myself around the country, it is something I enjoy doing, and the adrenaline I derive from it helps me to heal from my past traumas. But because I am a woman, Policemen will stop me along the road and ask - Where are you coming from? You say Abuja, and they ask you, where are you going to? And you say Lagos. The next thing you hear is - are you not afraid driving along on this road?"

"How many men have they asked that question, or is it because I am a woman? At every point in time, society always tries to make the women feel that they are less, compared to the Omen. That is why I usually say that it is wrong for journalists to ask a female politician how she hopes to cope with family and office. You will not ask the man that, so why ask the woman?", she added.

ADEOLA AKINREMI

HOME TRUTHS!

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Elumelu's Public Good Package

In August of 2017, as Sierra Leone struggled with human tragedy and economic woes that resulted from a massive landslide that killed more than 800 people in its capital, Freetown, the chairman of Heirs Holdings—a philanthropist who made his fortune as a banker—Tony Elumelu stepped forward, pledging \$500,000 to support national emergency and to improve the city's fortune.

Last week, he put up even more money to help stem the tide of COVID-19 across Africa. Elumelu gave outlandish \$14 million from his fortune at a time people and nations are driven-apart by a contagion.

And since 2015, Elumelu in his plan to give away his fortune as a stimulus for Africa's growth through entrepreneurship set aside \$100 million grant to create 1,000,000 jobs and contribute \$10 billion in annual revenues to Africa's economy for 10 years. A large chunk of that money is now in the hands of young entrepreneurs in at least 48 countries in Africa.

We all know that there are more big-league givers on the continent. I can make a guess list: Africa's number one billionaire, Aliko Dangote, the Sudanese-British businessman, Mo Ibrahim, Naushad Merali of Kenya, Hakeem-Belo Osagie, Femi Otedola, Mike Adenuga, Strive Masiyiwa of Zimbabwe, Jim Ovia, General T.Y. Danjuma and many more.

These big-league givers are not the only set of philanthropists. There are other categories of givers. In Africa, there are Good Samaritans and my widow's mite categories of philanthropists. These are people who donate grinding machines, motorcycles, sprayers, sewing machines, deep freezers, hair clippers, hair dryers, mechanical tools and vehicles to get the extremely poor into business.

There are millions of people who regularly contribute to churches, schools, and other organisations unnoticed as well. Some of these people give up the use of funds that would otherwise benefit their own families. The money these people drop into the 'offering basket' or give to people in their neighborhood mean forgone shopping and personal pleasures.

But Elumelu's tradition of giving is what makes it a rare example of public good and a spark for wealthy people like him. In economics, a public good is a good that is both non-excludable. The idea is this: no individual can be effectively excluded from the use of the resource and the use by one individual does not reduce availability to others.

Let's think of public good in terms of a public road that allows practically everyone to use it regardless of the type of motor vehicle they are using, or even if they are just walking. That is how public good works. But when a person buys a car, he can only use it for himself and restrict others from using it. That will be the opposite of public good.

So, what makes Elumelu's giving different than others? It is the spread of his wealth across Africa. That's a topnotch giving to public good. By not limiting the use of his wealth to Nigeria, the billionaire banker dubbed Warren Buffet of Africa by Forbes is making a revolutionary statement.

Unlike other big-league givers who concentrate mostly on their countries, communities or getting a chair at their alma mater, Elumelu is making good impression in global giving the same way the world richest man, Bill Gates does.

Elumelu's pattern of giving is one of optimism for the rise of Africa philanthropists to the need of the continent—a signal to departure from Africa looking to American billionaires for charitable investments and entrepreneurial develop-



Elumelu

ment of the continent.

In fact, Elumelu's \$14 million response to COVID-19 immediately changed the doomsday prophesy for Africa in the face of the global health crisis. That is the way to go!

The narrative is that Africa is never prepared to deal with pandemic such as the monster of Coronavirus. Therefore, COVID-19 will kill people in droves, once it set its teeth on Africa. The facts are there, African governments hardly prepare for the future. Poor medical facilities, schools, roads across Africa are evidence of poor planning. In most cases, resources in the coffers of governments in Africa are used to fund frivolities like furniture and cars for elected officials.

I was exploring ideas on what to write this week, when the tech billionaire and co-founder of Alibaba Jack Ma showed up in Africa a few days back with big package of coronavirus test kits and prevention materials. Trust me, African leaders started praise service for Jack Ma on Tweeter. "This is a huge shot in the arm and a much-needed contribution in our work to stop the spread of #Coronavirus. I know the people of Rwanda join me in gratitude," Rwanda president Paul Kagame wrote.

Ethiopia Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, who received the plane load of the medical materials wrote "Thank you @JackMa for sending the first wave of #COVID-19 prevention materials. Support includes 1.1million testing kits, 6million masks & 60,000 protective suits to be distributed throughout Africa."

Thank you to Jack Ma is in order. It is the right thing to do. Jack Ma donated coronavirus prevention supplies not only to Africa but to countries facing enormous challenge such as the United States, Italy, and other countries in Asia and Latin America.

I am always moved, when I see Africa responds to its own problem and Elumelu's generous giving in Africa warms my heart.

And this, in recent weeks, I've been reading the Giving Pledge Letters. The letters have some fascinating content. These are letters written by rich people who take the pledge to give most of their wealth while they live. The letters

describe the philosophy behind their giving. It is a campaign run together by Warren Buffet and Bill and Melinda Gates to create a social norm among the wealthy to give their fortune during their lifetime.

In his own letter, the American billionaire who made his fortune from stocks, Buffett wrote: "Some material things make my life more enjoyable; many, however, would not. I like having an expensive private plane but owning a half-dozen homes would be a burden. Too often, a vast collection of possessions ends up possessing its owner. The asset I most value, aside from health, is interesting, diverse, and long-standing friends."

"My wealth has come from a combination of living in America, some lucky genes, and compound interest. My luck was accentuated by my living in a market system that sometimes produces distorted results, though overall it serves our country well. I've worked in an economy that rewards someone who saves the lives of others on a battlefield with a medal, rewards a great teacher with thank-you notes from parents, but rewards those who can detect the mispricing of securities with sums reaching into the billions," he added.

Last year, the Amazon founder former wife, Mackenzie Bezos, joined the group with these words: "I have no doubt that tremendous value comes when people act quickly on the impulse to give. We each come by the gifts we have to offer by an infinite series of influences and lucky breaks we can never fully understand."

Most of the letter writers (more than 180 individuals from over 22 countries have signed the pledge) are solemn with their words without a brag. They see their fortune for what it is: lucky breaks. Why have I been reading these letters, I want to understand the motivation for their giving and how they see wealth. It is a recommended reading for those who are rich and those looking for their lucky breaks.

Finally, I am concerned that Africa is sliding in terms of government action. The system in Africa is not rewarding research and development. For me, that is frightening, because the countries in Africa will never cross the border of its third world label.

In a global health policy class that I took while at Johns Hopkins University last year, one of the best moments I had in the class was discussing how nations tie policies to economic growth. For example, what can be done to fix Africa's current poor medical system? Can investment in drug distribution and vaccine production incentives employment—a social determinant of health?

The governments across Africa need to step up their nation's health system by integrating efforts based on a shared recognition of the interplay between the economic, environmental, and social factors that contribute to health. The government simply cannot turn its back on its traditional role of producing and investing in national public goods before another cycle of pandemic comes.

Unlike other big-league givers who concentrate mostly on their countries, communities or getting a chair at their alma mater, Elumelu is making good impression in global giving the same way the world richest man, Bill Gates does

Side Effects...

BE POSITIVE

This is not be best of time, but we can all chose to be positive in battling Coronavirus. You do not need a test to be positive. All that is required is a common sense to stay at home to slow the spread of COVID-19. It is funny to read that people are still hosting wedding receptions amid the pandemic. Honestly, that is excess. The lockdown will be lifted fast, if everyone acts to protect others by doing the social distancing. For those who cannot control themselves, the country now has a social prefect. He's IGP Mohammed Adamu.

TINUBU'S TACTICS

There's something about Bola Tinubu that is striking: intelligence. With the collapse of his political stage (the annual colloquium celebrating his birthday) by coronavirus, the APC leader has used the same virus moment opportunity to show what he will do if he were to be president. In a statement, Tinubu is asking Buhari to do what America did to address economic crisis caused by the pandemic. This is a precursor to 2023. The former Lagos State governor who remains a 'title chief' in the management of Lagos State is extremely grounded in the game of strategic politics. A few weeks ago, he disarmed politicians within his own party plotting the removal of an aggressive party chairman who is loyal to him. He labelled the syndrome 2023 virus. According to him, those fighting the party chairman, Adams Oshiomhole were afflicted with a '2023 virus,' which according to him was worse than coronavirus. He made a good pass by labelling the anti-Oshiomhole politicians as Buhari's enemies. What else does Buhari need to hear?

LOCKERS IN LOCKDOWN

Today, I remember my high school. We used to have what we called lockers. It was an iron table with compartment. Everyone has it. Everything goes in there and we can lock and unlock it. Now, across the country, schools are in a shutdown mode in response to COVID-19. That means the lockers are locked-down as well. The government needs to act fast to continue to support the mental acuity of students from public schools from complete shutdown.

VIRTUAL VILLAGE

"Covidivorce" for couples with straying marriages due to isolation, "quaranteens" in 2033 for babies born during this period are a few words this pandemic period has generated. I am adding my own to it and it is called virtual village. Indeed, with COVID-19, the world changed from United Nations to virtual village. Amazing!

LAWYER

A THIS  DAY WEEKLY PULL-OUT

31.03.2020

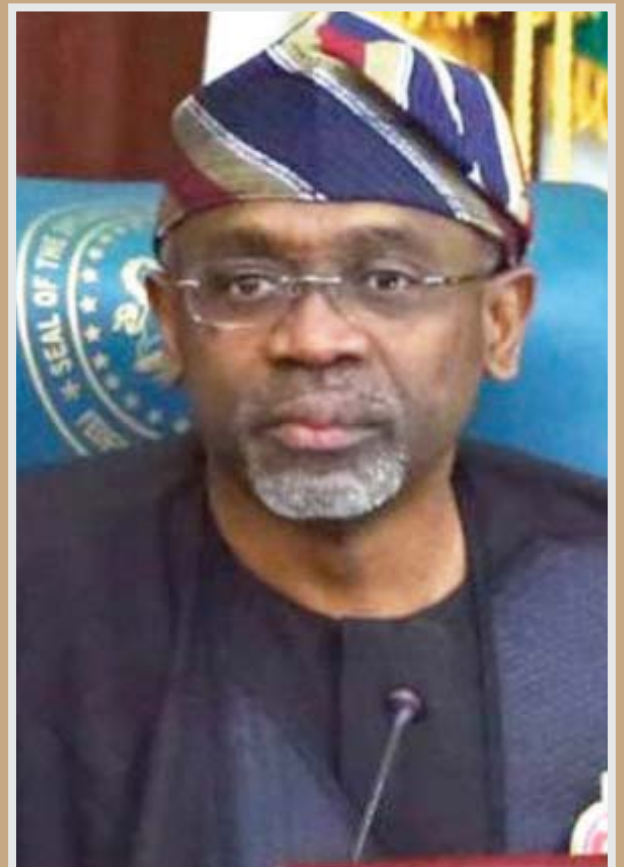
DANCING ON THE GRAVES OF SOLDIERS AND VICTIMS



Senate President, Ahmed Lawan



President Muhammadu Buhari




Speaker, House of Representatives, Femi Gbajabiamila

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DANCING ON THE GRAVES OF SOLDIERS AND VICTIMS



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Effect of Failure of Prosecution to Call Vital Witness

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Lagos to Discontinue 566 Cases being Prosecuted by Police

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Appeal Court Affirms Oba of Igbooye's Dethronement

PAGE 5



'Road to Success in law practice, is not always Rosy'

PAGE 6

QUOTABLES



'It is a good decision, the right step because it is only the living that talk about cases.....So, if the Judges, Lawyers and Litigants are not there now because of Coronavirus, then what is the rush?'
- **Dr Alex Izinyon, SAN**



'The Zamfara case at the Supreme Court, does not involve PDP. PDP is a meddling interloper.'
- **Daniel Hassan Bwala, Legal Practitioner, Special Adviser to the Deputy Senate President on Legal and Constitutional Matters, Abuja**

COLUMNISTS



DR. MIKE OZEKHOME, SAN, OFR, FCIARB, PH.D, LL.D Constitutional Democracy, means a system of government, in which political and governmental power, is defined, limited and shared by a grundnorm called the Constitution, which provides inbuilt checks and balances.

This column seeks to fiercely discuss constitutional, legal and political issues, with a view to strengthening, deepening and widening the plenitude and amplitude of democracy and good governance, without fear or favour.

The writer of this column, Dr. Mike Ozekhome, SAN, is a Constitutional Lawyer, Human Rights Activist, Pro-Democracy Campaigner, Notary Public and Motivational Speaker. He co-founded the Civil Liberties Organisation (CLO), Nigeria's pioneer human rights league, on October 15, 1987, the Universal Defenders of Democracy (UDD), in 1992, and with Chief Gani Fawehinmi and others in 1998, the Joint Action Committee of Nigeria (JACON), to push out the military. In his early days, he lectured at the University of Ife. Dr. Ozekhome is an author of many books. He is also a Special Counsel at the International Criminal Court (ICC), at The Hague.



ABUBAKAR D. SANI

Abubakar D. Sani holds a Bachelors degree from the University of Maiduguri, and has been in active private legal practice since he was called to the Nigerian Bar in 1987.

He is the Principal of Abubakar D. Sani & Co., which has offices in Abuja and Kano. "INSIGHT" aims to unravel, analyse and proffer solutions to numerous anomalies in Nigerian law and practice, particularly statutes, vis-a-vis the Constitution, International Treaties and Conventions to which Nigeria is a signatory, Judicial Precedent and other relevant statutes and issues.



JOY HARRISON-ABIOLA

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Legal Administrators Illinois, and a member of the International Relations Committee (Africa). She is a leading Legal Management Professional, with over 21 years' experience as a business professional. She works with Adepetun Caxton- Martins Agbor & Segun- ACAS-Law as the Practice Administrator. "FROM THE BACK OFFICE" explores what law firms need to do, to remain competitive and relevant in today's business and economic climate, and will also look at ways to re- engineer and awaken the dynamics of the contribution of the Legal Management Professionals; to better position them to provide practical solutions to the challenges facing law business.

Covid 19 and Irresponsibility of the Political Elite

Between a Rock and a Hard Place

part from praying to God to protect us from this deadly scourge, we, as individuals, must be cautious and show some sense of responsibility in trying to curtail the spread of the epidemic/ pandemic, and that means putting ourselves in voluntary self-isolation (or as one of my dear friends so eloquently put it - "deep self-cocooning"). In Nigeria, maybe the only way that this can be achieved, is by implementing a total lockdown like China, because the numbers of those who are infected with the Coronavirus, has started to spike quite rapidly. But, is a total lockdown practicable?

I have been extremely pensive during this epidemic/pandemic, ruminating about all sorts of things, most especially about how the majority of Nigerians who can barely sustain themselves for one day will survive, if the country goes into a total lockdown. The answer lies between the proverbial 'rock and a hard place', a real 'Catch 22' situation. Will Nigerians isolate themselves to prevent themselves from contracting the virus, while they die of hunger at home? Just as important, is how six or ten people who live in one room packed like sardines, will be able to practice any social distancing! Do most people even have running water to wash their hands regularly, or money to buy hand sanitisers, Vitamin C and Dettol?

Covid 19 is beginning to sound like an elitist virus, thrust upon the less privileged by those who are privileged to be able to travel around the globe, and have brought it here. It therefore, behooves on the privileged, to help the less privileged to get through this scourge. We are therefore, grateful to the Captains of Industry who have risen up to the occasion, and have started to make donations to assist in fighting this deadly virus, in different ways. The bottom line is that, the 'have nots' outnumber the 'haves' in Nigeria, and if they are not assisted, Covid 19 will spread like wildfire here, and consume many, both rich and poor.

The Governor of Lagos State announced a stimulus package of a few essential items, meant to last for 14 days, to target 200,000 households each comprising of six people (approximately 1.2 million people). Even though this is not exactly enough, it is indeed, a laudable step in the right direction. Lagos is said to have a population of about 10 million people or more (no one can say for certain, since we haven't had a census in so many years, but, Lagos is supposed to be the highest populated State in Nigeria, followed by Kano), and because we don't have any reliable form of data or records per se, one can't say for certain the percentage of the population who actually require this rescue sustenance package, whether 10%, 30% or even up to

50%. Still, Mr Lagos State Governor has been very active and proactive during this Covid 19 crisis, and this is commendable. Section 14(2)(b) of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended) (the Constitution) provides that the primary purpose of Government is the security and welfare of the people. I must say that, Mr Lagos State Governor has tried to portray this, in a number of his actions and policies, since he assumed office last year.

However, the other day when I was going out to buy provisions (using the new catch phrase - 'stock up'), I saw commercial minibuses parked on the side of the road waiting to be filled up with passengers, nothing like social distancing in the buses at all. But, then, I thought to myself, what choice do these people really have, when they do not have personal cars of their own - and it's not as if the means of public transportation in Lagos or anywhere in the country, is bountiful? I was glad to view a video from Ibadan, in which white boxes were actually painted on the ground for people to stand on while waiting for public transport outside the very popular UCH area, well spaced for social distancing, and I hoped that this action was being followed up with what is being done in Anambra State, where the Police and Covid 19 Task Force are there to monitor how many people actually board a commercial bus, at one time.

Irresponsibility

Furthermore, I wondered whether it wasn't asking for too much - expecting 'danfo' drivers and the masses to be responsible about not spreading the virus, when our elite and leaders are reckless and couldn't care less about whether they spread it or not. So far, Dr Chikwe Ihekweazu, the Head of the NCDC, is one of the few public officials who has shown any sense of responsibility. He travelled to China, returned and went straight into self-isolation for 14 days. By mid-February/March 2020, responsible people who travelled abroad, returned to Nigeria and went straight into self-isolation, whether or not they had any symptoms of Covid 19. Oh! No! Not our so-called top/ senior "do you know who I am" Government officials! While some were still having non-essential celebratory events, others travelled to Europe, returned home, and did not observe any form of self-isolation. Instead, having been fully exposed to the virus while they were away, they were seen immediately upon their return at official events and various functions like wedding fathias, irresponsibly mixing with people with gusto and aplomb, and exposing them to the Coronavirus.

This scenario reminds me of countries like South Africa and the USA, where it is an offence to knowingly transmit sexually transmitted diseases like HIV to unsuspecting partners, with the full knowledge that such a perpetrator has the virus. The crime

ranges from attempted murder, to criminal transmission. **State v Hinkhouse 912 P.2d 921**. Because, it may be difficult to prove the intent to kill, many States in USA have the lesser crime of criminal transmission, in which the Prosecutor only needs to prove that the Defendant who has the virus, intentionally engaged in behaviour which could result in infecting others with HIV; for example, non-disclosure of their HIV status to unsuspecting partners, and having unprotected sex with them.

While I am not in any way saying that, those who have tested positive for Covid 19 knew they had the virus and intentionally spread it (like Patrick Sawyer did during the Ebola outbreak), it is obvious that they should have shown more of a sense of responsibility like Dr Ihekweazu, by going into self-isolation immediately upon their return from foreign trips. At best, their behaviour has been reckless. For those who travelled abroad to work for the country, they are in a slightly better stead than those who continued with their non-essential celebrations and partying, knowing fully well that there is a pandemic. Of course, for those who attended unnecessary social functions and contracted the virus, they did so at their own peril. No one pointed a gun to their heads, to force them to attend. Be that as it may, we however, commiserate with all who have lost their loved ones to Covid 19.

Bail: Prisons, EFCC et al

Then you think about the prisons, and those awaiting trial for offences which are bailable, or those who have a few months to the end of their sentences. Should they not be granted bail/released immediately, before there begins cross-contamination between prison officials and inmates, and the prison officials now spread it to their families, and to the general population? Countries like Italy, Iran and Bahrain have taken measures in this regard, releasing a considerable number of inmates, putting some under house arrest, all in a bid to curtail the spread of Covid 19, which we all know is highly contagious. Should we not be doing the same? For one, the Nigerian Correctional Service Act 2019, provides for non-custodial sentencing. Is this not the appropriate time to invoke it? See Sections 35(4) and 36(5) of the Constitution, and Sections 162 and 165 of the Administration of Criminal Justice Act; **Omodara v State 2004 1 N.W.L.R. Part 853 80 at 89-90**.

On the contrary, agencies like the EFCC for one, are illegally holding on to people who have been granted bail by courts of competent jurisdiction! I have in my hand, the order of a Federal High Court in Abuja dated 19/3/2020, granting bail to a Defendant who has been in EFCC custody since January or so, yet the EFCC has refused to release him on bail. Of course, I cannot say whether this Defendant is guilty of the offences he has been charged with it or not, as only a court of competent jurisdiction is in a position to make that determination. He has been charged to court for money laundering, which is a bailable offence. The last time I checked, even murder is a bailable offence, only that bail on a murder charge can only be granted by the court, and not by the Police.

What then gives the EFCC and Ibrahim Magu, its Acting Chairman, the impetus and right to be a law unto themselves, flout the law, Constitution, court orders, and all international charters that Nigeria is signatory to, at will? It seems that, the EFCC has gone beyond the mandate of its establishing statute, the EFCC Act, and is no longer just an investigator and prosecutor of economic crimes, it is also the judge, jury and prison (five-in-one). Magu sounds like 'Cacophonix' in the comic series "Asterix", like a broken record to be candid. He constantly drones on about impunity, and how "all hands must be on deck to fight corruption" - yet, he is guilty of the same impunity which he so



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"IT SEEMS THAT, THE EFCC HAS GONE BEYOND THE MANDATE OF ITS ESTABLISHING STATUTE, THE EFCC ACT, AND IS NO LONGER JUST AN INVESTIGATOR AND PROSECUTOR OF ECONOMIC CRIMES, IT IS ALSO THE JUDGE, JURY AND PRISON (FIVE-IN-ONE)"

vehemently preaches against! Detaining people unlawfully, and refusing to release detainees who have been granted bail, is not just the height of impunity because it is coming from a law enforcement agency, but shows a total disregard for the rule of law.

Unlike Magu and his agency who are five-in-one, I am only a one-in-one, a Lawyer, and the law I read taught me that, a Defendant is innocent until proven guilty, and that, it is absolutely unacceptable, for agencies to unlawfully detain people who have been granted bail, possibly in a bid to torture them mentally and break them down into making confessions, especially in a democratic setting such as ours is supposed to be.

Undoubtedly, if that Defendant and others who are being held unlawfully by the likes of Magu and the EFCC, the Police and other agencies, needlessly die in custody from Covid 19, their illegal jailers must be held accountable, and charged to court for murder, as a deterrent to other security agencies who have a penchant for taking the law into their own hands.

Conclusion

Nigeria is not a Banana Republic, and it is so sad and off-putting when we see that, it is those who are in positions of authority, who behave as if it is. They go as far as using their positions, to settle scores with old enemies! This is certainly not the way to attract foreign direct investment (FDI) which we are in such dire need of, especially with the crash of oil prices. On the contrary, it will attract foreign direct disinvestment (FDD), as people will take to their heels, scared to invest in a country that is seen to be unstable and has no rules, with a Government that has absolutely no regard for the rule of law.

Unforgettable

Dr Ameyo Adadevoh (and your colleagues who died too), we remember you today and always, for paying the ultimate price - the loss of your life - to curtail the spread of the Ebola virus in Nigeria. Continue to rest in the bosom of the Lord, dearest Ameyo. Amen.



Acting Chairman, Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Ibrahim Magu

Effect of Failure of Prosecution to Call Vital Witness

Facts

In 1991, the management of the African Continental Bank (ACB) discovered that the Bank's clearing accounts with the Central bank of Nigeria (CBN) were always overdrawn, due to suspected fraudulent and unethical practices relating to the purchase and lodgement of bank Manager's and Customers' cheques; overdraft and other credit facilities. Consequently upon the foregoing, the Management of the bank introduced a Guidance Facility (a policy which prohibits Managers or Staff from ascribing value to any cheque, before it successfully goes through the clearing system). It was also stipulated that, where a Customer has a pressing need to draw on the amount of which a yet-to-be-cleared cheque would eventually give value to his account, the Manager should document the necessity, and forward the request to the Head Office for approval. The Respondent was saddled with the duty of conveying such requests to the Head Office, and communicating the approval from the Head Office to the concerned branches where the customer's accounts were domiciled. In the course of his duty, the Respondent made Exhibit Z (an application to the Executive Director, Operations, for renewal of Guidance facility of N3 million an increase of same to N10 million), in respect of a request from the Nsukka branch of the bank. The Exhibit contained a list of eleven companies, the last being Paritz AWTZ Holdings Nigeria Limited. The Executive Director (Operations) (PW6) cancelled out the name of Paritz AWTZ Holdings Nigeria Limited and a certain Universal Oil Company, whose name was not originally contained in Exhibit Z, and was never approved by PW6. Nevertheless, in Exhibit E26 (letter conveying the Management's approval for the renewal of the Guidance facility, signed by the Respondent), the names of the two companies stated above, were approved to enjoy the facility.

The foregoing precipitated the query issued to the Respondent, and his subsequent arraignment with four others on a count of forgery before the Failed Bank (Recovery of Debts and Financial Malpractices in Banks) Tribunal, Lagos Zone V. The Respondent was found guilty of forgery, and sentenced to a term of 12 months imprisonment. He however, successfully appealed his conviction and sentencing at the Court of Appeal.

Issues for Determination

The issues posed for determination by parties were:

- Whether the Justices of the Court of Appeal were right in considering and allowing the appeal, based on grounds VI, VIII and X of the Respondent's Notice of Appeal.
- Whether having regard to the facts and circumstances of this case, evidence led at the Tribunal and the position of the law, the judgement of the Court of Appeal was erroneous and led to a miscarriage of justice.

Arguments

Arguing the first issue, counsel for the Appellant posited that the Court of Appeal, having struck out grounds 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7 and 9 of the Respondent's notice of appeal and grounds for being incompetent, the court should not have considered the remaining grounds which were all subsumed under one issue for determination, especially when the issue posed by the Respondent was not tied to any of the grounds of appeal. He argued that, the consideration and determination of the issues, occasioned a miscarriage of justice to the Appellant. Counsel submitted further that, failure of the Respondent to indicate the grounds of appeal from which the issue was formulated from, was not only a bad drafting style but a fundamental and jurisdictional issue – **CHUKWUGOR v A-G CROSS RIVERS STATE (1998) 1 NWLR (Pt. 534) at 395-396**. He submitted further that, issues formulated from incompetent grounds are incompetent. Relying on the decision in **J.C. LTD v EZINWA (1996) 4 NWLR (Pt. 443) at 406 & 417**, he urged the court to resolve the issue in favour of the Appellant.

Countering the submission, the Respondent argued that, striking out of grounds 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7 and 9 by the court below, leaving grounds 6, 8 and 10 of the Respondent's notice and grounds of appeal, did not make the appeal incompetent thereby. Calling in aid the decision in **JFS INV. LTD v BRAWAL LINE LTD & 2 ORS (2010) 12 SC (Pt. 1) 129**, counsel submitted that, failure to relate issues to grounds of appeal does not affect the competence of the issues, and that the sole issue raised from the competent grounds 6 and 8 was neither attacked, nor appealed against.

On the second issue, it was the submission of counsel that by the charge against the Respondent on count 18, forgery was proven against the Respondent, since all ingredients were manifestly present as provided under Section 464 of the Criminal Code Act. By the evidence before the court, the Respondent fraudulently included two companies in Exhibit E26, the letter conveying Management's approval to the branch, thereby making it a forgery and a false document within the definition of a false document under Section 464(b) and 465 of the Criminal Code Act. He argued further that, it was wrong for the lower court to hold that failure of the Supervisor of



Hon. Uwani Musa Abba-Aji, JSC

In the Supreme Court of Nigeria
Holden at Abuja
On Friday, the 31st day of January, 2020

Before Their Lordships

Olabode Rhodes-Vivour
Chima Centus Nweze
Amiru Sanusi
Ejembi Eko
Uwani Musa Abba Aji
Justices, Supreme Court
SC.239/2012

Between

Federal Republic of NigeriaAppellant

And

Mark Onochie Oduah..... Respondent

(Lead Judgement delivered by Hon. Uwani Musa Abba Aji, JSC)

the Respondent to testify as a material witness was fatal to the case of the Appellant, since a decision can be based on the evidence of a single witness with strong probative value.

On the other hand, the Respondent submitted that, the decision of the lower court was based on the fatality of the Appellant's case, with respect to its failure to produce the document that was forged and the failure to produce the key witness to testify, and that the doubt created thereby, was resolved in favour of the Respondent. Counsel reasoned that, from the totality of the evidence against the Respondent,

"..... WHERE, HOWEVER, THERE IS A PARTICULAR VITAL WITNESS WHOSE EVIDENCE IS CRUCIAL TO THE CASE IN PROOF OF THE GUILT OF THE ACCUSED PERSON, FAILURE TO CALL SUCH A WITNESS WOULD OCCASION A FATALITY TO PROVING THE CHARGE, AS THE PRESUMPTION OF WITHHOLDING EVIDENCE WOULD ENURE IN FAVOUR OF THE ACCUSED PERSON"

the *mens rea* was not established; hence, the charge was not proved beyond reasonable doubt.

Court's Judgement and Rationale

On the first issue, the Supreme Court held that, elevating what the lower court did to a jurisdictional incompetence, is unfounded, as the virus of incompetence did not eat up all the grounds of appeal formulated by the Respondent. The Preliminary Objection of the Appellant to dismiss the appeal at the lower court failed, as some of the grounds were unaffected by the challenge posed by the Appellant. *Grounds 6, 8 and 10 remained for consideration by the court and by the admission of the Appellant, a single issue was formulated by the Respondent. It is the law that, two or more issues cannot be formulated from a ground of appeal, but one issue can be formulated from more than one ground of appeal – STATE v OMOYELE (2016) LPELR-40842(SC)*. Further, where there is only one issue, it is only logical that all grounds are married to that single issue and no other. Even where the issues are more than one, the court can, in doing substantial justice, give grounds of appeal their related issues and positions. Thus, the fuss made by the Appellant about the failure of the Respondent to relate the issue to the grounds of appeal, thereby throwing the Appellant in "a tedious and near-impossible task to respond to the Respondent's brief", is groundless. Further, the argument that the failure of the Respondent to relate the grounds of appeal to the issue, occasioned great injustice to the Appellant, is unimaginable. In **OGBORU & ANOR v UDUAGHAN & ORS (2012) LPELR-8287(SC)** it was held that, *where the parties and the court are not misled by the contents of a ground of appeal, complaint about its form becomes a technicality which does not occasion a miscarriage of justice, and is inconsequential. Formulation of one issue from the surviving grounds of appeal was a step in the right direction that called for commendation, and not deprecation, nullity or incompetence.*

Deciding the second issue, their Lordships held that, *the time honoured standard of proof in criminal cases is proof beyond reasonable doubt. The court must be fully satisfied that the facts established by the evidence, by virtue of their probative value, establish the guilt of the accused. Proof beyond reasonable doubt, however, does not mean proof beyond every shadow of doubt – ALI v STATE (2015) LPELR-24711(SC)*. The evidence at the trial was oral and documentary. The Appellant called eight witnesses and tendered documents, while the Respondent testified for himself and called others. The allegation against the Respondent was forgery, while the facts and evidence showed that the Respondent was a subordinate co-author and signatory to the accounts or documents of the bank, when the forgery alleged in Exhibits Z and E26 were committed.

By Section 465 of the Criminal Code, forgery is defined as *when a person who makes a false document or writing knowing it to be false, and with intent that it may in any way be used or acted upon as genuine, whether in Nigeria or elsewhere to the prejudice of any person, or with intent that any person may be in the belief that it is genuine be induced to do, or refrain from doing any act whether in Nigeria or elsewhere is said to forge the document or writing*. The essence of co-signing and authorship of documents in banks and organisations, is to forestall forgery and fraudulent practices. This was the case in the ACB, where the Respondent co-authored and signed documents with his senior or supervisor – Mr. S.A. Okorie. The Respondent testified that he did not commit forgery, but only executed a routine duty with his Supervisor, and could not have unilaterally taken a decision to approve Exhibit Z and E26. The Supervisor was not called to debunk, or establish this cogent evidence. **While the prosecution is not obliged to call all listed witnesses or a host of witnesses to secure a conviction, where, however, there is a particular vital witness whose evidence is crucial to the case in proof of the guilt of the accused person, failure to call such a witness would occasion a fatality to proving the charge, as the presumption of withholding evidence would enure in favour of the accused person – ADAMU v STATE (2019) LPELR-46902(SC)**.

In a charge of Forgery, an essential ingredient to be established, is that the accused person forged the documents in question. Courts are therefore, duty bound to give critical examination to evidence adduced before them and not act on rumour or suspicion – **ONAH v STATE (1985) LPELR-2668(SC)**. In this instance, there is no proof that the Respondent is guilty as charged.

Appeal Dismissed.

Representation

L. Olasande Karim, Esq. with Joseph Oche, Esq. and M.E. Sheriff, Esq. for the Appellant.

Kabir Aliyu (DPP) with Lawal Hudu Garba (DDPP), Shamsudeen Jaafar (ADPP) and M.O.J. Kebbi-State for the Respondent.

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BUDGET SEMINAR

L-R: Mrs. Toyin Sanni, Group CEO Emerging Africa Capital Group, Ms. Mary Uduk Acting DG SEC, Mr. Benjamin Obidegwu, Chairman Capital Market Solicitors Association and Partner Hermon Barristers and Solicitors and Mr. Isyaku Tilde, Acting Executive Commissioner Operations SEC at 2020 Budget Seminar at Eko Hotel, Victoria Island, recently

Lagos to Discontinue 566 Cases being Prosecuted by Police

Akinwale Akintunde

Following the review of the recommendation of the Committee on Decongestion of Non-Criminal cases at the State High courts and Magistrates courts, the Lagos State Government is seeking to discontinue 566 non-active cases which have been in courts 2015 below, being prosecuted by the Police.

The Committee had recommended that, where such prosecution

at the courts have become impracticable due to delay and its attendant factors, or are appropriate for Plea Bargain or criminal diversion, it should be discontinued.

The Committee on Decongestion of Non-Criminal cases was inaugurated on February 21, to review the recommendation of the Fola Arthur-Worrey led Advisory Committee on Police Prosecutorial powers

in Magistrates Courts.

The Arthur-Worrey led Committee in their communique, recommended that the State Government should review the role of Lay Police Prosecutors, in the criminal justice system of Lagos State.

According to a statement issued last Wednesday, the Attorney-General and Commissioner for Justice, Moyosore Onigbanjo, SAN, having critically examined

the Committee's first phase review and recommendation, has instructed the Directorate of Public Prosecutions (DPP) to immediately file a notice of discontinuance in respect of 566 non-active cases, at the registry of the State High Court and Magistrates Court.

In the statement signed by Kayode Oyekanmi, Director, Public Affairs, Mr. Onigbanjo further directed the immediate commencement of the second phase of the exercise.

Appeal Court Affirms Oba of Igbooye's Dethronement

Akinwale Akintunde

The Court of Appeal sitting in Lagos, has upheld the judgement of a Lagos High Court sitting in Igbosere, which dethroned Michael Onakoya as the traditional ruler and Orijeru of Igbooye land, Epe.

Justice Iyabo Kasali had on April 19, 2016 in a judgment, declared the nomination of Onakoya, to the stool of Orijeru of Igbooye, as illegal and of no effect.

The trial Judge granted all the claims of the Claimants in the suit filed through their counsel, Tunde Oyende.

The Judge declared that, "the second Defendant (Michael Gbadebo Onakoya) is not a member of the Ewade Ruling House of Igbooye in Epe Local Government Area of Lagos State, and is not entitled to be nominated to the stool of the Orijeru of Igbooye.

"The court "perpetually" restrained Onakoya from parading himself as a member of the Ewade Ruling House of Igbooye, Epe, the traditional ruler and Orijeru of Igbooye land of Epe Local Government".

Justice Kasali had also declared: "that all the other

Defendants are hereby, perpetually restrained from recognising the second Defendant (Michael Gbadebo Onakoya) as a member of the Ewade Ruling House of Igbooye".

She held that, "the second Defendant's counter-claimant's claim fails in their entirety, and they are dismissed".

The trial Judge also described as fraudulent, the documents used by the deposed monarch for his nomination, selection and subsequent recognition by government for the stool of Orijeru of Igbooye land.

She agreed that, the Claimants were not aware of nor participated in the meetings purportedly held by the Ewade Ruling House in August, 1991, which culminated in his (Onakoya's) unlawful nomination.

She also agreed with the Claimants that, they were not aware of the presentation of the second Defendant to the State Government.

"The members of Ewade Ruling House only became aware of the true but hidden and secret fact that the second Defendant

had assumed the stool of Igbooye, before he was deposed, on the platform of Ewade Ruling House, when they saw the letter Ref. EP. 181/134 dated 26th February, 2003 addressed to the second Defendant "in care of Ewade Ruling House" in the course of downloading processes in Suit ID/1472/92: Adesada v Lagos State Government, which was decided on 15th October, 2008 by this Honourable court", the court held.

Justice Kasali said it was necessary for trial courts to take a stand against illegality, and ensure that justice is done at all times.

Earlier, Justice Habib Abiru, who has now been elevated to the Court of Appeal, had in 2008, in his judgement in a Suit No: ID/1472/1992, dethroned the embattled monarch from the stool of Orijeru of Igbooyeland.

Justice Abiru declined to stay execution of his judgement in a ruling delivered on October 15, 2009, and likewise, the trio of Justices C.C. Nweze, R.N. Pemu and F.O. Akinbami then of the Court of Appeal on February 27, 2013, in a

different applications filed by the deposed monarch.

The Lagos State Government had on May 17, 2016 banished the deposed monarch from Igbooye town following the two judgements by Justice Habib Abiru (now of the Court of Appeal) delivered in October 2008 and Justice Iyabo Kasali delivered in April 2016, after his dethronement as the Orijeru of Igbooye land, Epe.

The letter banishing Onakoya from Igbooye, Epe was signed by the then Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Local Government and Community Affairs, Sanuth J.A.B., and also ordered him to stop parading himself as the Orijeru of Igbooye until another judgement setting aside the two judgements of the High Court.

The letter advised him to stay away from the community, in order to prevent any breakdown of law and order until situation is reversed.

However, following his appeal to the State Government, the banishment of the deposed monarch was reviewed, and he was allowed to return home

CONTINUED ON PAGE 15

Lawyer Seeks Lagos AG, IGP's Intervention, over Alleged Manipulation of Court's Proceedings

Akinwale Akintunde

The Lagos State Attorney-General and Commissioner of Justice, Mr. Moyosore Onigbanjo, SAN, has been urged to intervene in an alleged involvement of some judicial officers in sharp practices and manipulations of court's records, in connivance with police to witch-hunt innocent citizens.

A Lagos-based Lawyer, Mr. Eric Chukwuemeka Igweokolo, in a petition dated February 24, and addressed to the Mr. Onigbanjo and the Inspector General of Police, narrated how he became a victim of injustice being meted out to innocent citizens by corrupt police officers, with the aid of some judicial officers.

According to Igweokolo, a civil matter that had been resolved in favour of his client at the State High Court on different occasions and currently pending before the Court of Appeal, was twisted by the police in collaboration with some judicial officers, to file charge against him.

In the petition, Igweokolo stated that in 2005, he was briefed by Chinedu Onwumelu, over a four bedroom bungalow he bought from Azubuike Ekwerekwu, for N5 million, but due to foot dragging in executing the Deed of Assignment for

the transaction it became a subject of litigation before Justice Opeyemi Oke, in a suit no ID/769/2005.

He said the suit was later reassigned to Justice Mojisola Dada, who ordered Ekwerekwu to refund his client, Onwumelu, the sum of N5 million. The sum being what he allegedly paid for purchase of the property, with 21% interest from 2003 to the date when the judgement was delivered and 5% interest thereafter, until the judgement debt is liquidated.

Not satisfied with Justice Dada's final verdict, Ekwerekwu approached the Court of Appeal to set aside the judgement. While the appeal is still pending, the judgement debtor (Ekwerekwu) filed a new suit (No. ID/2168/2009, on same subject-matter. But, with alternative claims and the Petitioner (Igweokolo), was joined as Respondent alongside his client.

In the new suit, Ekwerekwu prayed the court to order Onwumelu and Igweokolo to refund sum of N3 million he paid to them, in respect of Justice Dada's judgement. But, after long litigation and involvement of National Judicial Council (NJC), the suit was dismissed. It was regarded as, an abuse of court process.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 15

Lagos Arraigns Nine Cultists

Peter Taiwo

The Lagos State Government last Friday, arraigned Nine members of Eiye and Aye Confraternity, before a Magistrates court in Ogba.

The arraignment was done following the arrest by the Police of the suspected Cultists, based on intelligence report received on 10th March, 2020 that the suspected cultists were on a rampage around Solebo Estate, Ikorodu.

In a release signed by signed by Director, Public Affairs, Kayode Oyekanmi, it was gathered that, the suspected cultists were reportedly in search of one Femi, also known as FM, to kill him.

The cultists were caught fighting each other, with various dangerous weapons. They were also alleged to have taken the opportunity of the rampage created by them, to attack and rob some residents of the area.

On receipt of the information, the Ipakodo Police Division sent a signal to the Anti-Cultism Unit, Gbagada, for the immediate arrest of the cultists.

The Nine suspects: Ayoola Quam, Oluwafemi Kolawole, Peter Adebayo,

Oladunni Abiodun, Opoola Quadri, Akaraki Suleiman, Oyenuga Gafaru, Mufutau Mustapha and Busayo Akintan, were arrested on the 16th March, 2020.

They all confessed, to their membership of Eiye Society.

One of the Suspects, Opoola Quadri, confessed to have also killed several people during their cult operations and activities.

The Suspects were arraigned on Friday 20th March, 2020 on a two-count charge of disorderly conduct posing a threat to the society, and unlawful assembly contrary to Sections 44 and 42 of the Criminal Law of Lagos State respectively.

The Prosecuting Counsel, Dr Jide Martins applied for the remand of the Suspects, pursuant to Section 264 of the Administration of Criminal Justice Law of Lagos State 2011, pending the outcome of the DPP's advice.

Magistrate Yetunde Ekogbulu, who refused the plea of the Defendants, ordered that they should all be remanded at the Kirikiri Medium Correctional Centre, pending the conclusion of the investigation.

She adjourned the case, till April 21st.

Appeal Court Asked to Set Aside Judgement Affirming Abebe Village land, Iganmu, belongs to Ojora Family

Akinwale Akintunde

The Court of Appeal, Lagos Division, has been asked to set aside the ruling of a Lagos High Court delivered by Justice S. A Onigbanjo on March 10, 2020 in Suit No: LD/8671/LMW/2019.

In the suit, the Claimants had dragged the Ojora of Ijora, HRM Oba Abdual Fatai Aremu Aromire and Prince Olayiwola Oluwa to court over a disputed land, and had by a Motion on Notice dated December 2, 2019, prayed the court for an order of interlocutory injunction restraining the Defendants (HRM Oba Abdual Fatai Aremu Aromire and Prince Olayiwola Oluwa) either by themselves or through their agents, servants or privies, from trespassing or further trespassing on their (Claimant's) lease registered as 74/74/923 and sublease as 49/49/1374 as part of No.10, Abebe Village Road, Iganmu or any part thereof, pending the hearing and determination of the suit.

The Claimants/Applicants namely, Taylor Woodrow Nig Ltd, Beta Transport Nig Ltd, La Vendure Nig Ltd, Hamzat Subair and Waheed Enitan Oshodi supported their application with an affidavit attaching exhibits and written address, as well as relying on further affidavits and processes filed on December 3, 2019 and January 20, 2020.

The Defendants/Respondents in opposing the application, relied on counter-affidavit with exhibits attached and written address filed on January 16, 2020, as well as reply processes filed on February 7, 2020.

They (Respondents) also filed Notice

of Preliminary Objection on January 16, 2020, praying the court to strike out or dismiss the entire suit.

In ruling on the application, having considered the brief oral arguments proffered by counsel to both parties regarding their respective positions in both applications, Justice Onigbanjo dismissed the Claimants' application, as an abuse of court process.

The Judge premised his decision on the judgement of the Supreme Court in Suit No: SC/54/2005, which affirmed the Court of Appeal decision in Suit No: CA/L/86/2018 and which in turn affirmed his (Onigbanjo's) judgement in Suit No: LD/562/72 and CTC of which are exhibited by parties in this suit, and all of which judgements affirmed the objectors as the overlords and rightful owners of all the land in Iganmu, Lagos State, from time immemorial.

Justice Onigbanjo in his ruling said the Supreme Court judgement delivered by Justice Adesola Oguntade, had made it clear that the disputed Iganmu land rightly belongs to the Defendants/Respondents.

"To me therefore, from the foregoing especially clear endorsement by the Supreme Court of the findings of the trial court that the radical title over all land in Iganmu and its environs as claimed in Suit No: LD/562/72 vests in the Defendants from time immemorial as buttressed by the 1918 Survey Plan drawn by Herbert Macaulay, as well as the fact of the acquisition of portions of the land in Iganmu by the colonial government from no other family but the Defendants' family

in 1925, then it is clearly an abuse of court process for the Claimants in this suit to seek to re-litigate those findings under the guise of seeking by declaratory and injunctive reliefs challenging the radical title of the Defendants regarding any piece or parcel of land in Iganmu and its environs as affirmed by the Supreme Court, by alleging that the piece or parcel of land subject-matter of this suit, though situated in Abebe Village Road, Iganmu, nevertheless, originally belonged to one Suenu family from which the Claimants herein derived their possessory rights over the said land from", Onigbanjo ruled.

Not satisfied with the Judge's decision, the Claimants approached the Court of Appeal, alleging that the learned trial Judge erred in law, on so many grounds.

In their Notice of Appeal dated March 16, 2020 and filed by their counsel, Mr. Adedotun Makinde, SAN, the Claimants/Applicants claimed that the trial Judge erred in law, when he held that their action in Suit No. LD/8671/LMW/2019 was an attempt to re-litigate Suits Nos: SC/54/2005, CA/L/86/2001 and LD/562/72, notwithstanding the fact that they or their predecessors in title were not parties in Suit No: SC/54/2005.

According to them, the trial Judge never made any finding or pronouncement to the effect that, either them or their predecessors in title were never parties to Suits Nos: SC/54/2005, CA/L/86/2001 and LD/562/72.

The Applicants also accused the trial Judge of not making a finding or pronouncement, that the property registered

as 74/74/923 and 49/49/1374 was litigated upon in SC/54/2005, CA/L/86/2001 and LD/562/72.

They accused the trial Judge of making reference to Survey Plan No. AL/641/1974 attached as Exhibit C to the Notice of Preliminary Objection, which was different from Survey Plan No. AL/641/1974 referred to in the judgement in SC/54/2005, adding that, the judgement in SC/54/2005 cannot bind them who were never parties in the suit.

According to the Applicants, Justice Onigbanjo also erred in law, when he failed to determine the weightier questions of Estoppel per rem judicatam and locus standi, which were the grounds of the Respondents' Notice of Preliminary Objection, before arriving at the conclusion that the Applicants' suit was an abuse of court process, on the ground that they were a mere academic exercise.

The Applicants accused Justice Onigbanjo of denying them fair hearing, when he failed to recuse himself from the case upon becoming aware that his family members were the Respondents, adding that, their (Claimants) application for abridgement of time, contained sufficient materials to warrant the learned trial Judge to recuse himself from the proceedings.

They are therefore, praying the court to set aside the ruling of Justice Onigbanjo delivered on March 10, 2020, and order trial before another Judge.

They are also praying the court for an order of interlocutory injunction restraining the Respondents, either by themselves or through their agents, from any further acts of trespass pending the hearing and determination of the suit.

Legal Personality of the Week Alex Gbejule Gbiwen

'Road to Success in law practice, is not always Rosy'

Please, give a brief introduction of yourself

My name is Alex Gbejule Gbiwen, one time Chairman of Young Lawyers Forum (YLF) and the present Assistant Secretary to Nigerian Bar Association, Warri Branch. I was called to the Bar in 2010.

Have you had any challenges in your career as a Lawyer, and if ,so what were the main challenges?

Yes. I had thought that as soon as I secured a job as a Lawyer, I would earn so much money, but, I found out that the efforts put into the practice as a young Lawyer, are not often commensurate to your earnings. Within the first few years of my call, it was difficult to meet up with the high expectations of my family and the society generally. But, in all, I can stand tall and say, God has been faithful.

What do you consider to be your worst day as a Lawyer?

My worst day as a Lawyer, was sometime in 2011. I was still fresh from Law School, and was so eager to appear in court and conduct a case. You can imagine the joy I felt, when a colleague of the same call year invited me to lead him in a landlord and tenant case in which he was to testify as a witness, in an Area Customary Court. In the course of conducting the case, I tendered photocopy of a receipt as evidence without laying the necessary foundation for doing so, that is, explaining what happened to the original copy, and as expected the opposing Counsel raised an objection to that effect; and instead of withdrawing the document which was the right thing to do at that moment, I just said "I concurred" after listening to his argument which sounded convincing enough even to me. The President of the Court tried to give



Alex Gbejule Gbiwen

me hints, but I didn't understand. He then asked for my age at the Bar which I told him, and as if this got him more upset, he seriously tongue lashed me in the presence of the litigants, which included my client. I felt so embarrassed. I had thought that the President of the Court having known that I was a new wig, would give me a certain form of encouragement, and not the tongue lashing which I received. This experience has always made me prepare carefully, before appearing in court.

What has been your most memorable experience as a Lawyer, so far?

My most memorable experience came when I cross-examined a witness for the first time at the High Court. I was just

one year post call, and was asked by my principal who was stuck in traffic and could not arrive in court on time, to go to court and ask for a stand down in a matter that was for cross-examination, to enable him come and conduct same personally. Upon making the application for a stand down, the Judge bluntly refused, and asked me to go on with the cross-examination. This was in a case that was filed in 1982, got to the Supreme Court, and was sent back to the High Court to start de novo. Luckily, I had been following up with the case and had some questions scribbled out which I intended to hand over to my principal as my little contribution to the case. I had to cross-examine the witness as ordered by the Judge, relying on those questions. After few questions, the opposing Counsel who seemed very supportive of the court's order that I must go on with the case, interjected and asked for a date claiming that he never had the time to prepare his witness, an application which was vehemently denied by the Judge. At the end of proceedings, I earned my Lord's admiration and commendations, as I did very well. It was the first cross-examination, that I conducted in my career. You can imagine the joy and satisfaction I got, earning the praise of a very disciplined Judge. The joy I felt was more than money could give, and it lasted for days.

Who has been most influential in your life?

Well, I can't point to just one person, as the most influential in my life. I believe I am where I am today by the grace of God, through different people who have been very influential in different facet of my life. I will mention a few. As a Lawyer, my principal, Chief Edward Omamogho Ekpoko, Esq. He exposed me to the profession, teaching

me all I know in the profession, within the context of integrity and the rules of professional conduct. As a Christian, Papa Ayo Oritsejafor my spiritual father and mentor, a man whose lifestyle has shaped mine positively. As a person generally, my beloved parents, Mr & Mrs Orighoye Felix Gbiwen. They have always believed in me, and have been very supportive in all I do. Without their love, guidance and sacrifice for me, it would have been a whole different story.

Why did you become a Lawyer?

It had always been my dream to become a Lawyer, from childhood, so I could be a voice to the voiceless and help to the helpless, while earning a living in the process.

What would be your advice to anyone wanting a career in law?

I would advice anyone wanting a career in law to be hard working and determined, as determination and hard work bring any goal within reach. The journey is not always smooth, the first five years of post-call is not always rosy, but there's what I call "the Lawyer's day". These are those days where fortune smiles on a Lawyer, perhaps, with a brief that can change his life positively for the better.

If you had not become a Lawyer, what other career would you have chosen?

If I had not become a Lawyer, I would have joined the Force; probably the Nigerian Army, because I love discipline and hate oppression. I always want to defend, and speak for the oppressed.

Where do you see yourself in ten years?

In 10 years time, I see myself bigger and better in the legal profession and life, generally.

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Federalism as a System of Government (Part 4)

Introduction

In our last three outings on Federalism as a system of government, we have been able to show the concept and meaning of Federalism, history of Federalism in western thought, reasons for Federalism, the Nigerian federal structure, the issues in its origin and creation in Nigeria, and how true Federalism operates in the regions. In all of this, Nigeria is far from operating true Federalism. Today, we shall consider some of the viable recommendations advocated for at the 2014 CONEFAB reports, to drive a true Federalism in Nigeria.

The 2014 National Conference and Viable Recommendations to drive True Federalism

The 2014 National Conference inaugurated by former President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, GCFR, made historic and far-reaching recommendations that could give Nigeria true fiscal Federalism. Unfortunately, these laudable recommendations, like others before, have been consigned to the dustbin of historical oblivion.

As a Federal Government delegate (addendum), to the 2014 National Conference, I vigorously pushed for a true fiscal federation, fully aware that Nigeria would not realise her great potentials without it. I will attempt a summary hereunder, of some of the recommendations of three Committees whose works are germane to our present discourse, of attaining true Federalism.

The Conference recommended fiscal Federalism and the use of referendum/plebiscite, in determining our affairs.

Merging and De-Merging of States

The Conference recommended that States that so desire could merge or de-merge under certain conditions and criteria, the details of which were spelt out. States could also create economic blocks, for mutual development.

Whilst knocking down a return to regionalism, the Conference affirmed that the States shall be the federating units.

Local Governments transferred to States

In reaffirming Section 7 of the 1999 Constitution (as altered), which guarantees a system of democratically elected Local Government Councils, the Conference transferred LGCs to the States, and recommended that States that so desire may create or reduce the number of existing Local Governments, through the States' Houses of Assembly. From the background of States literally embezzling at source, funds belonging to the LGAs, the Conference recommended the scrapping of the State/ Local Government Joint Account, and the establishment in its place, of a State Revenue Mobilisation, Allocation and Fiscal Commission (SRMAFC).

The Conference abolished the practice whereby, sole Administrators or unelected officials administer Local Governments for any period howsoever. It recommended that, elections shall be held not later than 30 days to the expiration of the tenure of LGCs and not earlier than 90 days, the tenure being three years certain.

The same committee believed that, the present Presidential system of Government is too expensive and unwieldy. It therefore, settled for a home-made hybrid model of Government, which effectively combines attributes of the Parliamentary and Presidential systems of government. It code-named it, "the modified Presidential system".

Under this system, a candidate for the office of President shall contest solely, and later select a Vice President from the Legislature. He cannot select more than 30% of his Ministers, from outside the Legislature.

The Conference recommended the principle of Zoning and Rotation of elective offices at Federal and State levels, on the basis of equity, justice and fair play.

State Constitutions

States shall have their own Constitutions, with their right to self-determination as federating units extended to ethnic nationalities, within the State.

The Committee on Law, Judiciary, Human Rights and Legal Reforms, of which I was a member, recommended inter alia that:

The offices of the Attorney-General of the Federation/ State, should be separated from that of the Minister/ Commissioner of Justice.

The concept of Plea Bargain, should be abolished.

"AS IT STANDS TODAY, NIGERIA OPERATES A FEDERAL SYSTEM, ONLY IN NAME. IT IS, IN REALITY, A UNITARY SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT, WHICH SOME PEOPLE HAVE DERISIVELY REFERRED TO AS, "FEEDING BOTTLE" FEDERALISM"



President Muhammadu Buhari

Structure of Courts

(i) There should be established, the State Court of Appeal and Supreme Court for each State to serve as the terminal Court for States' matters, except in cases of weighty Constitutional issues, civil liberties and matters of overriding public interest, with the leave of the Supreme Court.

Specialised Courts/Tribunals

(i) Tribunals of Enquiry should be an item, under the Concurrent Legislative List.

(ii) Electoral Offences Commission should be established for the Federation, as one of the Bodies in Section 153(1) of the Constitution.

(iii) Electoral Offences Tribunal should be established under the Commission, to try alleged electoral offences.

(iv) Such offences should be tried summarily, where they are committed.

Religion

Religion should be removed from governance and accordingly, Government should stop the use of public funds to sponsor people on pilgrimages. Consular Services should, however, be maintained.

That Government should devolve power, so that States and LGA's can adequately participate in governance to alleviate poverty in rural areas.

Independent Candidacy

Every Nigerian who meets the specified conditions in the Electoral Act, should be free to contest elections as an Independent candidate. Section 221 of the 1999 Constitution, should be repealed accordingly.

Minority Rights/Ethnic Nationalities

The Conference took serious note of the perennial conflicts between indigenous and non-indigenous citizenship rights and freedoms, and believed that these arise mainly from non-recognition of the distinction between citizenship rights and indigenous people's rights and freedoms. Consequently, the Conference recommended that, in addition to reinforcing the recommendation on affirmative actions for ethnic and other minorities (including physically challenged and disadvantaged persons), there should be specific constitutional guarantees of the rights and freedoms of indigenous peoples which cannot be acquired, particularly as they are peculiar to their cultural and traditional rights and practices.

The Conference recognised the unconditional rights and freedoms, of every and any ethnic nationality in Nigeria that considers itself as unjustly subjected to real and perceived injustices of marginalisation, domination and suppression, to join their kith and kin through the instrumentality of relevant laws enacted and procedures established consistent with either 'referendum' or 'plebiscite' with their consequential 'boundary adjustments', provided such movements shall only be applicable to communities that have contiguous boundaries.

Without prejudice to the above, minority groups that wish to exist as separate and meet the criteria for State creation, shall be allowed to do so under the instrumentality of the relevant laws and procedures as part of their rights to internal self-determination.

Devolution of Political and Fiscal Powers

That to achieve true Federalism in Nigeria, the legislative powers/ duties of the respective tiers of government should be clearly spelt out. That the deduction in any form of what is described as 'special funds' from the 'Federation Account' prior to distribution to the mentioned beneficiaries of the Account, be stopped, particularly as the Supreme Court had in 2002 declared such a 'fund' unconstitutional

in **A-G, Abia State & Ors v A-G of the Federation**.

That the revenue formula should be reviewed, such that what accrues to the central government is reduced; while making more resources available to the States for development, in their rural and urban communities.

Police/Policing

That both the Federal and State Governments should share responsibilities, for security and the maintenance of law and order. Thus, the committee recommends a second tier level policing in addition to the federal Police. Indeed, States that so desire, were permitted to have State Police.

Devolution of Powers

The Conference recommended massive devolution of powers from the Federal to State and Local Government Areas, so as to have a leaner Central Government and more prosperous federating units.

Mineral Resources

Mines and minerals, including oil fields, oil mining, geological surveys and natural gas were recommended by the Conference to be retained in the Exclusive Legislative List as specified in the 1999 Constitution of the Federal republic of Nigeria (as altered), but should be amended to read:

"Mines and all minerals, including oil fields, oil mining, geological surveys and natural gas, provided that States where the mining activities take place shall be involved in matters relating thereto;

The Government of the Federation shall create a special fund to develop mines and minerals, in States where such resources are developed".

The Conference in making this recommendation, considered the overriding need to bring all the other mineral resources of the country, hitherto undeveloped, into mainstream development by activating a National Strategic Plan for exploitation of all minerals, so as to boost their contribution to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). It also was of the view that, this item (as amended), would enable the Federal Government set up or create a special fund, that would ensure the realisation of the above mentioned goal, through a tripartite relationship between the Federal Government-State and investor(s). This in its view, was also meant to diversify the economy of the country rapidly, and give those States involved a sense of belonging in the Nigerian nation. Such diversification of the economic base of the country, would reduce the revenue; engender economic sustainability, and substantially reduce the tensions over the issue of revenue sharing.

The Conference accordingly, recommended as follows: That the sharing of the funds accruing to the Federation Account among the three tiers of government, should be done in the following manner:

i. Federal Government – 42.5% ii. State Governments – 35%

iii. Local Governments – 22.5%

To replace the existing formulae of; i. Federal Government – 55.68%

ii. State governments – 26.72%

iii. Local Governments – 20.60%

Sharing Formula (Horizontal Allocation)

The Conference recommended as follows:

a. That the percentages given to Population and Equality of States in the existing Sharing formula be reduced, while that assigned to Social Development Factor be increased to a much higher percentage, so as to ensure accelerated development of all parts of the country.

b. That three new principles listed hereunder be added to the existing sharing formula, to enhance economic, infra- structural and human capital development in the country:

i. Inverse Primary School Enrolment.

ii. Federal Presence. iii. Unemployment.

c. That the "technical" aspects and details of revenue sharing formula shall be referred to the Revenue Mobilisation, Allocation and Fiscal Commission and the National Assembly, for final determination. The proposed sharing formula by the Conference was based on:

i. Diminished emphasis on principles of equality of States and population.

ii. Increased emphasis on Social Development Factor; and

iii. Internally Generated Revenue effort.

Conclusion

True Federalism or Fiscal Federalism, is the only panacea for the rapid development of Nigeria. The continued reliance on a monoprodukt – the fast depleting crude oil – cannot sustain Nigeria, without conscious diversification of her resources.

There is the urgent need for a conscious devolution of powers, from a behemoth central government to grossly impoverished federating units. As it stands today, Nigeria operates a federal system, only in name. It is, in reality, a unitary system of government, which some people have derisively referred to as, "feeding bottle" Federalism.

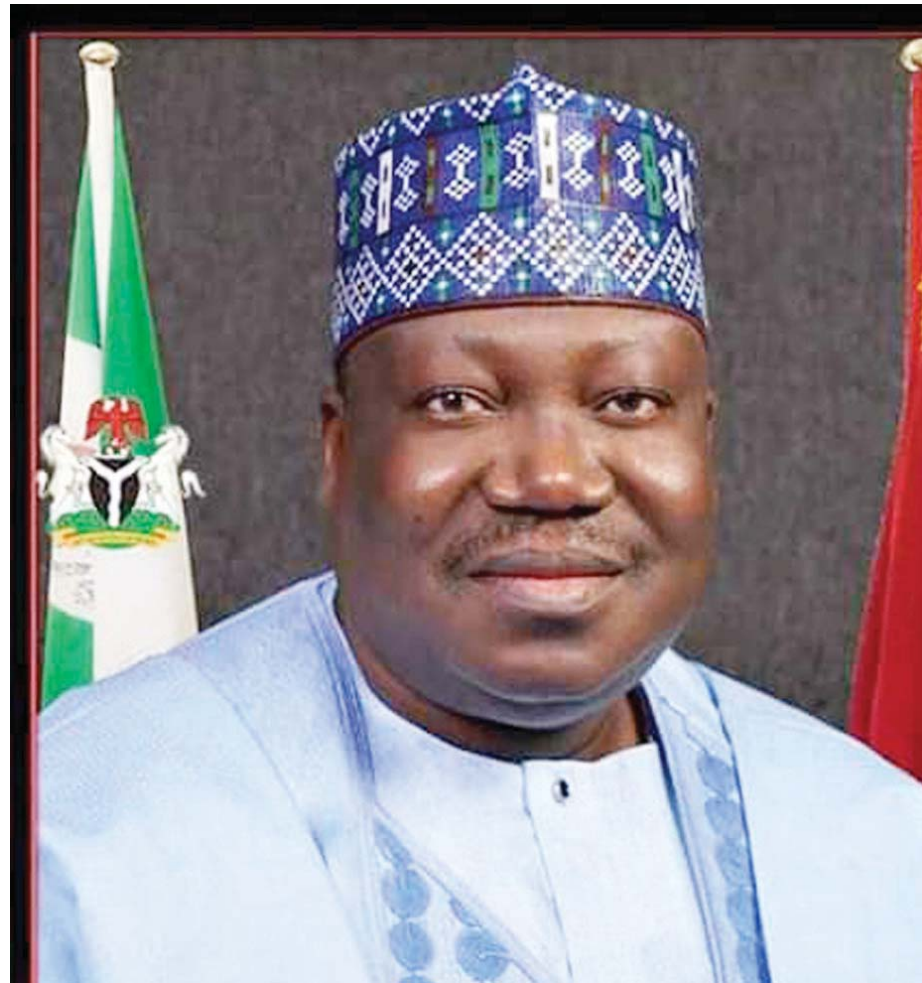
THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK

"We need to reinstate the idea of Federalism" (Jeff Fortenberry).

D I S C O U R S E

Dancing on the Graves of Soldiers and Victims

To the chagrin of many Nigerians, a strange Bill for the creation of the *National Agency for Education, Rehabilitation, De-radicalisation and Integration of Boko Haram Insurgents in Nigeria*, suddenly surfaced at the National Assembly, seeking not only to grant amnesty to Boko Haram insurgents, but to absorb many of them into the Nigerian Army and send some of them abroad for further education, at the expense of hapless taxpayers. As the nation grapples with how to contain the COVID-19 pandemic, over 70 of our brave soldiers were ambushed and killed by Boko Haram insurgents, last week. **Emmanuel Onwubiko, Jide Ojo** and **Richard Abdullahi** posit that, granting amnesty to Boko Haram insurgents and passing the proposed Bill will not only be an affront to the memory of all our soldiers who have lost their lives while fighting gallantly against the insurgents, reduce the morale of those presently on the battle front, have the capability of compromising the nation's security apparatus, but also be rewarding violence and criminality, while preferentially entitling insurgents to certain economic opportunities which are not open to their victims and the average Nigerian, generally



Senate President, Ahmed Lawan



President Muhammadu Buhari



Speaker, House of Representatives, Femi Gbajabiamila

Commission for 'Repentant' Boko Haram: Rewarding Criminality

Jide Ojo

Introduction

There is an adage that says "where there is no law, there is no sin". In trying to regulate human behaviour, every society has a set of laws, codes, and regulations aimed at punishing wrongdoing, so as to serve as deterrent to others who may want to indulge in such crimes. As the Americans say, "if you do the crime, you do the time". It is essentially in order to moderate human behaviour, that all civilised societies set up administration of justice procedures and structures. So, there is the Police, courts and prisons. Anyone who commits crime is arrested, investigated, and if found guilty by a competent court of law, is sent to prison or asked to pay fine in lieu of going to jail. Even in the days of yore, before the advent of the modern adjudicatory systems, the traditional rulers supported by kingmakers and or council of chiefs perform the role of executive, legislature and judiciary. They rule, formulate laws, hold court sessions in their palaces, mete out punishment to offenders, and even have local prisons where those found guilty of serious crimes are held in custody.

When Boko Haram insurgents decided in 2009 to wage war against the Nigerian State, the insurgents must have known that they are committing crimes that can lead to loss of their lives, but, they do not care a hoot whether they live or die. In fact, many of them are misguided through indoctrination that they are fighting a jihad, "Holy War" and that should they die in the course of it, they die as martyrs. That is the more reason that those who subscribe to Boko Haram ideology, could volunteer to carry out suicide bombing on innocent compatriots who have committed no crime.

It is thus, very disheartening to see many of the insurgents previously arrested, being released under the guise of having been deradicalised. Thousands of these insurgents have so far been released and reintegrated back into the society, with claims in some quarters that some of the deradicalised former members of the sect are being secretly recruited into the Nigerian Army, a claim the Army authority has debunked. How effective have this deradicalisation and reintegration policy of Federal Government been?

Recall that the initiative came on stream in 2017. In my opinion, it is of doubtful success, as these insurgents continue to relentlessly attack the BAY States (Borno, Adamawa and Yobe). Indeed, just few days ago, precisely on Monday, March 23, 2020, Boko Haram insurgents ambushed and killed over 70 Nigerian soldiers of the *Operation Lafiya Dole*. The soldiers were killed in Gorigi, near Allargano Forest general area of Borno State.

The nation is still debating the utility of the de-radicalisation policy of Government before former Yobe State Governor, now Senator representing Yobe East, Ibrahim Geidam brought a Private Member Bill, seeking a Commission for so called

"THE PERPETRATORS OF THESE HEINOUS CRIMES ARE THE PEOPLE WE ARE TREATING WITH KIDS' GLOVES, HOPING THAT THEY WILL EMBRACE PEACE AND ABANDON THEIR DAYDREAM OF CONVERTING THE WHOLE COUNTRY INTO AN ISLAMIC REPUBLIC"

'repentant' Boko Haram members. The Bill was read for the first time on the floor of the Senate on March 25, 2020. Since then, it has generated a lot of controversy, muted only by the fear over the Covid-19 pandemic ravaging the world at this time.

Bill seeking Establishment of Commission for Boko Haram Insurgents

The Bill as proposed by the Yobe East Senator among other things:

Provides an avenue for rehabilitating, de-radicalising, educating and reintegrating the defectors, repentant and detained members of the insurgent group Boko Haram to make them useful members of the society; Provides avenue for reconciliation and promote national security; Provides an open-door and encouragement for other members of the group who are still engaged in the insurgency to abandon the group, especially in the face of military pressure.

Others include: it gives the Government an opportunity to derive insider-information about the insurgency group for greater understanding of the group and its inner workings, as gaining a greater understanding of the insurgents will enable the Government to address the immediate concerns of violence and study the needs of de-radicalisation effort to improve the process of de-radicalisation; Helps disintegrate the violent and poisonous ideology that the group spreads, as the programme will enable some convicted or suspected terrorists to express remorse over their actions, repent and recant their violent ideology and re-enter mainstream politics, religion and society.

According to the document, the agency will create vocational rehabilitation for the members - which will give the detainees opportunities to learn carpentry, clay shaping, pottery, use of art through drawings, among others.

Gory Statistics of Damage by Boko Haram Insurgents

According to the February 29, 2020 features on the Bill by *Premium Times*, "records show that of the 2.3 million people displaced by the conflict intensified in May 2013, at least 250,000 have

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"Go, Your Terrorism is Forgiven"

Emmanuel Onwubiko

Leadership in contemporary society anywhere in the world under any arrangement, is tasking.

Leadership in a constitutional democracy is even more tasking, going by the fact that the essence of exercising legitimate political authority over a sovereign entity, is a multi-tasking enterprise involving the meticulous implementation of social contract between the electorate who are the real owners of the sovereignty, and the elected.

The Nigerian Constitution of 1999 (as amended) is very explicit on this, when in Section 14(2)(a) the groundnorm affirms that: "sovereignty belongs to the people of Nigeria from whom Government through this Constitution derives all its powers and authority"

Further down in subsection 2(b) of Section 14, it says "the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government".

The current President, Muhammadu Buhari, who reportedly won the election in 2015 and defeated a benevolent incumbent President, actually won his office on the back of his sacred pledge to clinically end the grave attacks and blood-curdling violence unleashed on Nigerians, by the largely North East of Nigeria's based armed Islamic rebels and terrorists known as Boko Haram which in English means 'education is sinful'.

The preponderant number of Nigerians who in 2015 elected Maj. Gen. Buhari, did so because during the electioneering campaigns in which the then retired Major General Muhammadu Buhari traversed all States of the Federation, the then opposition - All Progressives Congress (APC) Presidential candidate defeated the incumbent Peoples Democratic Party's (PDP) President, Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, based on his twin promises of defeating terrorists and bringing them to justice for their horrendous crimes against humanity, in the mindless mass murders of over 30,000 innocent Nigerian citizens.

Democracy and constitutionalism thrive inevitably on integrity and credibility of holders of public offices, and the strict adherence to campaign promises. However, Buhari has breached his campaign promises in 2015 and 2019.

Tony Blair and Campaign Promises

Erstwhile British Prime Minister Mr. Tony Blair who led the opposition Labour Party of UK to defeat a ruling Conservative Party, made these facts clear in his classical book known as "Tony Blair: A Journey".

He wrote as follows: "As opposition leader, you carry great responsibility; to campaign for the top job in any country is onerous. You are the standard-bearer for your politics, your party, and the beliefs both hold dear. Anyone who has ever run a campaign to win an election knows how big a task it is. There are a million decisions of organisation, communication, personnel and policy which have to be taken quickly and effectively. If you can do it well, it is good preparation and a real indication of leadership, but it isn't the same in its impact on you as a person".

Tony Blair continued thus: "From the moment the mantle is on your shoulders as Prime Minister, you understand that the scale, importance and complexity are completely different. They are not at the end of the same spectrum of leadership. You inhabit a new dimension, altogether. There is something more: running for the job, you have a team, and it feels like a team. Yes, you're the leader, but your collaboration is so close, your intimacy so refined by experience, your interaction so governed by familiarity of an almost telepathic nature, that you feel like a family or a cabal of like-minded conspirators".

President Buhari's Broken Campaign Promises

The Guardian of United Kingdom, had in a report of April 1st, 2015 stated as follows:

"Muhammadu Buhari, the President-elect of Nigeria,

"..... RATHER THAN DEFEAT ISLAMIC TERRORISM, INTRODUCED AN UNLAWFUL POLICY OF PARDON, REINTEGRATION AND RESETTLEMENT OF BOKO HARAM TERRORISTS WHOM HIS GOVERNMENT STYLISHLY CALLED, "REPENTANT TERRORISTS" "

has pledged to crush the deadly six-year insurgency by the Islamist extremist group, Boko Haram.

The former military dictator was speaking in the capital, Abuja, a day after his victory over the incumbent President, Goodluck Jonathan, in a largely peaceful election that has been praised by Barack Obama, David Cameron, Ban Ki-moon and other world leaders.

He said: "I assure you that, Boko Haram will soon know the strength of our collective will and commitment to rid this nation of terror and bring back peace".

"We shall spare no effort, until we defeat terrorism. In tackling the insurgency, we have a tough and urgent job to do."

Much of Buhari's support was in the North, especially the North-east, where Boko Haram, which wants to carve out an Islamic caliphate, has killed at least 10,000 people since 2009. In real life these terrorists have in ten years, killed over 30,000 Nigerians.

Jonathan's failure to get to grips with the scourge was seen as critical in his defeat, although a military offensive in the last weeks before the election regained lost ground, says Guardian of UK."

The paper quoted Buhari as proclaiming that: "Democracy and the rule of law, will be established in the land".

"Let's put the past behind us, especially the recent past. We must forget our old battles and past grievances, and forge ahead."

"You shall be able to go to bed knowing that you are

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“GO, YOUR TERRORISM IS FORGIVEN” CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

safe, and that your constitutional rights remain in safe hands. You shall be able to voice your opinion, without fear of reprisal or victimisation. You are all my people, and I shall treat every one of you as my own.”

Entrepreneur Mo Ibrahim, whose Foundation awards a prize for achievement in African leadership, said: “Today, we Africans are all proud of Nigeria and President Jonathan. Thank you Mr. President. If you are seeking a legacy, you have definitely achieved it.”

However, in all of the first term of four years between 2015 to 2019, President Buhari, rather than defeat Islamic terrorism, introduced an unlawful policy of pardon, reintegration and resettlement of Boko Haram terrorists whom his Government stylishly called, “Repentant Terrorists”. These terrorists have scaled up their mass murders, and the incompetent government goes on with the illegal pardon for terror suspects.

But, Nigerians are rejecting this notion which is unconstitutional, that goes to attempt to placate mass murderers and terrorists, even when the victims of terror are left to suffer deprivations.

In fact, the failure of President Buhari to prosecute Boko Haram terrorists, made him almost lose the 2019 polls, if not for the widespread alleged manipulation of the 2019 polls, which even the United States blamed the so-called defeat of the opposition PDP, to the evil machination of security agents of the Federal Government under the control of the then incumbent President Buhari who ran against a very popular opponent of the PDP and former Vice President, Alhaji Atiku Abubakar.

These are some of the few human rights related issues bordering on the terror campaigns, and then the reason for the pyrrhic victory of the 2019 election awarded to the incumbent President who had then in 2019 transformed into a bad brand and still is very unpopular, because he has failed to combat terrorism, but, has instead, decided to dance naked on the graves of the victims of terror, through the contrived policy of forgiving the so-called repentant terrorists.

America's State Department 2019 Human Rights Country Report

America's State Department 2019 Human Rights Country Report on Nigeria said: thus: “The insurgency in the Northeast by the militant terrorist groups Boko Haram and the Islamic State in West Africa (ISIS-WA), continued.

“The groups conducted numerous attacks on government and civilian targets, resulting in thousands of deaths and injuries, widespread destruction, the internal displacement of more than two million persons, and external displacement of an estimated 243,875 Nigerian refugees to neighbouring countries, as of September 30, US said.

“Significant human rights issues included, unlawful and arbitrary killings, including extrajudicial killings, forced disappearances, torture, and arbitrary detention, all the above by both Government and non-State actors; harsh and life-threatening prison conditions; unlawful infringement on citizens' privacy rights; criminal libel; violence against and unjustified arrests of journalists; substantial interference with the rights of peaceful assembly and freedom of association, in particular for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBTI) persons and religious minorities; widespread and pervasive corruption; crimes involving violence targeting LGBTI persons; criminalisation of same-sex sexual conduct between adults; and forced and bonded labour.”

“Impunity remained widespread, at all levels of government. No charges were filed in some of the significant allegations of human rights violations by security forces, and cases of police or military extortion or



Senator Ibrahim Gaidam of Yobe East Senatorial District, Bill Sponsor

other abuse of power.”

“Abductions by Boko Haram and ISIS-WA, continued. Both groups subjected many women and girls to sexual and gender-based violence, including forced marriages, sexual slavery, and rape.”

American Government, however, ruled the 2019 poll rigged thus: “The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) is the independent electoral body responsible for overseeing elections, by regulating the process and preventing electoral misconduct. During the year (2019), INEC conducted the Presidential election, National Assembly elections, State House Assembly elections, and local elections in all 36 States plus the FCT, as well as Gubernatorial elections in 30 States. There was evidence that the military and security services intimidated voters, electoral officials, and election observers. In addition, violence in several States contributed to lower voter participation, and added to the sentiment that the army is a tool of the ruling party in many parts of the country, particularly in the South. For example, widespread violence and military involvement in electoral processes, including during the vote collation process, significantly scarred the Governorship election in Rivers State. Additionally, several of INEC's Resident Electoral Commissioners (RECs) reported DSS operatives intimidated them, when the RECs attempted to protect voting materials. Some RECs reported security service personnel visited them multiple times, prior to the elections. Press reported certain RECs claimed the DSS was surveilling the RECs, and that they had been brought to DSS offices for questioning.”

“There were reports that corruption, including vote buying, were historically high during the 2018-19 electoral season. Examples of vote buying were apparent in the re-run of the Osun gubernatorial election in September 2018, and during the Kano gubernatorial election on March 9.”

These irregularities marred the election in which President Buhari could have been defeated, for spectacularly breaking his campaign promises to tackle Boko Haram insurgency, but has, instead, placated terrorists.

UNICEF

Around February 2020, the Borno State Government said about 1,400 repentant

Boko Haram suspects have been released by the military, and rehabilitated into society. This figure is fraudulent, because the United Nations has a higher number.

“The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) has disclosed that, the Nigerian military released over 3,500 suspected Boko Haram terrorists from custody in the last four years.

According to a statement released by UNICEF's Communications Officer, Sam Kaalu, a total of 223 children including 10 girls, were among the latest released from Nigerian Army administrative custody and Maiduguri Maximum Security Prison, after they were cleared of suspected ties with armed groups.

Kaalu said the suspects were released to the safe custody of Borno State Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development, UNICEF and Borno State authorities in Maiduguri, Northeast region of Nigeria.

He stated that the children will now immediately enter a programme that would help them reintegrate into their communities, re-engage with their families, and take the first steps towards creating a new life and means of livelihood. Some of the children, he noted, had been missing for up to four to five years, with many presumed dead by their families.

According to Kaalu, since 2016, 3,559 people associated with armed groups have been released from administrative custody, including 1,743 children (1,125 boys, 618 girls). All have gone through the Bulumkutu Rehabilitation Centre in Maiduguri in Borno State, and have since been reunited with their families or placed in the most appropriate alternative care, where they are accessing rehabilitation services and reintegration support, in their communities.

He said that, UNICEF is working closely with Nigerian State authorities to help with reintegration programmes for all children formerly associated with non-State armed groups, and others affected by the ongoing conflict in North-east Nigeria.

Borno State exposed the faulty side of this illegality, when it disclosed that some Boko Haram terrorists released were rejected by their communities, in which they killed thousands of citizens.

Borno Government stated that, if any person was rejected by his community for being a former Boko Haram member, the Government would resettle that person.

Reaction of Nigerian Soldiers

However, the soldiers said it is wasted effort for them to have fought against Boko Haram, only for the terrorists to be released after they have been captured. Nigerian soldiers in the front-line in the war against terrorists, have expressed disappointment with the Muhammadu Buhari-led Federal Government, for releasing 1,400 or more 'repentant Boko Haram suspects. The soldiers said they do not understand why

suspected Boko Haram members, are being released in large numbers.

“A lot of soldiers, are not happy about this. We were there at the Maimalari Barracks, when some of these Boko Haram people were released”, one of the soldiers who doesn't want his name mentioned said. “The authorities are releasing them, but Boko Haram are killing soldiers that they capture. This does not make sense to us, at all. We continue to sweep across the bushes to flush these people out, and then the Government will release them. Does that not amount to wasted efforts?” (Cited in an online report).

Similarly, another soldier stated that, most of the Boko Haram insurgents who were being released on a 'repentant' claim, have found their way back to terrorism, unleashing mayhem in Nigerian communities.

He said, “You wonder why Boko Haram members are on the increase? When we arrest them and bring them here, some top people would come and start negotiating their release. But, I will tell you some of these so-called suspects are returning to the bush, and they were never repentant”.

Controversial Bill

To add salt to injury, the Senate began deliberations on a Bill that seeks to establish an agency that would see to the rehabilitation, deradicalisation and integration of repentant insurgents in the country. A Bill, sponsored by Ibrahim Gaidam of Yobe East Senatorial district, was read for the first time on the floor of the Senate, recently.

Reaction of Military Chiefs

The military authority, see it differently. Military chiefs say rehabilitation of fighters who surrender, are part of the war effort to bring about peace. But, what about the International laws on war crimes? How do you pardon war criminals, and undermine the extant laws?

‘Clients’, the military euphemism for the repentant insurgents, were said to have been exposed to formal literacy classes, skills acquisition and Islamic Religious Knowledge (IRK), as well as drug and psycho-therapists during their training. So, we are told by the Army not to panic. Those on the frontlines, think otherwise.

Reaction of Borno Elders

A group of Borno elders, led by ex-Governor Kashim Shettima, last year, had frowned at the initiative, saying the military's operation was not well thought out. They feared that, releasing the purported repentant Boko Haram militants into civilian population could be counterproductive, as hardened fighters would return to the terror group to commit more atrocities.

“The ongoing de-radicalisation and reintegration of repentant Boko Haram insurgents under the “operation safe corridor” of the Defence headquarters, is a cause for concern for members of the Civilian JTF and some stakeholders in the State” the group wrote in a letter last year.

“(We) suspect that “Boko Haram members do not repent”, hence, the de-radicalisation programme may be breeding spies and agents of recruitment for the Boko Haram”, they had said. They urged the President, to approve the suspension of the programme.

Reaction of HURIWA

The Human Rights Writers Association of Nigeria, (HURIWA), warned against the Rehabilitation, Deradicalisation and Reintegration Bill sponsored by Senator Ibrahim Gaidam of Yobe East Senatorial District.

HURIWA, a prominent civil rights advocacy group said the Bill which proposes outright pardon of repentant armed terrorists under the guise of a de-radicalisation programme, could result in civil war either in the short, medium or long term.

The rights group warned that, the Bill was unconstitutional and offends all relevant anti-terrorism laws of the Federation.

“IN FACT, THE FAILURE OF PRESIDENT BUHARI TO PROSECUTE BOKO HARAM TERRORISTS, MADE HIM ALMOST LOSE THE 2019 POLLS, IF NOT FOR THE WIDESPREAD ALLEGED MANIPULATION OF THE 2019 POLLS.....”

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COMMISSION FOR 'REPENTANT' BOKO HARAM: REWARDING CRIMINALITY CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

fled Nigeria into Cameroon, Chad or Niger. The insurgents killed over 6,600 in 2014 alone. The group also carried out mass abductions including, the kidnapping of 276 schoolgirls from Chibok in April 2014 (as well as 110 girls from Dapchi in Yobe State in February 2018). In 2017, former Governor Kashim Shettima of Borno State, said the Boko Haram insurgency had led to deaths "of almost 100,000 persons, going by the estimates of our community leaders over the years." Over 14 million Nigerians have also been directly affected by humanitarian crises in the North-east region of the country, two international humanitarian groups reported. The groups also said 13,000 churches were razed, 1,500 schools shut, and 611 teachers killed by the insurgents."

The newspaper observed further that: "The Borno Government in 2017 said about 1 million houses and public structures were destroyed by Boko Haram, in the 27 local government areas of the State. Many more have since been affected, over the years. It also said that, the insurgents have destroyed properties worth over N1.9 trillion in six years. At least 25,794 people were killed in various attacks, many by Boko Haram, during the first term of President Muhammadu Buhari between May 2015 and May 2019, a report analysed by Premium Times also indicated."

The perpetrators of these heinous crimes are the people we are treating with kids' gloves, hoping that they will embrace peace and abandon their daydream of converting the whole country into an Islamic Republic. The mere thought of this, is horrific and preposterous!

My Position on the Issue

I am against the deradicalisation and reintegration policy of the Federal Government, as well as the proposed establishment of a Commission for 'Repentant' Boko Haram, as articulated by Senator Ibrahim Geidam for the following reasons:

It shows that Government is weak and incapable of winning the war against the insurgents, without appeasement to the aggressors. This perceived weakness will encourage more people to take to crime, in the hope of claiming to have become repentant once they are caught. As can be seen, many criminal elements who engaged in banditry in the North West region States of Kaduna, Katsina and Zamfara, are now being appeased to lay down their arms and embrace amnesty. Despite this offer, these fiends that should have been ruthlessly dealt with for their economic crimes, are still having a field day, kidnapping innocent commuters and villagers, engaging in cattle rustling and armed



Boko Haram terrorists

robbery. There is no gainsaying that, Nigerian State is very weak, and incapable of protecting its innocent citizens.

When the Government of former President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua packaged an Amnesty Programme to pacify the Niger Delta militants in 2009, I knew it was a bad precedent which will come back to haunt the Government. It is the argument that the militants were granted amnesty, so the Boko Haram insurgents should also be pardoned, that is being canvassed by the supporters of Senator Geidam's Bill. Yet, it is incongruous to compare apples with oranges. The militants in Niger Delta were fighting for the emancipation of their despoiled land, and calling for economic justice. On the other hand, what rational idea are the insurgents propagating? Should Nigeria succumb to them by granting the insurgents their wish to have an Islamic Caliphate or turn Nigeria into an Islamic Republic, when the Constitution of the country states that Nigeria is a secular State? Research has shown that religious bigotry, fanaticism and fundamentalism is the most difficult to deradicalise, hence, since 2017 when the policy of deradicalisation was initiated, insurgency is yet to abate.

In summary, granting amnesty to insurgents and bandits, is akin to rewarding criminals for committing

heinous crimes against innocents. How does that look on the victims, if their aggressors are garlanded for committing crimes? Quite saddening, the Internally Displaced Persons, many of whom have lost their means of livelihood including loved ones, are being made to suffer untold hardships. Save for the establishment of the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management and Social Development which is less than a year old, nothing much has been done to ameliorate the deplorable condition of IDPs in Nigeria. Yet, these are the persons whose welfare and wellbeing should have been paramount, and not that of the aggressors who plunged them into their miseries.

Conclusion

To my own mind, setting up a Commission for repentant Boko Haram insurgents, is needless and wasteful. As earlier pointed out, there is already a deradicalisation programme of Federal Government, since 2017. If the Governors of Borno, Yobe and Adamawa intend to grant amnesty to those who have tormented their citizens, they can go ahead and do so within the powers granted them by the Nigerian Constitution, to grant pardon to criminals. Otherwise, the operational scope of North East Development Commission can be expanded to support ex-Boko

"IT SHOWS THAT GOVERNMENT IS WEAK AND INCAPABLE OF WINNING THE WAR AGAINST THE INSURGENTS, WITHOUT APPEASEMENT TO THE AGGRESSORS"

Haram members who have genuinely repented and are remorseful of their crimes. But, while they do this, they should consider whether this is in sync with natural justice, equity and fairness. They should think about how the families of our gallant soldiers who have died in the course of this 11-year war, and the millions who have been maimed and displaced will feel.

Jide Ojo, Executive Director of OJA Development Consult, Author and Newspaper Columnist

"GO, YOUR TERRORISM IS FORGIVEN" CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

HURIWA alleged that, some lawmakers were conniving with armed terrorists to introduce "satanic legislation."

The group said: "Let us from the Human Rights Writers Association of Nigeria (HURIWA) caution the section of the National legislators who are actively conniving with armed terrorists, to introduce a satanic legislation that will overlook the mindboggling crimes of genocide committed by terrorists, and the killings of over 30,000 innocent Nigerians in the last ten years, with the view to appease terrorists even when the victims of terrorism are scattered in different internally displaced people camps in Nigeria, and are external refugees in so many nearby countries.

"If this Bill to legalise the freeing of arrested terror suspects under any guise succeeds, then the nation should be prepared for the consequences of their unconstitutional action, because the hundreds of thousands of innocent victims of the terrorists attacks in the last decade will definitely not fold their hands, whilst those

who killed their loved ones are pardoned through roguish means, by the passage of this criminally minded Bill that is meant to legalise belonging to terror cells and participating in mass murders.

"This Bill before the Senate is not only satanic and unconstitutional, but will paint the picture of a rogue nation, because in all civilisations, those who declare war against innocent citizens and participate in genocide are rounded up and prosecuted, and made to face the full weight of the law. History is replete with a plethora of trials of persons, who joined terror gangs and carried out mass killings. The plot by the National Assembly to therefore, permit the wanton defecation of the Constitution of Nigeria by forgiving mass murderers, must never be allowed to succeed", HURIWA affirms.

"The Government must engage in a law based war, by enforcing anti-terrorism laws. Section 1A (4) of the TPA (as amended) empowers "the law enforcement agencies" to "enforce all laws and regulations on

counter-terrorism in Nigeria". Prior to the TPA, Section 46 of the EFCC Act 2004 defines "terrorism" to mean, a violation of the Criminal Code or the Penal Code and with likelihood of endangering life, integrity or freedom, or causing serious injury or death with the intent to force the person(s) or body or government to do or not to do certain things, or disrupt and

"HOWEVER, THE SOLDIERS SAID IT IS WASTED EFFORT FOR THEM TO HAVE FOUGHT AGAINST BOKO HARAM, ONLY FOR THE TERRORISTS TO BE RELEASED AFTER THEY HAVE BEEN CAPTURED"

includes financing or aiding terrorism. The punishment for the crime by Section 15 of the EFCC Act is, imprisonment for life."

That is the essence of substantial justice. The refusal of President Buhari to subject terrorists to the fuller rigours of substantial justice, is a violation of the Constitution, and indeed, a graphic depiction of Nigeria as a gangsters' land.

As Aristotle rightly stated: "law is order, and good law is good order." And Augustine of Hippo (314-430 CE) says: "If justice be taken away, what are governments, but great bands of robbers?"

Nigerians must therefore, mount pressure on this government not to pardon terrorists, but to prosecute and punish them for the crimes against humanity.

Anything contrary, is to make Nigeria a "paradise for terrorists."

Emmanuel Oruvubiko, former Federal Commissioner of the National Human Rights Commission, Nigeria (NHRC), head of Human Rights Writers Association of Nigeria (HURIWA)

The Legislative Competence of NASS to Enact the Boko Haram Bill

Richard Abdullahi

Introduction

The Bill for the creation of the National Agency for Education, Rehabilitation, De-radicalisation and Integration of Repentant Insurgents in Nigeria (Boko Haram Bill), recently passed first reading in the Senate. The Bill which seeks to establish a federal agency for the rehabilitation, de-radicalisation and integration of repentant Boko Haram terrorists, has generated backlash. While some have argued in favour of the Bill, others have condemned the Bill in the

most arduous terms. Most of the arguments against the Bill have ranged from the general resentment and outrage against Boko Haram, to strands of religious sentiments and of course, political motivations. This comment is not intended to follow the stream of such blanket backlash, but to cut through the clutter and firstly, look at the power of the National Assembly (NASS) to legislate on the issues contained in the Bill and to secondly, consider the efficacy of the strategy.

Legislative Competence of the National Assembly in respect of the Bill

There is no gainsaying the fact that Section 4(2)(4) and 11 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended) (The Constitution) confers on the NASS the powers to make laws for the securing of public safety, peace, order and good government of the Federation or any part thereof, with respect to any matter included in the Exclusive Legislative list, certain matters on the Concurrent list, and some other matters in respect of which it is empowered to make laws under the Constitution.

However, the legislative powers of the National Assembly are clearly circumscribed within the said matters included in the Exclusive Legislative list, and some of the matters on the Concurrent list, under the second schedule. It is arguable whether upon a proper reading of the matters contained in the lists, the National Assembly has the legislative competence to enact the Boko Haram Bill, having regard to the specific matters stipulated thereunder. In **OLAFISOYE v FRN (2004) 4 NWLR (PT. 864) 580, TOBI JSC** said:

"An act is ultra vires the National Assembly, if it is enacted outside the legislative powers of the National Assembly".

Although, it could be argued that by the combined effect of Section 4(2) of the Constitution and Item 60(a) under its second schedule, the National Assembly is conferred with the powers to create an agency for the enforcement of the of the fundamental objectives and directive principles contained in Chapter 2 of the Constitution, it is however, pertinent to note that, the establishment of the agency must be in accordance with the spirit and intendment of the fundamental objectives and directive principles of government. Where it is shown, as we shall undertake to demonstrate shortly, that the agency sought to be established will not align with the directive principles in Chapter 2 of the Constitution, then the competence conferred under the said Item 60(a) is negated.

In **OLAFISOYE's** case and the case of **A-G. ONDO STATE v A-G FEDERATION (2002) 9 NWLR (Pt. 772) Page 222**, the Apex Court considered the competence of NASS to legislate in respect of the matters in the said Item 60(a) under the second schedule to the Constitution, and held that, *an Act for the creation of a particular agency of government was within the legislative competence of the National Assembly, if that the agency was established to enforce the observance of one of the fundamental objectives of Government under Chapter 2*. Of course, the two decisions also dealt with the issue of the non-justiciability of Chapter 2 of the Constitution, and held that *"...although Section 15(5) of the Constitution is, in general, not justiciable, as soon as the National Assembly exercises its power under Section 4 of the Constitution with respect to Item 60(a) of the Exclusive Legislative List, the provisions... become justiciable"*.

The implication of the two Apex Court's decisions is that, the legislative competence of NASS under Item 60(a) of the Exclusive Legislative list, only subsists as long as the agency created or sought to be created is to promote and enforce the observance of the fundamental objectives and directive principles of Government under Chapter 2 of the Constitution.

The stated main purpose of the Boko Haram Bill, is to promote national security through the education, rehabilitation, de-radicalisation and integration of repentant Boko Haram terrorists.

While the intention may be candid, the question is whether from the provisions of the Bill, the nature of the agency sought to be created is not inimical to the principles and objectives encapsulated under Chapter 2 of the Constitution.

For instance:

i) The provision of the Bill which seeks to secure job placement, internship, capacity building for the militants strikes against Section 15(4) under Chapter 2 of the Constitution, as



Nigerian Army

it does not foster a feeling of belonging amongst the victims of the mayhem perpetrated by Boko Haram, who are not also beneficiaries of such Government largesse. That is a clear case of rewarding the violent, while leaving the victim to bleed unattended.

ii) The provision of the Bill which seeks to maintain payment of stipends and promote private sector compliance with the guidelines, rules and regulations on the reintegration of the ex-militants, strikes against Section 16 under Chapter 2 of the Constitution, which provides that government shall secure the maximum welfare, freedom and happiness of every citizen on the basis of social justice and equality of status and opportunity, as the provision seeks to preferentially entitle the militants to certain economic opportunities. That strikes the cords of brazen disequilibrium, in the already unstable scales of economic justice.

iii) Overall the bill is discriminatory and does not promote social justice, as it seeks to provide mouth-watering incentives for ex-militants, without a corresponding opportunity or intervention for their victims and indeed, citizens. Section 17(3)(a) of the Constitution provides that Government shall *"ensure that all citizens, without discrimination on any group whatsoever, have the opportunity for securing adequate means of livelihood..."*

iv) One of the potent arguments against the Bill is that its provision seems not to appreciate the psychological and ideological dimension of the Boko Haram malady. For instance, there are no sufficient provisions to guide against re-radicalisation and recidivism. The Bill has accordingly, been criticised as a subtle means of incentivising terrorism and all it portends. That strikes against the primal purpose of government, to ensure security of lives and property in Nigeria.

v) The provision of the Bill which seeks to engage the services of Foreign and Nigerian institutions in the pursuit of the educational needs of ex-militants, which means they will be educated free abroad, and the provision which allows the agency to receive subvention and States' counterpart funding to be deducted at source at 0.5% of States' statutory allocation, 1.0% of the Education Tax Fund and UBEC Fund runs roughshod against the provision of Section 18 of Chapter 2 of the Constitution, which provides that Government shall ensure equal and adequate educational opportunities for its citizens.

As earlier stated, the powers of NASS under Section 4 of the Constitution and Item 60(a) of the Exclusive Legislative list to legislate on the matters regarding the creation of any agency under the item, must be strictly aimed at promoting and enforcing the observance of the fundamental objectives

"THAT IS A CLEAR CASE OF REWARDING THE VIOLENT, WHILE LEAVING THE VICTIM TO BLEED UNATTENDED.... THE PROVISION SEEKS TO PREFERENTIALLY ENTITLE THE MILITANTS TO CERTAIN ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES. THAT STRIKES THE CORDS OF BRAZEN DISEQUILIBRIUM...."

and directive principles of Government under Chapter 2 of the Constitution. As shown above, the Boko Haram Bill runs roughshod against the spirit and intendment of the referenced Sections under Chapter 2, and erodes the legislative competence of NASS under Item 60(a).

Inefficacy of the Bill

The issue of the rehabilitation and de-radicalisation of ideological terrorists and the controversial backlash that trail such attempts, is not new. Countries have adopted a plethora of counter-terrorism strategies, in combating insurgency or terrorism. For instance, while the United States has employed a purely punitive method of arresting and prosecuting individuals linked to terrorism, Denmark on the other hand, adopted a non-punitive rehabilitation method. In 2014, Denmark began its own de-radicalisation programme for terrorist fighters returning from the conflict in and around Syria. The programme consists of preventing radicalisation, as well as rehabilitation efforts. Of course, the strategy attracted stinging criticisms, on the basis of the risks and inefficiency of such strategy.

The United Kingdom's strategy consists of a combination of punitive and rehabilitation strategies, of "Prevent" and "Channel". Both strategies have generated significant controversy, amongst the general and Muslim segments of the British population. Saudi Arabia, is another country that has adopted a mixture of punitive and rehabilitation strategies. Since 2003, the most prominent feature of Saudi Arabia's counterterrorism strategy, has been focused on de-radicalisation through a socio-religious re-orientation programme. The success of some of those programmes have been due to an in-depth appreciation of the problem, and the requisite intervention programme tailored to the peculiarity of the environment.

In the premises, while Nigeria's adoption of a de-radicalisation strategy is not wrong in itself, it is important to note that, all of the counter-terrorism strategies stated above, were predicated on Government's programmes and policy prescriptions. Another potent argument against the strategy represented by the Bill, is the push to make it a legislation. For instance, the Presidential Amnesty Programme for Niger Delta militants which the sponsors have cited as justification for the Bill, was an intervention programme with a timeline and terminal date, unlike the Boko Haram Bill which intends to create an agency that will exist in perpetuity.

The rehabilitation and reintegration of radicalised militants requires a well-articulated policy regime, with specific objective and strategy. First, it is important to first ascertain whether the final goal of the policy is disengagement (a behavioural disengagement from a group, cause or ideology that justifies violence) or de-radicalisation (a cognitive shift from the use of violence to force change). This clarity of the goal will inform the strategy to be adopted under the policy, and the ultimate positive outcome.

Second, the policy and strategy eventually adopted ought to thoroughly consider a combination of both short-term and long-term national security priorities, together with such rehabilitation and de-radicalisation goals.

What the Bill lacks, is an in-depth articulation or appreciation of the complexities associated with ideological radicalisation and de-radicalisation. It is taken for granted, under the Bill, that the mere declaration by the militants of their willingness to drop arms and embrace the incentives, is sufficient. The blanket provisions that seek to provide such sumptuous incentives for supposedly repentant militants, betrays the bill's lack of appreciation of the variegated complexities of the problem, and may become counter-productive.

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INSIGHT

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Are Covid-19 and Civil Liberties Mutually-Exclusive?

Introduction

The unprecedented on-going global pandemic known variously as Coronavirus or Covid-19, has tasked the capacities of health and governance systems and structures across the world. Compared to reports from other regions (Europe, the U.S. and Asia), Nigeria appears to have been spared the worst of the scourge in terms of casualties – so far. This might not remain so for long (here is hoping – praying – it does), hence the commendable initiatives by Government at all levels, to stem the tide.

But, here, ironically, lies the problem. This is because, in my view, the form which those initiatives have taken – typically involving restrictions on the size of assemblies or congregations in different fora – unwittingly impinge on certain fundamental rights or civil liberties of citizens, without observing or complying with the requisite conditions which validate or justify them. Accordingly, at the risk of playing the Devil's Advocate, I venture to draw the attention of policy-makers to what I consider to be the appropriate legal framework under which such civil liberties can be derogated from. But, first, which liberties, precisely are we talking about?

The Right to Peaceful Assembly and Worship

This civil liberty appears to be under the greatest assault, from the reactions of public administrators to the virus. In virtually every State in the country, authorities have restricted gatherings of people to between 20 and 50 persons, in the following scenarios:

i. Places of Worship

The ban has predictably had the greatest effect, on Mosques and Churches. Public reaction to this has been mixed, with reports that those that breached the restriction failed to observe any form of social distancing – a new, currently trending, epithet, that emphasises the avoidance of close physical contact as a means of guarding against being infected by the virus.

Mosques, in particular, continued to observe congregational prayers as scheduled, including at the National Mosque, Abuja. This quickly changed, however, when news trickled in about the first death from the virus (in Abuja) - coupled with the infection of the son of former Vice-President, Atiku Abubakar, also in the FCT - with the Nigeria Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs, hastily directing the closure of all Mosques in the capital.

ii. The Courts

Another, predictable, area where the restrictions have been imposed is the court system. At the last count, the Chief Judges of the High Courts of Lagos, Ekiti, Anambra and Imo States have issued circulars or directives limiting the number and nature of persons and causes, respectively, which will be entertained in their jurisdictions. The common number is 20, including Counsel, parties and witnesses, whilst only the most urgent criminal cases and



ex parte applications in civil cases, will be considered.

However, following calls by the Nigerian Bar Association for a total shut-down of court system across the country, the Chief Justice of Nigeria, Hon. Justice Dr Ibrahim Tanko Muhammad, directed all State and Federal courts to suspend sitting for two weeks "in the first instance", commencing from 23rd March, 2020, "except in urgent or time-bound matters".

iii. Elsewhere

In Rivers State, Governor Nyesom Wike (a Lawyer) announced a ban on public weddings and funerals (ordinarily a function of local governments under the 4th Schedule of the Constitution). He also ordered the closure of all parks, nightclubs and cinemas in the State. This was followed by similar bans in other States, notably in the South-South and South-East. In Kano, the Governor suspended the operations of event centres. In Kaduna, the State Governor announced the suspension of the train service between Abuja and Kaduna, adding that, only traders selling food and medicines would be allowed to open their shops in the State.

The Federal Government is reportedly contemplating using the Police and the Military, to trace people who are believed to have had contact with those infected with the virus. Worryingly, no one is 'immune', as the Chief of Staff to the President, Abba Kyari, and the Governor of Bauchi State, Sen. Bala Mohammed have also contracted the virus. Lagos has imposed a lock-down in all but name, with calls for it to be extended nation-wide. This followed the apparent success of the adoption of such measures in China, India and Italy.

".....THE CONDITIONS ENVISAGED BY THE CONSTITUTION FOR A PRESIDENTIAL DECLARATION OF A NATION-WIDE STATE OF EMERGENCY, PRESENTLY EXIST.....ONCE THAT IS DONE EVERY MEASURE NECESSARY FOR CONTAINING THE PANDEMIC, CAN THEN BE SAFELY DEPLOYED - AND CONSTITUTIONALLY JUSTIFIED"

The Law

The right to peaceful assembly and worship are guaranteed in the 1999 Constitution. It provides in Sections 38 and 40, respectively, inter alia, thus:

- "(1) Every person shall be entitled to freedom of religion, including the freedom . . . (either alone or in community with others, and in public or in private) to manifest and propagate his religion or belief in worship, teaching, practice and observance";

- "Every person shall be entitled to assemble freely and associate with other persons".

These liberties are, however, not absolute, as they can be derogated from in the interest of, inter alia, public health "by any law that is reasonably justifiable in a democratic society": Section 45 of the Constitution. It is this provision, more than any other, in my view, that justifies the aforesaid restrictions.

Unfortunately, Governments at all levels seem to be oblivious of the aforesaid conditions under which such derogation may be valid, as no such law was relied upon in any of the notices by which the restrictions were imposed. In this regard, both the Constitution and the Interpretation Act define "law", as "a law enacted by the House of Assembly of a State" (and includes any instrument having the force of law which is made under a law)". Additionally, the latter defines "Act" as, inter alia, "an act of the National Assembly whether passed before or after the commencement of this Act". See Sections 18(1) and 37(1) of the Interpretation Act and Section 318(1) of the Constitution. From the foregoing, I believe that the aforesaid restrictions on the right of assembly in courts, places of worship, etc., are unconstitutional

and invalid.

This, however, is not the end of the matter, as Section 305 of the Constitution empowers the President (and State Governors) to declare a State of Emergency in specified circumstances, such as, inter alia, when: there is a breakdown (or danger of a breakdown) of public order and public safety in the country or any part thereof requiring extra-ordinary measures to restore peace and safety; or there is an occurrence or imminent danger or occurrence of any disaster or natural calamity which affects a community or a section of a community; any other public danger which poses a threat to the existence of the country.

Conclusion

Given the sheer size, scale and proportion of the Covid-19 pandemic, it is not rocket science to posit that it eminently qualifies as a threat to public safety and public order which requires extra-ordinary measures such as the aforementioned restrictions, in order to restore peace and safety. Indeed, it would not be an exaggeration to characterise it as a calamity and a disaster – at least one waiting to happen, if it's not properly handled. In other words, the conditions envisaged by the Constitution for a Presidential Declaration of a nation-wide State of Emergency, presently exist. All it takes, is the requisite will. Once that is done (that is, the Declaration), every measure necessary for containing the pandemic, can then be safely deployed – and constitutionally justified.

As back-up, the President can leverage on the provisions of Section 10(2) of the Interpretation Act, which provides that "an enactment which confers power to do an act shall be construed as also conferring all such other powers as are reasonably necessary to enable that act to be done or are incidental to the doing of it". I believe this would be far better than the present disparate, haphazard and ad hoc palliatives which can legitimately be challenged, for lacking the requisite constitutional/legal backing. In saying this, one should not be understood as saying that the measures are far-fetched or undesirable – far from it; they are necessary, and indeed, indispensable. This is because, it is axiomatic that the safety and welfare of citizens is the primary purpose of Government. Adopting them to tackle the virus should, however, not be at the expense of constitutionally-guaranteed fundamental rights.

In this regard, one can do no better than to recall the memorable words of Lord Atkin in **LIVERSIDGE v ANDERSON (1942) A.C. 206 at 244** where he opined that: "in this country, amid the clash of arms, the laws are not silent. They may be changed, but they speak the same language in war as in peace. It has always been one of the pillars of freedom, one of the principles of liberty . . . that the Judges are no respecter of persons and stand between the subject and any attempted encroachments on his liberty by the executive, alert to see that any coercive action is justified in law". To do otherwise would be to succumb to the Machiavellian mantra that, the end justifies the means – which would undermine the very basis of our constitutional democracy, namely, the rule of law.

FROM THE BACK OFFICE

JOY HARRISON-ABIOLA ibejiya@gmail.com



A Business Continuity Plan "BCP"

Global Impact

30th January 2020, the World Health Organisation declared the COVID-19 novel coronavirus, a "Public Health Emergency of International Concern". What began as a local health scare in a food market in Central China has snowballed into a global economic melt-down, causing concern for both small and big businesses. Presently, with over 137,000 confirmed cases in countries all over the world, the virus is a global pandemic, meaning that, it will have a sustained global impact.

One of the hardest hit industries, is the transportation industry. Some of the impact reported include African airlines loss of \$4.4 billion in revenue as at 11 March, 2020, as ticket refunds increased by 75% in 2020, compared to the same period in 2019. It is reported that Africa's air transport industry's economic contribution is estimated at \$55.8 billion, supporting 6.2 million jobs and contributing 2.6% to the continent's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). However, due to flight bans, as well as international and regional travel restrictions, airlines' revenues are plunging despite wide-ranging cost cutting measures being implemented by the airlines to alleviate the fiscal impact of Covid-19. Here in Nigeria, the International Air Transport Association (IATA) shared some statistics with the public - that the disruptions from Covid-19 will put over 22,200 jobs on the line, could result in 853,000 loss in passenger volumes, and \$170 million loss in incomes. IATA shared further that, if the situation lingers, the sector is at risk of losing 2.2 million overseas-bound passengers, and \$434 million revenue.

Global Economic Plans

In response to this crisis caused by the coronavirus, governments and central banks all over the world, have enacted fiscal and monetary incentives. E.g. Nigeria's CBN declared a credit relief of \$136.6 million, to businesses affected by the coronavirus pandemic. Governor Godwin Emefiele said households, SMEs, airline service providers, hotels, health care merchants, including crude oil supplies, stock, sporting events, financial markets, entertainment and hospitality industries will benefit from the funds. Other interventions announced by the bank include, reduction of interest rates for the loan from 9% to 5% retroactively to March 1. We will need clarity on the protocol for accessing the credit facility, payment tenor, etc.

Similarly, on March 11 the United Kingdom rolled out several economic stimuli in response to Covid-19 which include - lowering interest rates by 0.5%; lowering capital requirements for U.K. banks, allowing them to use a reserve they call a "counter-cyclical capital buffer", which is money kept in reserve to increase banks' resistance to global financial shocks. Allowing nearly \$390 billion, in new loans. In addition, the Finance Minister, Rishi Sunak, announced a budget with nearly \$37 billion in fiscal stimulus, a \$23 billion in business tax cut for retailers; Cash grants to small businesses; a mandate to provide sick pay for people who need to self-isolate, and a subsidy to cover the costs of sick pay for small businesses; Expanded access to government benefits for the self-employed and unemployed, a three-month freeze on mortgage repayment for those unable to



service their mortgage, etc.

The United States announced even more substantial measures, to provide monetary stimuli: On March 3, the Government slashed rates by 0.5%, reported to be the largest cut since the 2008 financial crisis. On March 12, the Government expanded reverse repo operations - adding \$1.5 trillion of liquidity to the banking system, extending the amount of short term loans to banks to keep money markets (markets for very short term loans) stable and allow banks to have more cash on hand. On March 17, the Treasury Secretary, Steven Mnuchin, announced that he was approving the Federal Reserve's creation of a "Commercial Paper Funding Facility" (CPFF), which allows the Government to create a corporation which can purchase commercial paper, short-term, unsecured loans made by businesses for everyday expenses. He also authorised up to \$10 billion from the Treasury to help cover loan losses incurred under the program, which will end on March 17, 2021, unless it is extended. He also announced that individuals and businesses will have an extra 90 days past April 15, to pay their tax bills. He estimates this will free up \$300 billion in extra liquidity, over this period. Individuals can now delay taxes up to \$1 million, and corporations up to \$10 million. Also, they re-launched another Great Recession-era tool, the Primary Dealer Credit Facility (PDCF). Starting March 20, the PDCF will offer short-term loans to banks secured by less stringent collateral. The program will run at least six months, and longer if needed. President Trump had earlier signed an \$8.3 billion spending bill, called "Phase One", to fund efforts to fight the pandemic - fund research on a vaccine, give money to State and local governments to fight the spread of the virus, allocate money to help with efforts to stop the virus's spread overseas, free virus testing, expanded unemployment benefits, The list is extensive.

Against the milieu of these government responses, what is your personal response to the crisis? What is the response of your

law firm to the crisis? I am reminded of a quote credited to Muhammad Ali Jinnah, a Lawyer and Pakistan's first Governor-General; "Expect the best, prepare for the worst." This quote was further refined by Zig Ziglar, an American Author and Motivational Speaker, "Expect the best, prepare for the worst, capitalise on what comes." And Denis Waitley, an American Writer and Consultant, famous for his series, The Psychology of Winning, added his twist to the quote, "Expect the best, plan for the worst, and prepare to be surprised." How do businesses capitalise on outcomes, since with crisis, you cannot prepare for or cover all possible scenarios or outcomes?

Is your Business a Going Concern?

A going concern is a business that functions without the threat of liquidation for the foreseeable future, which is usually at the minimum, the next 12 months i.e. the firm is able to meet its financial obligations as and when they fall due - pay its liabilities, and realise its assets. The going concern assumption is a basic underlying assumption of accounting which helps identify any negative trend in a firm's operations. Negative trends include such things as lower operating income, loan denials, loan defaults, repossession of assets, etc.

If your business is a going concern, it means that during a crisis, you will not be forced to halt operations or liquidate your assets. Even if the business, in using its assets in the most effective manner possible, defers certain expenses until a later period, because it will presumably still be in business. A going concern is potentially expected to continue to earn profits. In scoring your business as a going concern, the following are a few red flags to look out for - Negative trends in operating results, such as a series of losses; Serial loan defaults by the firm; Denial of trade credit to the firm by its suppliers; Uneconomical long-term commitments the firm is subjected to; Legal proceedings against the firm. A going concern must be able to use its existing

assets to continue operating long enough to carry out its commitments, current plans, obligations, objectives, beyond a 12 month period. The firm will stay in business, and the value of its assets will endure.

If there is substantial doubt about the ability of your business to continue as a going concern for a reasonable period of time, i.e. if your existence is threatened adversely, you may consider any of the following plans - Plans to dispose of assets - curtail in any material way the scale of your operations. Plans to borrow money, or restructure debt; Plans to reduce or delay expenditures; Plans to increase ownership equity, etc.

A "BCP"

A Business Continuity Plan, is primarily focused on implementing strategies that protect the various elements of a business, so that it continues its operations uninterrupted, in the midst of a crisis situation like Covid-19, natural disasters, economic or human disruptions etc. Crisis tests the stability of a business entity. How do we make our business, crisis proof? How best can we plan for the worst? After all, we are all humans - omni-science is not one of our characteristics.

We activate a business continuity plan, to ensure that business key assets are not impaired, but rather, that they continue to operate optimally during a crisis. What are these business ASSETS. Your key asset is firstly your people - knowledge base (especially for service firms), financial assets - cash, cash equivalents, Accounts Receivables, WIP, PPE - property, plant, equipment - your IT is major, inventory, prepaid expenses, every item listed in your balance sheet.

The Success of a BCP is PEOPLE. People first - the safety and wellbeing of your people. Let your people know and feel that their safety and well-being, are paramount. For instance, acknowledge the uncertainty COVID-19 is causing and constantly communicate what is being done in the best interest of your people and clients. A successful BCP requires that COMMUNICATION about the situation is clear, constant and concise. It also requires that you keep abreast with the FACTS of the crisis as it unfolds. It requires that your firm continues to monitor, evaluate and respond to developments in order to safely manage through the crisis. For instance a covid-19 BCP strategy will include:

- Restricting visitors to your offices and enforcing the use of virtual meetings
- Reduce work-related exposure and health risk, by implementing a combination of in-office hygiene protocol and protocols to increase "social distancing"
- That you install technologies that allow you to provide the full suite of your services to your clients remotely, and enables staff work remotely. There are a number of project management or team collaboration, file sharing and document management resources - Microsoft teams, Sharepoint online, Bitrix24, Glasscubes, Huddle, Samepage, Workzone, Box for Business, Confluence, Igloo, etc.
- Institute proactive measures to protect your physical office space and ensure everyone follow the guidelines issued to protect these ASSETS of the business - document saving, inventory, etc.
- Staying close to your clients is essential in a crisis situation, assuring them of your firm's continued support capabilities for any of their business needs.

Stay safe. Stay in business.

"A BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLAN, IS PRIMARILY FOCUSED ON IMPLEMENTING STRATEGIES THAT PROTECT THE VARIOUS ELEMENTS OF A BUSINESS, SO THAT IT CONTINUES ITS OPERATIONS UNINTERRUPTED, IN THE MIDST OF A CRISIS SITUATION LIKE COVID-19..."



We Hold Your Brief

JUDE IGBANOI

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Dear Counsel,
Your advice, is urgently needed.

My son and his fiancée, planned their wedding for the end of this month. They were supposed to arrive Benin City from Milan, Italy, in two weeks. All arrangements have been made by both families for this wedding, but, I got a call from my son that his bestman who is based here in Nigeria, advised him to think seriously about the date of the wedding, and whether or not to even have the wedding in Italy.

According to him, his friend told him that he has information that anybody coming into Nigeria from Italy and other European countries would be forcefully detained and quarantined for two weeks, because of the fear of the spread of Covid 19.

Kindly, explain this. Is it legal to forcefully detain someone coming into the country, for this type of reason? What should we do?

B.I.,
Benin City,
Edo State.

Dear B.I.,

The issue of quarantine of persons arriving Nigeria from other countries, only became necessary a few weeks ago, with global onslaught of corona virus. These measures, are in the best interest of the public health of the generality of Nigerians.

The legal authority of the Federal Government of Nigeria to take extraordinary measures during public health crises, is based on the emergency powers of the President and the legislature under the 1999 Constitution, and the authority accorded to the executive body, specifically the health authorities, under the 1926 Quarantine Act.

The Quarantine Act gives the President and the country's health authorities broad powers, to deal with public health crises. The President is authorised, among other things, to declare any infectious disease a dangerous infectious disease, declare any area in or outside of Nigeria an infected area, and issue regulations to prevent

the spread of any dangerous infectious disease. It appears that, the power to issue regulations has been exercised only once, with the issuing of the Quarantine (Ships) Regulations, which authorises or requires Port Health Officers to take a host of measures to prevent the importation into, and spread of infectious diseases within Nigeria.

The constitutional provisions provide the authority for the imposition of statutory limitations on rights otherwise protected under the Constitution, during public health crises. This justifies the restrictions imposed on any of the above-stipulated, constitutionally guaranteed rights by the current statutory regime, the Quarantine Act, or any other similar law that may be enacted in the future.

State Governors are accorded the same powers as the President, to categorise diseases as dangerous infectious diseases, declare a particular location an infected local area, or issue regulations for any of the above-stipulated purposes, in the absence of Presidential action on a particular matter.

Note however, that, although the Government retains the powers to detain and quarantine persons arriving the country from countries suspected to be exposed or endemic with communicable diseases, especially the Coronavirus, Government would not arbitrarily quarantine without first carrying out necessary medical tests on such persons.

So, if your son arrives Nigeria for the wedding, he would likely be screened for Coronavirus, and if the tests produce negative results, there wouldn't be any need to detain or quarantine him and his fiancée for any reason, but they may still be advised to go into self-isolation for 14 days just to be completely certain.

In any case, events have overtaken your son's enquiries, and as it stands, the wedding must be postponed until further notice, if it is to take place in Nigeria. In addition to Government's previous directive that gatherings must be restricted to a maximum number of 50 people, our borders have now been closed, and flights have been suspended to and from Nigeria until late April.

LEGAL HUMOUR

Attorney: This myasthenia gravis, does it affect your memory at all?

Witness: Yes.

Attorney: And in what ways does it affect your memory? Witness: I forget..

Attorney: You forget? Can you give us an example of something you forgot?

...

Attorney: Now doctor, isn't it true that when a person dies in his sleep, he doesn't know about it until the next morning? Witness: Did you actually pass the bar exam?

...

Attorney: The youngest son, the 20-year-old, how old is he? Witness: He's 20, much like your IQ.

...

Attorney: Were you present when your picture was taken? Witness: Are you kidding me?

...

Attorney: She had three children, right? Witness: Yes.

Attorney: How many were boys? Witness: None.

Attorney: Were there any girls?

Witness: Your Honour, I think I need a different Attorney. Can I get a new Attorney?

...

Attorney: How was your first marriage terminated? Witness: By death..

Attorney: And by whose death was it terminated? Witness: Take a guess.

...

Attorney: Can you describe the individual?

Witness: He was about medium height and had a beard Attorney: Was this a male or a female?

Witness: Unless the Circus was in town I'm going with male

...

Attorney: Is your appearance here this morning pursuant to a deposition notice which I sent to your Attorney?

Witness: No, this is how I dress when I go to work.

...

Attorney: Doctor, how many of your autopsies have you performed on dead people?

Witness: All of them. The live ones put up too much of a fight.

...

Attorney: ALL your responses MUST be oral, ok? What school did you go to?

Witness: Oral..

...

Attorney: Do you recall the time that you examined the body? Witness: The autopsy started around 8.30pm

Attorney: And Mr. Denton was dead at the time?

Witness: If not, he was by the time I finished.

(Culled from Social Media)

APPEAL COURT AFFIRMS OBA OF IGBOOYE'S DETHRONEMENT CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

based on the provisions of Section 37 of the Obas and Chiefs laws.

Dissatisfied, the deposed king had approached the Court of Appeal, and sought the order of the court to set aside the judgement of the lower court delivered April 19, 2016 by Justice Iyabo Kasali.

Delivering judgement in the suit last week, the three man panel of the appellate court, Justice Mohammad Lawal, presiding, Justice Ugochukwu Ogakwu and Justice Jamilu Tukur, in a unanimous decision, dismissed the appeal filed by the deposed monarch

In the judgement read by Justice Tukur, the Justices of

the Court of Appeal held that, the application filed by the former king of Igbooyeland was lacking in merit.

The Appellate Court upheld the two issues raised for determination of the court by the first to sixth Respondents and seventh Respondents, in their Respondents briefs settled by T.A. Dairo and Yusuf Ali, SAN, respectively.

According to the court, the first to sixth Respondents, have locus standi to institute the suit filed at the Lagos High Court.

The Justices of the appellate court also agreed and granted the relief sought by the Respondents, that

the Appellant/Claimant, Micheal Onakoya, is not a member of the Ewade Ruling House of Igbooyeland, and is not entitled to be appointed as an Oba (king) on the platform of the ruling house.

The appellate court refused to award any cost, as it ordered parties to bear their respective cost.

While Onakoya is the Appellant, the Respondents include Alhaji M.A. Quadri, Mrs. Oladipe Otunowo, Chief Gbenro Otunowo, Otunba Abdulwasiu Musa-Adebamowo (Head of the Ewade Ruling House), Lagos State Government and Attorney-General of Lagos State.

LAWYER SEEKS LAGOS AG, IGP'S INTERVENTION, OVER ALLEGED MANIPULATION OF COURT'S PROCEEDINGS CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

Igweokolo also claimed that, in the bid to frame him up for crime he did not commit, with legal backing, on December 31, 2009, the police purportedly obtained a warrant of arrest against him from Sabo, Yaba Magistrates' Court. He noted that, in the Warrant of Arrest, it was held that Ekwerekwu had on December 30, 2009, made complaint on oath that on October 15, 2009, he (Igweokolo) committed the crime and refused to honour police invitation on the matter which prompted the police to seek for the warrant of arrest from the court.

The Lawyer averred that, he was later arrested on

January 15, 2010, detained in State Criminal Investigation Department, Panti till January 18, 2010 before being arraigned at Ebute Metta Magistrates' Court 7, on a four count charge of obtaining, N3 million under false pretences from Ekwerekwu.

He asked why he was not arraigned at Sabo, Yaba Magistrates' Court where the warrant of arrest was obtained against him, but, at Ebute Metta Magistrates' Court.

He alleged that to date, the police have failed to furnish him with the complaint made on oath by Ekwerekwu.

Besides, Igweokolo alleged that in a bid to frustrate and jail him at all cost, the case file has been moving from one Magistrate to the other, since 2010 to date. The matter is currently before a Chief Magistrate in Ebute Metta, and the continuation of trial has been fixed for April 28.

However, in a swift reaction, Ekwerekwu said he won't comment on a matter that is in the court, and that the complaints should wait for the Court's judgement, as the

Judiciary is the last hope of the common man.

WORDS OF WISDOM

Experience hath shewn, that even under the best forms of government those entrusted with power have, in time, and by slow operations, perverted it into tyranny.

(Thomas Jefferson)



(Culled from the Internet)

PRESIDENT SIGNS COVID-19 REGULATIONS

Nigeria, of dangerous infectious diseases."

Shutdown outside Lagos, Ogun, FCT Inconsistent with Presidential Directive, Says SGF

Meanwhile, the SGF, also a lawyer and heads the Presidential Task Force on COVID-19 hinted at the illegality of the sporadic shutdown of states by governors, saying they were inconsistent with Buhari's directive that limits the lockdown to Lagos, Ogun and the FCT.

He spoke during the task force's briefing yesterday and said the president's order was definitive and categorical.

According to him, "As a nation, our response must be guided, systematic and professional. There is a need for consistency across the nation.

"All inconsistencies in policy guidelines between federal and state agencies will be eliminated. I referred you to paragraph 29 of the president's broadcast. We are mindful of the fact that there are those inconsistencies in policies. Such states began to implement their lockdown

before the president's broadcast.

"The president's broadcast was very definitive and categorical; we are only locking down Lagos, Ogun and the federal capital. Those are the only three designated areas for the lockdown now."

The SGF said he would contact security personnel in states where borders had been shut in order to enlighten them on the directive of the president.

The rash of border closures by state governors that preceded the presidential broadcast had left many travellers stranded on the highways.

But succour came for them yesterday when Mustapha promised to come to their aid.

He said: "I will make some calls to some security agencies in those borders. I expected that after Mr. President's broadcast what should ordinarily happen is that, if you had stopped people from getting to their destinations, that broadcast should have enabled you release those people to get to their destinations.

"You can put proactive measures like a toll gate to ensure that you test them

and allow them get to their destinations. That was what we did at the airport before we finally locked down the airport."

Panic in Lagos, Ogun, FCT as Lockdown Starts

Residents of Lagos and Ogun States as well as the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) yesterday embarked on panic-buying of food items and provisions in preparations for the lockdown imposed by President Muhammadu Buhari to curb the spread of COVID-19, which began last night.

In Abuja, hordes of shoppers were seen in many of the markets in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) stocking up on foodstuffs and other essentials during the lockdown that will last 14 days.

Long queues were also observed at many petrol stations as vehicle owners scrambled to stock enough petrol.

The queues, which in many cases spilled into the main roads, were observed in some parts of Asokoro, Nyanya, Wuse 2, Jabi and Central Business District.

Bank customers were also, part of the frenzy as they

besieged Auto Teller Machines (ATM) points to withdraw money.

The Yakubu Gowon Crescent, Asokoro, where many of the banks have branches, witnessed a massive turnout of bank customers, who wanted to make cash withdrawals.

THISDAY gathered that many of the machines soon ran out of cash because of the massive withdrawals.

Beside the people making frantic withdrawals at banks, there was also panic buying as many residents rushed to markets and malls to stock food items, fruits and commodities.

There was a large human and vehicular movement at Banex Plaza in Wuse 2 and some of the adjoining upscale shopping malls.

Shoppers scrambled to buy many items they could lay their hands on.

THISDAY also noted that many FCT residents were also relocating to other states like Kogi, Niger, Nasarawa and Benue that are not affected by the lockdown.

Their reason for the relocation was to avoid the impact the lockdown will have on them if they stayed back in the FCT.

There was a large and unusual vehicular movement

along the Abuja-Keffi Road as some FCT residents were seen travelling to the neighbouring states.

The large vehicular movement resulted in a traffic snarl along the Abuja-Keffi Road. The traffic snarl that began from the Mopol Check Point in Nyanya got as far as Kugbo Hills. Many motorists were also stranded in the logjam.

One FCT resident, Mr. Oche John, said he was temporarily relocating to his family house in Benue State as he could not bear the effect the lockdown would have on his family for the next 14 days.

Oche said he could not imagine how he would survive in Abuja while the curfew lasts.

In Ogun State, the residents of Abeokuta, the state's capital, also resorted to panic buying in preparations for the lockdown.

A trader at the Olomare Market in Abeokuta, Alhaja Adijat Adigun, said she learnt that her business was included in the banned lists of food items that would not be allowed into the state, hence she has hiked the price.

THISDAY also gathered that commercial vehicles, especially the inter-state operators, have

mounted pressure on their leaders in the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW) to meet with Ogun State Governor, Prince Dapo Abiodun, with a view to relaxing the restrictions on them.

Ahead of the lockdown, the Ogun State Police Command in alliance with operatives of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) have begun full implementation of the closure of Nigeria's borders with the Republic of Benin and neighbouring states of Lagos, Oyo, Osun, and Ondo.

THISDAY sighted the security operatives at the Lagos-Ogun boundaries at Sango and the Sagamu interchange.

It was also observed that the security operatives mounted roadblock at the Ijebu-Ode entry point from the Benin-Ore-Sagamu expressway.

In Agege and several other parts of Lagos, the partial lockdown by the state government has effectively reduced business activities, except for those dealing in foodstuffs.

The same situation also applied in Ikeja where the heavy presence of security operatives ensured that traders did not open their shops.

NCDC TRACES 6,000 CONTACTS AS COVID-19 CASES RISE TO 131

not rolling out the military or the police to ensure that people stay at home. We are really appealing to Nigerians to do this for themselves and their country," he added.

Makinde Tests Positive to COVID-19

The Oyo State Governor, Mr. Seyi Makinde, yesterday confirmed that he had tested positive to the virus.

He became the third governor to test positive after Bauchi State Governor, Senator Bala Mohammed and Governor Nasir el-Rufai of Kaduna State.

Makinde, who tweeted via his personal handle, @seyiamakinde, said although he tested positive to COVID-19, he showed no symptoms and would remain in isolation.

He added that he had appointed a former Chief Medical Director (CMD) of the University College Hospital (UCH), Ibadan, Prof. Temitope Alonge, as the Head of COVID-19 Taskforce while he recovers.

Nigeria Records Second COVID-19 Death

The Minister of Health, Dr. Osagie Ehanire, yesterday said Nigeria had recorded its second COVID-19 death.

Ehanire, in a statement, said the fatality was recorded during the weekend.

The minister said the majority of those who had tested positive for COVID-19 came from overseas while the others were their close contacts.

"Till date, three persons have been discharged after successful treatment. But sadly, another fatality was recorded over the weekend in the person of a patient who had severe underlying illnesses.

"We have intensified contact tracing and our strategy remains to promptly detect cases, isolate them and follow up with their contacts and also isolate and treat, in order to reduce the spread of the infection," he said.

Lagos Discharges Five Patients

The Lagos State Government has discharged five patients who were admitted to and treated at the Infectious Disease Centre, Yaba Mainland Hospital.

The government, in a

statement, identified the survivors as four males and one female, bringing the total number of survivors from the centre to eight.

The survivors were quarantined and treated at the isolation centre for two weeks after testing positive for the virus.

It said the survivors who preferred to remain anonymous looked stable and unruffled, adding that they felt happy they had been given a clean bill of health.

They expressed joy and satisfaction with the state government and Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu over the treatments they received and his proactive approach towards the containment of the virus.

It was learnt that Sanwo-Olu has received the news of the full recovery of the five patients with excitement.

The governor, in a short message reassured Lagosians that his administration was doing all it could to curtail the spread of the virus so that life could return to normal.

He said: "We are very excited to hear that five of our citizens in the isolation centre have regained full recovery. It is another pointer to us that with a concerted effort, we can defeat the coronavirus in Lagos and Nigeria."

US Approves Emergency Use of Chloroquine, Hydroxychloroquine

Meanwhile, the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has approved the emergency use of Chloroquine and Hydroxychloroquine to treat patients hospitalised for COVID-19.

CNN reported that the authorisation came in a letter dated March 28.

The report noted that the US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) acknowledged the FDA's action in its March 29 news release.

US President Donald Trump has described the drugs – which are used to treat malaria and other conditions – as game-changers.

But the FDA limited the scope of its authorisation to drugs supplied from the Strategic National Stockpile.

The HHS announced that two pharmaceutical companies, Bayer and a division of Novartis,

had donated the drugs to the stockpile.

"Anecdotal reports suggest that these drugs may offer some benefit in the treatment of hospitalised COVID-19 patients.

"The safety profile of these drugs has only been studied for FDA approved indications, not COVID-19," the statement said.

While there's limited evidence on the efficacy of Chloroquine or Hydroxychloroquine, the FDA said the drugs' benefits outweighed their risk.

In its letter, the FDA encouraged randomised clinical trials that could assess the effectiveness of the drugs, noting that the known and potential benefits outweigh the risks.

According to HSS, the authorisation is limited to patients who are currently hospitalised and weigh at least 50kg or about 110 pounds.

"Under the emergency use authorisation, healthcare providers must contact their local or state health department to access the drugs," it added.

Adenuga Donates N1.5bn to fight COVID-19

Chairman of Globacom, Dr. Mike Adenuga, has donated N1.5 billion to combat the pandemic.

The amount, which is the highest individual donation so far in the country, is broken into two: an initial N1 billion to the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) for the Nigerian Private Sector Coalition Against COVID-19 and N500 million to the Lagos State Government.

The donations were made in the name of Mike Adenuga Foundation.

Announcing the N500 million donation in a letter to Sanwo-Olu, Adenuga said: "We shall in addition to this contribution actively continue our ongoing efforts to assist various bodies and institutions in the country with the supply of such essential items as sanitisers, masks, test kits, ventilators, PPEs and other necessary requirements."

The Cable reported that the letter was delivered to the governor by Adenuga's daughter and Executive Vice Chairman of Globacom, Mrs. Bella Disu.

In his letter to the governor of CBN, Mr. Godwin Emefiele, Adenuga wrote: "Given its broad scope and focused thrust, we are convinced that effective

execution of the well-articulated objectives of the coalition are certain to yield the type of very positive results that will stand the country in good stead in the ongoing battle to checkmate the malignant COVID-19 virus."

Buhari Applauds Tinubu, Adenuga, Others for Contributions

The donation by Adenuga, Tinubu and others elicited applause from the president. Buhari yesterday in Abuja hailed them and oil magnate, Mrs. Folorunso Alakija, for their generous contributions to the war against COVID-19.

He also commended Modupeola, the husband of Mrs. Alakija; notable businessman, Sir Emeka Offor, and the Senior Pastor of Dunamis International Gospel Centre, Dr. Paul Eneche, and his wife, Becky.

A statement by the media adviser to the president, Mr. Femi Adesina, said the president also acknowledged the kind gesture of the captains of industries, corporate organisations, missionaries, musical artistes and individuals who have consistently supported ongoing efforts to mitigate COVID-19 pandemic that is plaguing the global economy.

According to the statement, the president thanked a group of oil companies that partnered the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) to raise \$30 million to fight the pandemic.

Buhari appreciated the contributions of Tinubu, Adenuga, Modupeola and Folorunsho Alakija and Offor, whom he said joined a list of other public-spirited Nigerians in contributing health and educational facilities for the fight.

He also welcomed the generosity of Zenith Bank Plc to the public healthcare system as well as the interventions of Keystone Bank and First Bank Plc.

The president lauded Eneche and his wife for hitting the streets to sensitise citizens on the virus.

The statement added: "President Buhari appreciates the efforts of Stallion Empowerment Initiative of the Stallion Group, and the entertainment industry, particularly renowned musician, Innocent Idibia, Tuface, for their contributions."

Senators Donate 50% of

Salaries

Efforts to fund the fight against COVID-19 have also received backing from the National Assembly as senators have decided to forgo, from this month, half of their salaries as donations to the federal government to fight the pandemic.

A decision to that effect was reached at the weekend by the lawmakers with the arrangement subsisting till Nigeria is certified free of the epidemic.

Vice-Chairman of the Senate Committee on Media and Public Affairs, Senator Godiya Akwashiki, said in a statement yesterday that they decided to contribute 50 per cent of their salaries to the efforts to stop the pandemic and boost the treatment of the infected.

Nigerian Dies in US

A Nigerian who is a student of Western Michigan University in the US, Mr. Bassey Offiong, has died of the virus.

The 25-year-old chemical engineering student passed away on Saturday. He was expected to complete his degree in a few weeks.

TheCable quoted Detroit News as saying that Asari Offiong, Bassey's sister, said her brother had told her that he was experiencing fever, fatigue and shortness of breath, which were symptoms of COVID-19.

She said her brother also told her that he was turned down several times for the COVID-19 test in the Kalamazoo area.

"I told him to ask them to test him. He said they refused to test him," she said.

Although she refused to disclose the hospitals where Bassey was denied test, she said a medical staffer told him he had bronchitis.

Prince Charles Out of Self-isolation

Also yesterday, the royal residence in London, Clarence House, said that Prince Charles of Wales was out of self-isolation one week after testing positive to COVID-19.

The British heir-to-the-throne was diagnosed of the virus after showing mild symptoms.

Prince Charles went into isolation at his Birkhall home on the royal Balmoral estate in Scotland.

According to the palace spokesman, the 71-year-old prince is in good health and following government restrictions.

"Clarence House has confirmed today that, having consulted with his doctor, the Prince of Wales is now out of self-isolation," a spokesman said.

According to the palace, Camilla, his wife and Duchess of Cornwall, who tested negative to the virus remains in isolation.

We are Not in War Emergency, Soyinka Tells Buhari

Nobel Laureate, Prof. Wole Soyinka, has faulted the lockdown of Lagos and Ogun States as well as the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) by Buhari.

Soyinka in a statement issued yesterday wondered if the president had the power to order such lockdown.

He called on constitutional lawyers and lawmakers to clarify the legality or the illegality of the lockdown.

He also warned against "constitutional piracy" in the fight against the pandemic in the country.

"Constitutional lawyers and our elected representatives should kindly step into this and educate us, mere lay minds. The worst development I can conceive of us is to have a situation where rational measures for the containment of the COVID-19 pandemic are rejected on account of their questionable genesis.

"This is a time for unity of purpose, not nitpicking dissensions. So, before this becomes a habit, a question: does President Buhari have the powers to close down state borders? We want clear answers. We are not in a war emergency," he said.

US Confirms Emergency Evacuation of Its Citizens

The United States government yesterday confirmed the emergency evacuation of its citizens from Nigeria this week.

The US embassy Abuja, in a statement posted on its Facebook page, also directed its citizens not to come to the airport until they are contacted directly.

It therefore urged them to continue to shelter in place and await further information.

BUSINESSWORLD

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RATES AS AT MARCH 27, 2020

MONEY MARKET		REPO		S & P INDEX		S & P INDEX		EXCHANGE RATE
OVERNIGHT	17.10	CALL	14.50	INDEX LEVEL	461.82%	1/4 TO DATE	-4.020%	N361/IUS DOLLAR*
OBB	15.80	1-MONTH	10	1-DAY	0.29%	YEAR TO DATE	-4.02%	*AS AT LAST FRIDAY
		3-MONTH	10.50	MONTH-TO-DATE	-12.02%			



LEADERSHIP CHANGE

L-R: Registrar, Institute of Capital Market Registrars (ICMR), Dr. David Walker Ogogo; new President /Chairman of the Council, Mr. Seyi Owoturo; Ag. Director General, Securities and Exchange Commission, Mary Uduk, and immediate Past President, ICMR Mr. Bayo Olugbemi at the inauguration of the new governing council, investiture of fellows and induction of associates of institute, held in Lagos... recently

SUNDAY ADIGUN

COVID-19: Bailout for States Inevitable, Says FSDH

Obinna Chima

ENERGY

The disruptive effects of the spreading COVID-19 pandemic will make bailout for states in Nigeria inevitable if it prolongs, analysts at FSDH Merchant Bank Limited have stated.

The financial institution stated this in its latest macroeconomic review for the first quarter of 2020, titled: "Steering a fragile economy in the face of uncertainties," that was obtained yesterday.

According to the Lagos-based firm, there would be need for the disbursement of intervention funds to vulnerable households that are affected by the virus, at both federal and states level, so as to cushion the impact on Nigerians.

The report predicted that the outbreak of the virus was expected to have both direct and indirect impact on Nigeria's economic growth this year.

It showed that already, the

Central Bank of Nigeria's (CBN) Purchasing Manager's Index (PMI), the manufacturing PMI fell from 59.2 in January 2020 to 51.1 in March, just as the Non-Manufacturing PMI contracted from 59.6 to 49.2 in March - after 34 consecutive months of expansion.

Nigeria's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth averaged 2.3 per cent in 2019 and Nigeria recorded the highest quarterly growth of 2.6 per cent in the fourth quarter of 2019. Inflation rate rose for the sixth consecutive month to 12.2 per cent in February 2020, the highest rate recorded since April 2018.

Growth in inflation rate was reflected in food inflation which rose to 14.9 per cent in February, from 14.85 per cent in January. Food inflation was driven by increase in prices of bread and cereals, fish, meat, vegetables,

oil and fats.

"The impact of the pandemic will be more visible on economic activities in March, following the shutdown of airports, cancellation of events/ conferences, slowdown of business and the sharp decline in crude oil price.

"The lower GDP growth will stem from: Fall in government spending; depreciating naira; high inflation; sectoral impacts due to shut downs; movement of these restrictions, etc. Given these, we believe economic growth in the year will fall under two per cent, far below our initial estimate of 2.5 per cent," it stated.

The outbreak of the pathogen led to a decline in crude oil demand from major importing countries such as India and China, even as talks between Russia and Saudi Arabia collapsed in March, forcing crude oil price to fall sharply to below \$30 per barrel, from \$52 per barrel on March 5.

FSDH predicted that crude oil price could fall further if the virus outbreak worsens.

"One major factor that will drive up inflation rate in March is panic buying as a result of uncertainties on the coronavirus situation. As the coronavirus situation worsens across Europe and the U.S., supply chains have been disrupted and stores continue to run out of stocks.

"Some Nigerians fear that this could be the case, especially as the number of confirmed cases continues to increase. This has resulted in panic buying, which has ultimately resulted in increase in the price of some food and non-food items.

"In March, the Federal Government reduced the price of fuel from N145 per liter to N125, following lower oil prices and a drop in landing costs for petrol.

"While this is a good move

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Quick Takes

Taiwan Sees Room for Rate Cuts

There is room for more interest rate cuts in Taiwan, but they will not be reduced to zero or into negative territory, and the government will offer more funds for small-and-medium-sized companies if needed, its central bank said on Monday. According to Reuters, the government has repeatedly warned of the impact of the coronavirus epidemic on the export-oriented economy, and has been taking steps to mitigate it. Taiwan has reported 306 cases of the virus to date and five deaths, far lower than many of its neighbors, because of early control measures and a good public health system, though it is seeing an upsurge in people who were infected overseas.

The central bank this month cut interest rates for the first time in more than four years to a new low of 1.125 per cent, and reduced its growth forecast for the economy amid growing fears that the coronavirus could trigger a global recession. It also said it would provide banks with T\$200 billion (\$6.61 billion) of financing to support companies hit hard by the virus' impact. Speaking in parliament, central bank governor Yang Chin-long said more money would be made available if the T\$200 billion is insufficient. "In addition to launching T\$200 billion in financing, I have personally written to and called up the banks one by one, hoping that they can help," he said. If the virus continues into the third and fourth quarters of this year, there will only be a small chance the economy will maintain growth of 2% or above, Yang said. The bank has already cut its full-year economic growth outlook to 1.92 per cent from 2.57 per cent forecast in December due to the virus.

UK Broadband Firms Lift Data Caps

Britain's big telecoms providers have agreed to remove all data caps on fixed-line broadband services that have become a lifeline for people isolated at home during the coronavirus crisis, the government said on Sunday. The companies, which include BT (BT.L), Virgin Media (LBTYA.O), Sky (CMCSA.O) and TalkTalk (TALK.L), committed to support and protect vulnerable customers during the pandemic after talks with the government and regulator Ofcom.

Other measures include helping customers who find it difficult to pay bills as a result of the epidemic, improving mobile and landline packages to ensure people can stay connected, and prioritising repairs for vulnerable customers, Reuters reported.

"It is essential that people stay at home to protect the NHS (health service) and save lives. This package helps people to stay connected whilst they stay home," Digital Secretary Oliver Dowden said in the government statement. Many of the companies have already taken steps to support customers during the crisis, including making it easier for vulnerable people to access information they need.

The other companies that agreed to the commitments were Openreach, O2 (TEF.MC), Vodafone (VOD.L), Three (0215.HK), Hyperoptic, Gigaclear and KCOM.

Egypt's Banks Impose Limits

Egyptian banks have been instructed to apply temporary limits on daily withdrawals and deposits in a move seemingly designed to control inflation and hoarding as concern grows over the spread of the coronavirus. According to Reuters, the daily limit for individuals would be 10,000 Egyptian pounds (\$635) and 50,000 pounds for companies, a central bank statement said, though businesses will be exempt from the withdrawal limits if the money is used to pay employees. The central bank has also limited daily ATM withdrawals and deposits to 5,000 pounds, it said in a statement. "Not official, but I heard (it was designed) to control hoarding and inflation," said one analyst who asked not to be named. "This could reduce hoarding and panic buying and contain prices," a second analyst said. The central bank has also urged people to limit their use of banknotes and to rely on electronic transfers and e-payments. "All banks cancelled fees on transfers and e-payment methods for the citizens' convenience," the statement added.

Egypt reported 40 new coronavirus cases and six fatalities on Saturday, bringing the totals to 576 confirmed infections and 36 deaths.

Egypt ordered mosques to shut their doors to worshippers for two weeks from March 21. The Ministry of Islamic Endowments said on Sunday that it would extend the closure indefinitely.

... Developing Countries' Oil Revenue May Decline by 85%

Chineme Okafor in Abuja

ENERGY

The outbreak of the Covid-19 is expected to push down the oil revenue of Nigeria and other developing countries who rely on oil to fund their public spending, by up to 85 per cent, the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and International Energy Agency (IEA) have said.

This is however on the condition that the situation fails to improve, and the global economy further weakens.

The OPEC and IEA stated this on the back of the meeting of their heads: the Executive

Director of the IEA, Dr Fatih Birol, and Secretary General of the OPEC, Dr. Mohammad Barkindo.

A statement from OPEC explained that both leaders spoke by phone to review the current situation in global oil markets and expressed deep concerns about the grave global health crisis caused by Covid-19 and its related impacts on the stability of economies and markets, notably in developing countries. The two leaders according to the statement expressed deep concerns about the virus which

they said was already a grave and unprecedented global health crisis with potentially far-reaching economic and social consequences.

It explained that Birol and Barkindo assessed the impact of the virus and the recent broad-based financial and oil market volatility on the global economy and particularly discussed the inherent risks of the fast-evolving dynamics, including the most recent developments in global oil markets.

"They agreed that these create material impacts, particularly for citizens of developing countries including those that

rely heavily on income from oil and gas production for essential services and that are especially vulnerable to market volatility.

"Dr Birol and SG Barkindo reviewed the impact on vulnerable developing countries and noted that if current market conditions continue, their income from oil and gas will fall by 50 per cent to 85 per cent in 2020, reaching the lowest levels in more than two decades, according to a recent IEA analysis," it said.

"This is likely to have major social and economic consequences, notably for

Continued on page 24

The Quote

"These are critical times for Africa as it addresses the challenges resulting from the Coronavirus"



AFDB President, **Akinwumi Adesina**

COVID-19: BAILOUT FOR STATES INEVITABLE, SAYS FSDH

particularly given the importance of petrol in determining general prices of both food and core items, the impact will be minimal on average prices, which are often sticky downwards. The fall in oil price and consequently external reserves led to a devaluation of the naira to N380/US\$ in March. Given this development, we hereby revised upward our inflation estimate to 12.6 per cent for 2020.

"The Nigerian forex condition is further challenged with a declining external reserves, which stood at US\$36 billion on March 18, 2020," the merchant bank added. With pressure on the reserves, the CBN in March adjusted the exchange rate to NGN360/US\$ from NGN306/US\$. The CBN also harmonised the forex market windows as the new rates range from NGN360/US\$ to NGN380/US\$. In bid to ensure stability in the forex market, the CBN in its last Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meeting unanimously voted to retain all parameters.

Total investment inflows in the country increased to \$24 billion in 2019, from \$16.8 billion in 2018. However, the report showed that on a quarterly basis, inflows declined consistently from \$8.5 billion in 2019 first quarter, to \$3.8 billion in the fourth quarter of 2019.

COVID-19: DEVELOPING COUNTRIES' OIL REVENUE TO DECLINE BY 85%

public sector spending in vital areas such as healthcare and education," the statement added.

According to the statement, both leaders underscored the importance of market stability, as the impacts of extreme volatility are felt by producers, particularly in terms of much needed income, and by both producers and consumers, who are affected by an unstable and unpredictable market.

"SG Barkindo and Dr. Birol emphasised the importance of finding ways to minimise the impact of the current situation on vulnerable developing countries. They agreed to remain in close contact on the matter and continue their regular consultations on oil market developments," it noted.

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Drop in Nigeria's ECA Worries NNRC

Chineme Okafor in Abuja

The balance of funds in Nigeria's Excess Crude Account (ECA) has dropped to \$71.8 million from the \$324.9 million that it was in January 2020, the Nigeria Natural Resource Charter (NNRC) has disclosed.

The NNRC also stated that the development followed a probe which had been initiated to find out how \$4 million was withdrawn from the ECA for a suspicious consultancy payment.

It added that Nigeria could face a severe fiscal crisis necessitating quick adjustments.

The NNRC stated these in a twitter conference hosted by a member of its Advisory Panel, Ms. Ronke Onadeko, in which she talked about the implications of the falling oil price on the Nigerian economy as well as the country's recent announcement of its liberalisation of the downstream petrol sector.

"Our SWF (Sovereign Wealth Fund) has just about \$2.5 billion in savings which is poor.

the ECA account has been depleted over the years with indiscriminate withdrawals and abuse. In January it was \$324.9 million. Now it's \$71.8 million, its fast dwindling," said Onadeko during the conversation.

She informed that, "the ECA account funds that were to be saved have been depleted by the payment of (petrol) subsidy, argumentation of budget shortfalls and distribution to the three tiers of government.

"Just last month the NASS reported that \$4 million was removed from

the ECA account to pay a consultant... these are the gaps and lapses and ways in which the account has been abused.

"Nigeria ranks low on the idea of countries that are oil producers and it is sad that at this time that we need the funds, the kitty is almost empty, we don't have any form of buffers to protect us from the recession coming and we are now having to go back to reduce our budget."

"Investigations are ongoing, and the Accountant General will have to come back with details of who the consultant is and what the payment was for," she added.

According to Onadeko: "Nigeria has no defense against rising global uncertainties. We have to downward-adjust

our budget and likely cancel our planned borrowing of \$22.7 billion to fund our budget shortfall."

She explained that the country would definitely face some financial stress as oil revenue dries up from the impact of Covid-19.

"We can be likened to a family with an unemployed breadwinner with no savings to fall back on," she added.

Onadeko, noted that in this situation, the country's financial stress would result to less money in the federation account, to states and local governments as well as for developmental projects across board.

"Each Nigerian's spend will shrink, we will buy less goods and service and we will see production of

factories slow down and jobs may be lost, incomes impacted negatively. We have a tough season coming up," she warned while urging for self-introspection of the country's spending pattern.

According to her: "We need to look inward and imbibe a more conservative spending regime, improve efficiency to guard against waste and to deploy technology more, it's always cheaper and innovative and may cause new opportunities to arise."

On how abuses on the ECA may be stopped, she said:

"There is a push that only the SWF account be run and that the ECA account should be merged and brought under the NSIA. They are doing a decent job with the meager funds they have to manage.

They got an additional \$250 million last month to invest."

Speaking on the government's liberalisation plans for the downstream petroleum sector, she said: "We have the time to make many positive changes while prices are low, there is no sign that prices will rebound in the short or medium term. There are options though, migrating from PMS (Premium Motor Spirit) to CNG (Compressed Natural Gas) to power our vehicles in busy cities like Lagos, Port Harcourt, Abuja, Kano."

"Nigeria is broke. We have no choice but to see this deregulation to a conclusive end once and for all and free the government of subsidy responsibilities," Onadeko stated.



BOND LISTING

L-R: Deputy Managing Director, FBNQuest, Taiwo Okeowo; Group Financial Controller, Interswitch Group, Chinomso Nwachukwu; CEO, Nigerian Stock Exchange (NSE), Oscar Onyema; CEO Interswitch Group, Mitchell Elegbe, and Group Chief Financial Officer, John Maguire, during Interswitch Group's Bond listing on the NSE in Lagos, recently.

SUNDAY ADIGUN

South-east Businesses Brace for Imminent Lockdown

Dike Onwuamaeze

Industrialists and operators in the Organised Private Sector (OPS) in the south-east said they are getting prepared for a looming economic shutdown following the closure of the Niger Bridge by the Delta State Government, as part of the measures to stem the spread of COVID-19 pandemic.

The Anambra State government had also announced that it would shut down all markets in the state from today.

The President of Onitsha Chambers of Commerce, Industry, Mines and Agriculture (OCCIMA), Mr. Chris Ukachukwu, told THISDAY, in a telephone chat that the effects of the virus was creating a difficult operational environment for members of the OCCIMA and might force some of his members to shut down their factories, especially those in the food and beverage sector.

Ukachukwu said: "Those in the manufacturing of bottled water are faced with possible shutdown of operation as the raw materials they need to produce plastic bottle are

no longer coming in freely from Lagos.

"And the closure of the Niger Bridge as well as the increasing number of states that has closed inter-state borders in the south-east may signal end of production as most factories that relied on imported raw materials will no longer have access to the sea ports.

"Moreover, anything that threatens transportation across the Niger Bridge will literally throw the Southeast into economic paralysis."

He said most businesses in Onitsha were battling with poor electricity supply and were finding it difficult to sustain production due to scarcity of diesel as some filling stations have closed down.

"Electricity supply has gone down and diesel is scarce and expensive making most manufacturers to run at high cost that renders their products uncompetitive," Ukachukwu said.

The Director-General of Enugu Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Mines, and Agriculture, Mr. Henry Nduka Awuregu, also told

THISDAY that the pandemic was having a negative impact on businesses in the state, especially with the closure of inter-state borders that has made difficult to move goods from Enugu to Ebonyi and Abia States.

"Sector to sector has been recording negative impact. Peace Mass Transport Limited has shut down operations. Most hotels are operating at less than 30 per cent capacity and filling stations are not dispensing fuel as before." Awuregu said, adding that it was too early to put a figure on the losses suffered by businesses as a result of the COVID-19.

Similarly, the immediate past President of Awka Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Mines and Agriculture, Mr. Felly Zontal Akosa, told THISDAY that most people were focusing more on how to survive the pandemic than doing business.

"We are not talking about business but survival now. Some factories are shutting down production and the announcement that the Niger Bridge will be closed will

amount to total economic lockdown."

In the same manner, the Chief Executive Officer of Twinset Industries Limited, Aba, Mr. Andy Uba Obasi, who was also the past President of Aba Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Mines and Agriculture, said that, "the prices of raw materials have gone up tremendously while access to imported inputs are scarce now."

Obasi, said most manufacturers were being forced to reduce or closed down their production line as a means of surviving the difficult environment imposed by the effort to contain the spread of COVID-19.

A recent statement signed by the President of Lagos Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Mrs. Toki Mabogunje, acknowledged the enormity and severity of the looming catastrophe, which the COVID-19 pandemic portends to business if it is not quickly contained, which she described as "monumental and unprecedented."

Mabogunje, said disruptions in business and economic activities at the domestic

level as companies and businesses shutdown operations, following lockdowns and mobility restrictions had left the aviation, hospitality, SMEs, manufacturing sectors as the worst hit in the current situation.

She advised businesses to review their strategies in line with unfolding developments, by adopting a flexible business model to ensure tight control on costs and non-revenue generating segments of the business.

Last week, the Nigeria Employers Consultative Assembly (NECA) held a virtual meeting with the Governor of Lagos State Mr. Babajide Sanwo-Olu, and agreed that Lagos State would not be on complete lock down. This was to allow all food markets and retail chains like Spar, Game, Shoprite etc. to remain open daily.

A Professor of Economics at Afe Babalola University, Sam A. Igbatayo, said entrepreneurs could leverage on opportunities that often emerge in the process like digital technology to deliver consumer products around the world.

BUSINESSWORLD

NEWS

COVID-19: Moghalu Calls for Urgent Fiscal Reforms

Peter Uzoho

The Convener of To Build A Nation (TBAN) and presidential candidate of the Young People's Party (YPP) in the 2019 general elections, Prof. Kingsley Moghalu, has listed policy actions that should be the main focus of the federation government in the fight against COVID-19 pandemic and its economic impact on the nation.

He further opined that Nigeria needs urgent fiscal reforms immediately after the virus, stressing that our economy must become truly diversified away from crude oil.

Moghalu, specifically advised that the budget of the federal and state governments should be, "completely re-programmed to focus on COVID-19," saying, with the exception of security and payment of salaries, nothing else should matter at the moment.

The former Deputy Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) in a statement noted that the N50 billion fund established by the CBN for families and small businesses would not be adequate to address the crisis if and when it escalates. He, however, advised that the fiscal authorities must plan and make provision for the subsistence funding of all extremely poor Nigerians and individual citizens, numbering approximately 100 million, for 30 days in this scenario.

He added that in a back-of-the-envelope calculation, if a sum of N20,000 were to be made available for every impoverished family to stock on food and supplies for a month in a Covid-19 total shutdown scenario, this would require an intervention of N2 trillion.

Moghalu said: "Even the

N10 trillion federal government budget for 2020 may not be able to carry this burden, since it is based on projections that have turned out (as usual) to be unrealistic because of reliance on crude oil revenue and the absence of a broad base of domestic taxation.

"This would be possible, however, if the burden were to be split with state governments. Additionally, members of the National Assembly should donate 50 per cent of their emoluments to this effort.

"Third, as I have emphasised in recent interviews, the COVID-19 crisis has graphically exposed the failure of the federal and state governments to invest adequately in human capital – healthcare and education – as a priority. This is incompetent governance, pure and simple."

While noting that Nigerian households in an already-impooverished population bear 70 per cent of healthcare expenses out of pocket, he said the federal government must urgently commence funding of the basic healthcare provision fund, with one per cent of the Consolidated Revenue Fund as provided in the Nigerian Health Act (2014).

Moghalu, who feared that the nation's economy appeared headed for a second recession in four years, pointed out that the COVID-19 crisis further demonstrated the ludicrousness of the now-suspended plan to borrow \$22.7 from foreign countries (mainly China) for "infrastructure".

He advised that the plan should be cancelled completely, arguing that the Nigerian government would likely not be able to service, let alone repay, such debt in the next few years.

He suggested that petrol

subsidy should be removed and the fuel pump price deregulated, with savings from subsidy removal invested urgently in the health and education sectors.

The TBAN convener added that foreign exchange reforms that truly incentivises a shift away from oil-dependency through increased manufacturing and export trade remained urgently needed.

Moghalu added: "The naira should be strategically and proactively devalued, and then align this move with appropriate fiscal and trade policy rather than, as is often the case, having devaluations forced on Nigerians with no accompanying policy reforms.

"The CBN should scrap its forex-access restrictions on the importation of over 40 items. Our fiscal authorities should instead impose high tariffs on items perceived as luxury or non-essential (and generate revenues from such tariffs), while industrial and trade policy should establish subsidies and other incentives for domestic manufacturers, especially those that can provide proof of export orders that will bring in hard currency and take advantage of the naira devaluation in the international market."

He said in addition to measures already taken, the federal government should shut down the whole country for one month, barring only existentially essential services. This, Moghalu explained, was necessary in order to give more time for contact tracing, reduce community spread of the disease, especially in urban slums and rural areas, import and deploy testing kits, and to deal with emergency treatments while it could still conceivably be handled.

Lagos Initiates Safety Measures at Abattoirs

Oluchi Chibuzor

The Lagos State government has revealed that it has initiated biosecurity measures across its abattoirs and slaughter houses.

The move was part of measures to mitigate the spread of the coronavirus and other infectious diseases through the facilities.

The State Commissioner for Agriculture, Gbolahan Lawal, explained that the government has stopped all non-essential activities such as food vendors and other non-related abattoir activities.

Lawal, however, warned that the state government would not condone any illegal conveyance of meat and meat products from any of the abattoir and slaughter houses to the markets, adding that the use of Eko refrigerated meat van was the only recognised means for transportation.

He urged butchers to discourage their customers from touching meat or meat

products, saying customers should only point at whatever they want and butchers with gloved hands should sell the meat.

The Commissioner stressed the need for crowd control during slaughtering process where a maximum of four persons per cow should be adhered to on the slab.

"The era of several customers touching meat or meat products on display is over as the Lagos meat reforms is poised to ensure only wholesome meat is sold to the populace and also promote food safety," he added.

He advised all butchers and food vendors to be fully kitted and maintain a high level of personal hygiene by regular washing of hands and tools, adding that a member of the management of each concessionaire who is fully kitted and stationed at an entrance, should also ensure the use of hand held

thermometer on individuals coming into the abattoir and the mandatory use of hand sanitizers.

He maintained that it was important for all unit heads of abattoirs in the state should sensitise all the butchers in their respective abattoirs on the dangers and preventable measures of the COVID-19 as well as the need to sensitise the entire abattoir stakeholders on the need for sick members to stay away from the abattoir and seek medical assistance.

"Posters and handbills on COVID-19 shall be made available at all our abattoir and meat markets emphasising the symptoms of the disease, the preventive measures to be taken and the phone numbers to contact in cases of suspected outbreak.

"It is also important that we increase the level of sanitation of the entire environment at our abattoir and slaughter houses in the state," he said.

MAKE WEALTH LAST



Grace Omenyo Agada

Extend Your Business Life with These Seven Assets

The desire of every successful business owner is to extend the life of their business beyond the first generation. Although this desire is a common desire, it fails 90 per cent of the time. According to global research, only 10 per cent of family businesses will celebrate their 100th year anniversary. This massive death of businesses is due to the loss of certain critical assets you will discover before the end of this article. But before I show you these assets, let me first show you how these assets are formed. The process of building a successful business from scratch does something to the founders of businesses that transforms them from ordinary men to extraordinary men. These extraordinary men develop certain abilities on their journey to wealth. That makes them reservoirs of critical assets that must be transferred to the next generation. The loss of these assets is the reason why successive generations fail. When the founders of businesses die without transferring these assets a death sentence is cast on the business. Businesses that stand the test of time reproduce these seven assets in the next generation. It is the timely transfer and development of these assets. That transforms successive generation from consumers of wealth to producers of wealth.

So, what then are these seven assets?

The seven assets are as follows. First is a wealthy mindset. Second, is unshakable values. The third is a good reputation. Fourth is a personal philosophy. The fifth is a personal longevity health habit. Sixth is wealthy relationships and the seventh is a profitable business asset. To understand how each of these assets affects business longevity, let's look at them in more detail. First, a wealthy mindset. Founders of businesses have a certain way of thinking that is uncommon among ordinary men. This unique way of thinking is what supports the creation and preservation of wealth. Some of the critical elements of a business owner's wealthy mindsets include an undying belief in possibilities and confidence in their abilities, a never quenching hunger to solve problems, a selfless act of service and so on. While ordinary men see impossibilities, barriers, and limitations, successful business men turn impossibilities to possibilities. For successive generation to preserve the family business, they must develop a wealthy mindset.

Next is a set of values. Successful business owners commit to a certain set of values that guides their business decision and their interactions with other men. These values are self-imposed and direct how they do business. Although these values are sometimes challenged by the business environment, they are prepared to defend it and pay the price. They pay the price because they know that paying the price is easier than violating their own values. A good example of value that is common to successful business owners is integrity. Integrity is not perfection, but the ability to integrate one's words, deeds and actions. Extraordinary business men stand for something and successive generations must develop their own values.

Next is reputation. Reputation is the public perception consumers have about a business and the respect they have for the business leader. A good reputation is built over years of sacrifice, sweat and tears and must be guarded with care. To ensure the long-term profitability of a business, successive generations must

know how to lift a good reputation and what not to do to a good reputation. Reputation is the consumer's own reality and it must be guarded with care.

Next is a personal philosophy. A personal philosophy is a series of conclusions a person makes from their own life experience and their understanding of the world. Business owners have a well of experience they can draw conclusions from to benefit the next generation. These conclusions can serve as guiding philosophies for the next generation. Examples of great philosophies that will benefit the next generation include: A difficult decision-making philosophy; a crises management philosophy; a business partnership philosophy; a family unity philosophy, a lasting marriage philosophy and so on. Leaving the next generation with a pocket of philosophies will cut-down the repetition of wealth dissipating mistakes. Next is a personal longevity health habit. The greatest asset in life is health. Losing a family or critical business member to preventable sicknesses and disease due to unhealthy lifestyle choices is the greatest tragedy in life. It is unhealthy for a family and unprofitable for a business. Although life is limited in years. Its length can be negotiable. Life can be extended through deliberate good health habits. Business leaders must thus create a culture that promotes the longevity of life. This is the only way to preserve the human capital that drives a business.

Next is a wealthy relationship. To get to a certain level in business. Business leaders sought the help of other people. This means that every successful business leader has valuable networks that is beneficial for the next generation. But these relationships will not just pass on to the next generation. They have to be deliberately cultivated and nurtured. Successive generation must know how to initiate new relationships nurture existing ones and extract value from them without the continuous nurturing of valuable relationships. It is hard for the next generation to lift the business beyond the laurels of its founders.

And last but not least is a profitable business asset. Not all businesses are assets. Certain businesses if critically analysed by an independent investor are liabilities. Dumping a liability on the next generation is cruel. To pass on businesses that will last, business owner must analyse their businesses through the eyes of an investor and they must also see successors as investors who can accept or reject a business.

Building a business that will last for many generations is not an easy feat. While it takes one extraordinary business man to build a successful business, it takes the collaboration of many extraordinary business men across multiple generations to keep a business breathing.

Grace Agada is the First indigenous Family Business Longevity and Legacy Expert. With unique expertise in helping Self Made Business Men Transition from Vanishing Mortals. To Men with Indestructible Name, Wealth and Legacy. Grace's philosophy is simple. Successful Business Men do a lot of good in the world. This good should Expand. Receive great recognition and extend beyond their lifetime. Her goal is to help Family business Men Eliminate factors that disrupt and murder Businesses. Discover, Own and Dominate New Emerging Market Opportunities. And reinvent their Businesses to last for up to 100 years. To learn more about how Grace can help you send an email to info@createsolidwealth.com.

Supporting Fight against COVID-19

Chineme Okafor hails the decision by oil companies operating in Nigeria to support the country in the fight against the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic

The Covid-19 epidemic is no longer just a public health crisis, but a huge threat to the world's economy which Nigeria is part of. Stock markets across the world have been hit hard just as prices of commodities such as crude oil have declined raising fears of a possible recession.

Indeed, demand for Nigeria's oil – the country's major export, will slow down as countries in Europe closedown to halt the virus. Key destinations for Nigeria's oil – Spain, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands and the United Kingdom – have all recorded huge outbreaks which have impacts on their economies.

Based on this, relevant international organisations such as the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and International Energy Agency (IEA) have projected that resource-dependent countries like Nigeria will find it hard to cope with the decline in commodity prices.

In a joint review of the situation, the OPEC and IEA explained that the income of countries like Nigeria from oil and gas will fall by 50 per cent to 85 per cent in 2020, reaching the lowest levels in more than two decades.

This, they stated will likely have major social and economic consequences, notably for public sector spending in vital areas such as healthcare and education.

Speaking on Arise News Network on Nigeria's situation, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Nigerian Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), Dr. Chikwe Ihekweazu, recently highlighted the need for collaboration in the country, stressing that the new wave of the virus outbreak was seen sweeping through countries in Africa, South America and South-east Asia.

"This is a new virus for which we are learning every day," Ihekweazu said, adding that Lagos state has led through the process of halting the spread by instituting new measures to limit while the NCDC is scaling its capacity to test for new cases.

A commitment to support

Recognising the impacts of the virus on Nigeria's economy, the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) subsequently pulled together partner oil companies in the country to help in the mitigation efforts.

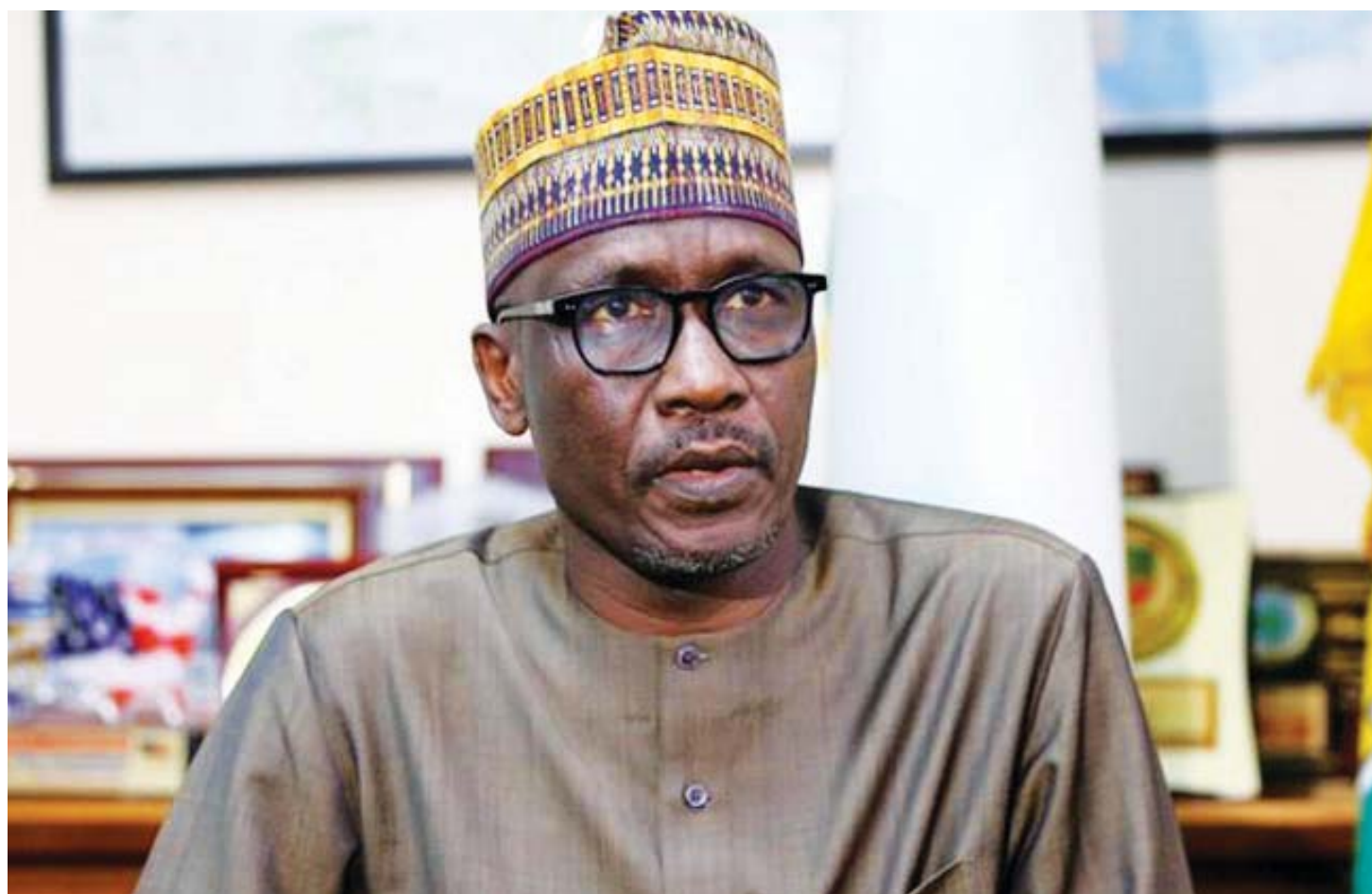
With its partners comprising the Oil Producers Trade Section (OPTS) of the Lagos Chamber of Commerce, and Independent Petroleum Producers Group (IPPG), the corporation announced a plan – the Oil and Gas Industry Intervention Initiative on COVID-19 – to combat the epidemic and its associated impacts.

According to a booklet containing the plans of the oil companies against Covid-19, the intervention initiative will align with the existing efforts of the federal government and the NCDC to curb the pandemic.

It is reportedly aimed at supporting the country's national healthcare delivery facilities and would focus on providing medical consumables for citizens; deploying logistics and in-patient support system as well as delivering medical infrastructure across board.

"The three thematic support initiatives amount to a total of \$30 million (N11 billion) in the first phase. This phase covers the efforts by NNPC and its partners in the upstream segment of the nation's oil and gas value chain," said the brochure which added that the intervention will strengthen the country's collective resolve to contain the spread of the virus.

For medical consumables, the intervention will scale up the provision of testing kits, medical protective suites, face shield and laboratory scientific kits. For logistics and in-patient support system, there will be retrofitted ambulances, ventilators, respirators and oxygen supply facilities, while makeshift intensive care facilities, ICU beds and state-of-the-art diagnostic laboratories will be built across the country's geopolitical zones within the medical



Mele Kyari

infrastructure aspect of the intervention.

In total, the intervention reportedly plans to provide 10 million surgical masks, 20,000 N95 respirator masks, 120,000 safety gloves, 20,000 protective suites and 3000 safety gloves.

Additionally, 40 retrofitted ambulances will be provided, as well as 10,000 test kits, 3000 oxygen kits, 1000 ventilators and four diagnostic laboratories.

With regards to funding, the brochure explained that 18 per cent or N1.98 billion of the projected fund will be spent on medical consumables, 22 per cent or N2.42 billion spent on logistics and 60 per cent or N6.60 billion on medical infrastructure. Each of the country's geopolitical zone will get N1 billion for the medical infrastructure.

It equally noted that the funding will come through in-kind donations using a transparent process driven with a clear governance structure to be led by the Group Managing Director of the NNPC, Mallam Mele Kyari.

Additionally, Katsina, Kano, Maiduguri, Bauchi, Markurdi, Enugu, Warri, Owerri, Port Harcourt, Lagos and Ibadan have been chosen to host the makeshift intensive care facilities to be constructed under the intervention.

A well-timed response

The oil sector-driven intervention against Covid-19 equally matched an advisory to the government by an expert in international energy business, Mr. Dan Kunle, who told THISDAY in an interview that it was necessary for the government to pursue collaborative efforts against the outbreak to minimise its impacts on the country.

In total, the intervention reportedly plans to provide 10 million surgical masks, 20,000 N95 respirator masks, 120,000 safety gloves, 20,000 protective suites and 3000 safety gloves

Kunle stated then that: "This is a bad period for the whole world economy. We are faced with existential challenges and therefore oil and gas as a commodity becomes very unattractive and this is the reality.

"After the Covid-19 crisis, Nigeria along with other countries of the world, have to reset her developmental agenda which must focus on human capacity development - education, health, water, roads, electricity, deep seaports and railways."

He further added: "The federal government of Nigeria must as a matter of national urgency which is derived from the global urgency, set-up some think-tank teams to assist in managing the looming crisis from the Covid-19 pandemic. The think-tank is to work out prevention mechanisms and curative measures the country would adopt.

"This I may imagine could involve the government inviting the Chinese to come and share their challenges and experiences as well as solutions used in the last two and a half months in their country to halt the spread of the virus.

"Because it is only China that has succeeded in working through the hell of the Covid-19 outbreak in Wuhan and today came out with minimal infection rates, Nigeria will need a group to get this engagement right in motion; even if we have to give our oil and gas in barter to get the best in terms of healthcare facilities and delivery from the Chinese."

He noted that the capacity of Nigeria to deal with a widespread outbreak was limited because the country has limited hospital infrastructure, health workers and medicaments.

"The government will have no choice in the next foreseeable future but to embrace all the private hospitals in Nigeria for this type of emergency management," Kunle added.

Also, contributors at a forum organised by Arise TV Channel, the broadcast arm of THISDAY Newspapers, at the weekend, lauded Nigeria's management of COVID-19 but warned the federal government not to rest on its oars.

The panelists, comprising health practitioners around the world, among others, alerted the federal government that tougher days were ahead and how it would handle the next few weeks would determine whether or not Nigeria would be able to flatten the curve and halt the spread of the virus.

Among the contributors were the Minister of Health, Dr. Osagie Ehanire; an entrepreneur and contractor to Obama's White House, Mr. Alex Lightman; Commissioner for Health, Lagos State, Prof. Akin Abayomi; Emeritus Professor, Chinese University, Hong Kong, Siam Griffiths; and Chairman, ANAP Foundation, Mr. Atedo Peterside.

Lightman described the country's management of the pandemic as more organised than that of the United States.

Speaking during the global briefing on COVID-19, tagged: The Pandemic; the Frontlines, the Impact and the Road Ahead, Lightman said it took the US President Donald Trump thousands of confirmed cases before issuing a lockdown but that with less than 100 cases, the Nigerian government had done what was needed in halting the spread of the pandemic in any country.

He said: "I watched President Muhammadu Buhari's broadcast and I think the two-week lockdown he declared in Abuja, Lagos and Ogun State is a very smart move. Nigeria is smarter than the US because we had thousands of cases before we had a lockdown. If we did this on time, things would not have been this bad in the US.

"The lockdown in Nigeria is a game-changer. If people adhere to social distancing and stay at home, the virus will not spread. This virus is a game of function, and one of the best ways against it is to halt community spread," he added.

Abayomi said the pandemic in Lagos was expected to surge in the coming months following community spread of the virus.

He said although the predominant cases were imported, the state had started seeing community spread of the disease, describing this as the real problem.

He said: "We know person-to-person transmission is what we will now battle. That is why we have now changed our strategy, which includes ensuring people stay at home, maintain social distancing and imbibe hygiene practices like hand washing.

"So far, none of our patients has come down with serious symptoms of COVID-19. They are either asymptomatic or are having mild symptoms. It is only a matter of time before we start having serious cases, so we are preparing. We are putting all the necessary health equipment in place to address this.

PROPERTY & ENVIRONMENT

'Government Should Provide Bailout Funds to Bridge Housing Deficits in Nigeria'

With housing deficit that has continued to exacerbate yearly, real estate expert and MD/CEO, Country Hill, Adewale Oshinaike has advised the Federal Government to provide bailout funds to real estate practitioners to build houses to bridge the deficit. Osinaike discusses these issues with **Fadekemi Ajakaiye**

Real Estate is not a business that brings immediate profitability, what prompted you to start the business?

I have been in the real estate industry for over 10 years now. I joined a Real Estate Investment Company where I worked as a Sales person on contract earning N30,000 monthly. About 200 sales agents were employed at that time working for the Real Estate Investment Company, but as time went by, we started reducing day by day. After a year, we were only eight that remained as sales agents. Some were sacked; while others left because they could not meet the targets and all sorts.

I left Real Estate Investment Company for another Real Estate Company, and learnt another dynamics of in the industry after joining them. The company had collected funds running into billions of Naira and was unable to pay the people the agreed returns and their principal sum. I was the Conflict Resolution Manager; saddled with the responsibility of resolving all land conflicts that company had. When I saw all the conflicts that the company had; I ran away because I knew that those issues cannot be solved, because they were so huge. Before starting Country Hill, I rose to become a Business Development Manager and Conflict Resolution Manager at the different companies where I worked.

You read Sociology at the University of Calabar, why did you go into Real Estate?

In sociology there is what we call rural and urban development, the rural and urban development is how we develop the rural areas and enhance the urban areas, how else do we do that if not through real estate? If you look at what is happening in our society today, you see houses jam-packed, people live in a kiosk, some are homeless and sleeping under the bridge, these are things that cause insecurity in our environment. My knowledge of sociology helps me to bring innovative solutions to the Real Estate market. Part of the practice is what we are doing at Country Hill, helping people to acquire affordable properties. We have areas that are developing, we make the necessary investment needed to developed area and we sell these properties at affordable rates to Nigerians. Being a sociologist and real estate expert today is not by my own plan. The idea is simply to help people afford luxury.

Do you think affordable housing is possible



Oshinaike

in Nigeria?

When I say affordable luxuries, you would hardly see any estate company in Nigeria that is not expensive. The government needs to put in place an effective mortgage system that works in Nigeria, so that the common man can afford it. Affordable housing is possible in Nigeria. If most real estate companies can take their minds off immediate gratification, affordable housing will be achievable for all. In our own case, we have provided over 4,000 plots of land for people to build houses. Are we looking for profit now? Maybe that's why we are in business, but not so much profits, but for us to position ourselves to make things affordable for people. You can't put everything on government; as government can't provide everything and that's why we are more concern about infrastructure in all our estates. Our estate in Magboro has tiled roads network, drainages, ambulances and pharmacy. In fact, we are working on an independent power supply system. If I take over 500 units of houses off the national grid and put them on an alternate power supply system, it will mean a lot to us and we would have solved some problem for the government. We all cannot depend on government.

Nigeria's housing deficit is put at 22 million units with huge part of it in Lagos, Port Harcourt and Abuja. What do you think government should do to reduce the huge number?

Housing deficit in Nigeria is real and it is increasing every day because there are lots of people moving into the country. In Opebi and Ilupeju alone, 10% of people living in these places are Chinese. Lagos is filled; people are now moving to Ogun state, also in Abuja, people are now living in Nassarawa. Since government is giving permit and visa to foreign nationals; the question is; have we proved housing for these in-flock in our urban cities? The answer is no.

Lagos state has done fantastically well in the last eight years. The Government have done various allocation to Real Estate Companies to develop new areas and settlement but at a cost that most of them still struggle to pay. Thus; only those who can afford those housing schemes get those allocation and sell to the end users at a premium which most cannot afford. The Ilubirin project, the IBILE homes and of projects are ongoing but most civil servants might not be able to afford it if a proper mortgage system is not in place for them.

Government should provide bailout fund for local investors to build, sell and return the capital to the government after some particular years. Government should also create policies that will allow foreign investors to invest in real estate also. That kind of fund can help to solve the housing deficit in the country.

In Dubai, government gives private companies funds to build houses or give them land if they know that the company has money to build houses. The houses are more than the people who live in Dubai and they are still building. Such ideas attract investors, visitors and tourism.

Why do you think we don't have foreign investors in real estate as we have in technology?

In the last four years, we have not had a major real estate investment in Nigeria because of instability in the economy. I was in Dubai sometimes ago to speak some investors, what those investors were asking includes the following: Why are Nigeria banks refusing to provide capital needed by Real Estate Companies for proper development of the sector? They were saying I should letters of credit and bank guarantee, but when you bring bank guarantee to your local bank, the bank will tell you to bring certain percentage of the money those investors want to give you as , if I have that kind of money, why do I need investors or even go to the Banks in the first place? The truth is that the foreign fund there, it's just for us to access it. There are

bottlenecks in Nigeria that will not allow us to access it, they will be asking you to come to Abuja today and tomorrow.

Government is not providing suitable environment for foreign investors to invest in real estate in Nigeria. There are many government policies that are hindering this development. Local investors don't want to bring its money out. Even if they bring it out, at what interest rate do they want to bring it out?

What role is Country Hill playing in providing affordable housing markets for Nigerians?

At Country Hill, we are positioning ourselves to be able to provide four thousand units of properties. If we can provide that out of the 22 million housing deficits in the country, it means that we have done our part. In our Paramount Residents and Gardens in Magoro, we are having 50 units with terraces, 100 units that are 150 bungalows and lands for private developers which is about 320. In Shimawa, we are providing over three hundred units three-bedroom bungalow. Imagine if you are buying a standard three-bedroom bungalow for 8 million Naira and pay for 5 years or more. In Agbara and Epe we are also having the same structure. In total, we have Olive Gardens Ibeju Lekki, Shimawa, Agbara and Epe, Paramount Resident and Gardens Magboro, Lily Gardens Shimawa, Country Court Imedun, Ibeju Lekki, Victoria Court Imoke, Ibeju-Lekki, Paramount Residences and Gardens Igando, Ibeju Lekki. These Estates are positioned to help reduce the housing deficit in Nigeria as a whole.

How would you advise the government to provide affordable housing for people, most especially low-income earners?

Government should be careful in making policies. The policies they want to create should not disrupt innovative solution in the society. We should make effective policies that will positively affect the life of the people. They should make good policies and provide infrastructure that will allow people to invest in real estate without any fear. Government agencies are not helping matters. Regulatory framework should be too cumbersome to manage. One agency should be able to handle most of the issues on land and housing matters in Nigeria. Duplication of function means we pay more to these agencies and government might get more revenue but the end users get to pay more for things that are readily affordable due to government financial demands.

COVID-19: Environment Ministry Activates Health Desks in 774 LGs

Bennett Oghifo

The Federal Ministry of Environment has activated health desks in all the 774 local government areas of the country for pollution control activities, among others.

A statement by the Director Press, Saghir el Mohammed said the Minister of Environment, Dr. Mohammad Mahmood Abubakar said this was one of the measures adopted by the ministry.

Mohammed, disclosed that the Department of Pollution Control and Environmental Health, as well as the Environmental Health Officers Council of Nigeria have since deployed their personnel across the country disinfecting and decontaminating public places

such as markets, motor parks, airports, schools, and other congested areas in conjunction with relevant authorities all in an effort to contain further spread of the epidemic.

This, the Minister, said is part of the Ministry's deliberate and strategic effort aimed at containing the spread of the deadly virus.

"We have also activated Environmental Health Desks in all the 774 Local Government Areas (LGAs) in the country to vigorously pursue grassroots advocacy, offer guidance and counseling, and to disinfect and decontaminate all risk-prone areas," he added.

The Minister, according to the statement, has sent his solidarity and words of empathy to Mallam Nasir El-Rufai, Kaduna State Governor, who

was confirmed to have tested positive to coronavirus.

Dr. Abubakar, in a tweet on his official Twitter handle on Saturday, wished Gov. El-Rufai speedy recovery and full recovery from the pandemic.

"Your Excellency, Gov @elrufai I wish you a speedy and full recovery from your illness. Get well soon," reads his tweet.

The Minister, in a series of tweets thereafter, noted that he was pleased to learn about the ways in which Nigerians are coming together to support the containment of COVID-19.

He however, said the increase in cases over the last few days according to the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) update indicated that Nigerians need to take more serious measures to collectively contain the virus.

Dr. Abubakar, a member of the Presidential Task Force on the control of the spread of coronavirus code named #PTF-COVID19, urged Nigerians to continue heeding to advice

of experts and Government on COVID-19.

He said: "As more people are being encouraged to go into self-isolation, we must remind everyone to stay home & practice

social distancing. We know this is immensely difficult for many of us, but we know this is the right thing to do. We can, & must take these steps together. @NigeriaGov."



Commemoration of World Wildlife Day 2020, organized by the Nigerian Conservation Foundation and Imo State Ministry of Environment... recently

COVID-19: Nigeria Risks Food Crisis, Agric Bureau Warns

James Emejo in Abuja

The Agriculture Bureau Association of Nigeria (ABAN) has called for a stakeholders' consultative forum to rationalise initiatives to keep the country's food chain running amidst the current challenges posed by the outbreak and spread of the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic.

The association's Coordinator, Mr. Suleman Dikwa, warned that the inability to act could lead to a food crisis which will be unprecedented in the history of the country. In a statement, he said failure to act could result in food shortage for a large proportion of the population including extreme inflation of food prices and massive food waste. He said: "Having worked with farmers across all of Nigeria's regions, food manufacturers and

exporters, we believe it is time to organise ourselves to avoid a crisis in the food supply of our nation.

"This is an opportunity to bring key stakeholders to the table to rationalise activities and keep the food chain flowing."

Dikwa said the government would need to urgently identify key players in the food supply chain, track levels of food availability and manage supply and distribution as this would require better linkages between users and producers. He said following a reduction in air travels by wealthy individuals and politicians, saving billions of dollars as well as the current determination by the government to cut waste, the country now has the potential to grow its own food and live healthier. He stressed that: "We need to

bring in all active players in the agriculture and allied industry, the pharmaceutical companies, the logistic companies into an emergency mode and develop a strategy to keep our supply chain running."

Noting that the global public health crisis presented an opportunity to fine-tune activities in the agricultural sector in particular, Dikwa said: "We are shutting down systems without concurrently redirecting resources into quickly developing alternative production and supply chains of critical resources. "How do we keep our ports running? How do we get a thousand and one agencies off our ports and get a manageable number and automate the systems to keep it running? Leaders have to emerge and organise people to keep the supply chain working."



NACCIMA Commends Measures to Tackle COVID-19

Dike Onwuamaeze

The National President of Nigerian Association of Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Mines and Agriculture (NACCIMA), Mrs. Saratu Iya Aliyu, has commended steps being taken by the federal and state governments to control and reduce the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic across the country.

Aliyu, in a message she sent to encourage members of NACCIMA in this trying period, also appreciated the recent setting up of the stimulus package by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) as well as the setting up of the Nigerian Private Sector Coalition Against COVID-19, designed to mobilise private sector resources,

increase general public awareness and secure the buy-in of the private sector to support the governments' efforts.

She, however, observed the need to make the private sector coalition more inclusive to embrace the entire organised private sector (OPS) in Nigeria.

The NACCIMA boss added: "As the search for an enduring solution continues, we are encouraged by the various clinical trials including the Clinical Solidarity Trials in Norway announced by the World Health Organisation (WHO). "We sincerely hope these clinical trials for a vaccine will yield the desired results. Finally, as the Director General of the WHO recently said, 'we must continue the fight, we must unite

and ignite the industrial might... to stop the disease' I add we must continue this fight and win it, to rebuild our lives and subsequently our businesses. We will triumph and God will see us through."

She, therefore, appealed to all the members of the association to adhere strictly to the recommended safety measures issued by the governments and relevant health institutions to preserve their lives.

"At this period, we must take all precautionary measures to stay safe and alive during this period of global and national health crisis. Only then can we be there when the crisis is over to rebuild our lives and businesses," she said.

Famfa Oil Pledges N1bn to Support FG, Lagos, Others

Sunday Ehigior

The Chairman and Vice-Chairman of Famfa Oil Limited, Mr. Modupe Alakija and Mrs. Folunsho Alakija have donated N1 billion to help the federal government, Lagos State government, and other agencies in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. According to them, the donation symbolised their resilience, character and strength as they plan to work with the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC).

In a statement, the philanthropists announced the donation of N250 million to Lagos State

government and the NCDC respectively.

"As the world rallies to deal with the health, security, economic and social implications of the coronavirus, it's clear that we will feel the effects much more deeply than many of the developed world. Managing a crisis of this magnitude means that the strength of our response will determine our ability to weather the storm.

"Individually and collectively, we are rising to this unprecedented challenge in a way that symbolises our resilience, our character and strength. Famfa Oil Ltd is pleased to be able to

make this contribution and will work in consultation with key stakeholders, such as, National Center for Disease Control - N250 million; Lagos State Government - N250 million; African Center of Excellence for Genomics of Infectious Diseases - N50 million; Medical Workers on the Frontline in Lagos - N100 million; Medical Workers on the Frontline in Abuja - N100 million; Supply Of Medical Equipment to relevant organisations N245 million; and Dr. Ameyo Stella Adadevoh (DRASA) - N5 million.

"With our contribution we will together take the charge in our fight against the Coronavirus.

AUPCTRE Provides Palliatives to Staff

The Almagamated Union of Public Corporation Civil Service Technical and Recreational Services Employees (AUPCTRE) of the Ministry of Petroleum Resources has put together a palliative measure for members of its union to support them during the period of the stay at home directive aimed at curbing the spread of the coronavirus pandemic.

This was unveiled by the Chairman of the association, Engr Oladipo Agboola.

According to him, "the stay

at home directive caught a lot of us unaware and as a responsive leadership we are looking at a way to assist and help our AUPCTRE members. In view of this, the executives have started the distributing bags of rice as palliatives to members.

"In order to observe the social distancing directive, the distribution mode is decentralised across different satellite towns of the Federal capital Territory which are Nyanya/Maraba, Kubwa/

Bwari, Lugbe/Airport road, Garki/Gudu and Suleja Axis.

"The collection was done on individual basis with high social distance adopted and no proxy collection."

Agboola, urged members to adhere to the golden rules of keeping Covid-19 at bay by always wash hands and use hand sanitisers so that the chain of transmission would be broken. He also enjoined all Nigerians to pray for speedy recovery of all those infected by the virus.

MARKET INDICATORS

MONEY AND CREDIT STATISTICS (MILLION NAIRA)

	SEPTEMBER 2019
Money Supply (M3)	35,029,779.72
-- CBN Bills Held by Money Holding Sectors	7,374,356.91
Money Supply (M2)	27,655,422.82
-- Quasi Money	116,533,891.21
-- Narrow Money (M1)	11,121,531.60
--- Currency Outside Banks	1,625,047.69
--- Demand Deposits	9,496,483.91
Net Foreign Assets (NFA)	13,911,335.83
Net Domestic Assets (NDA)	21,118,443.89
-- Net Domestic Credit (NDC)	35,918,179.45
--- Credit to Government (Net)	10,452,199.38
--- Memo: Credit to Govt. (Net) less FMA	11,007,422.79
--- Memo: Fed. and Mirror Accounts (FMA)	25,465,980.07
--- Credit to Private Sector (CPS)	-14,799,735.56
-- Other Assets Net	7,000,253.07
Reserve Money (Base Money)	2,005,600.83
-- Currency in Circulation	4,677,530.81
-- Banks Reserves	317,121.43

• Source - CBN

Money Market Indicators (in Percentage)

Month	March 2018
Inter-Bank Call Rate	15.16
Minimum Rediscount Rate (MRR)	
Monetary Policy Rate (MPR)	14.00
Treasury Bill Rate	11.84
Savings Deposit Rate	4.07
1 Month Deposit Rate	8.82
3 Months Deposit Rate	9.72
6 Months Deposit Rate	10.93
12 Months Deposit Rate	10.21
Prime Lending rate	17.35
Maximum Lending Rate	31.55

• Monetary Policy Rate - 13%

OPEC DAILY BASKET PRICE AS AT FRIDAY, 27 MARCH 2020

The price of OPEC basket of thirteen crudes stood at \$24.26 a barrel on Friday, compared with \$26.04 the previous day, according to OPEC Secretariat calculations. The OPEC Reference Basket of Crudes (ORB) is made up of the following: Saharan Blend (Algeria), Girassol (Angola), Djeno (Congo), Zafiro (Equatorial Guinea), Rabi Light (Gabon), Iran Heavy (Islamic Republic of Iran), Basra Light (Iraq), Kuwait Export (Kuwait), Es Sider (Libya), Bonny Light (Nigeria), Arab Light (Saudi Arabia), Murban (UAE) and Mery (Venezuela).

SOURCE: OPEC headquarters, Vienna

MARKET NEWS

MTN Shares Decline to Listing Price as Market Drops to 8-year Low

Goddy Egene

Nigerian stocks fell to eight-year low yesterday following negative reactions to President Muhammadu Buhari's ordering of lockdown in Lagos, Abuja and Ogun, to stop the spread of coronavirus.

The Nigerian Stock Exchange (NSE) All-share Index dropped 2.43 per cent to 21,330.79, while market capitalisation shed N276.7 billion to N11.1 trillion.

The decline was caused by losses recorded banking stocks and MTN Nigeria Communications Plc, which is the second biggest listed firm.

The telco stock dipped to 10 per cent to its listing price of N90 per share.

In all, 13 stocks depreciated compared to 11 that appreciated. The price losers were led by MTN followed by Wema Bank Plc with 9.6 per cent. International Breweries Plc went down

by 9.2 per cent, while Prestige Assurance Plc lost 8.3 per cent. Activity level was mixed as volume traded rose 85.7 per cent to 466.9 million shares while value traded declined 42.4 per cent to N1.9 billion.

The most active stocks by volume were Meyer Plc (201.0 million shares), Champion Breweries Plc (89.3 million shares) and Zenith Bank Plc (48.2 million shares) while Zenith Bank (5N574.4 million),

GTBank (N283.1 million) and MTN (N245.3 million) led the value chart. Meanwhile, the NSE has assured all our stakeholders that the exchange is open for business remotely. According to the exchange, since the outbreak of this pandemic, financial markets, particularly the capital markets around the world have seen levels of volatility that are only comparable to the global financial crisis of 2007/2008.

"To maintain the integrity of our market and in order for us to continue to stimulate economic growth, we activated our business continuity plan on March 23, 2020. Through this activation, we have: continued trading during normal hours and days by providing remote trading access for dealing member firms through FIX Protocol and Virtual Private Network (VPN) platforms; commenced remote working for our non-essential

staff nationwide; closed our trading floors nationwide; maintained continuous flow of relevant market information to enable stakeholders to make informed investment decisions; and engaged with government to address market issues raised by COVID-19," it said.

The NSE noted that the ability of their financial and money markets to continue to operate during this crisis is a testament to a well-functioning economy.

PRICES FOR SECURITIES TRADED AS OF 30/03/2020

MAIN BOARD	DEALS	MARKET PRICE	QUANTITY TRADED	VALUE TRADED (N)
FINANCIAL SERVICES				
SIN BANKING	MARKET CAP(N)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES
1 ACCT BANK PLC	412,524.82	11.60	3.62 ↑	871
2 UNITED BANK FOR AFRICA PLC	202,664.39	0.85	4.72 ↑	520
3 ZENITH BANK PLC	684,663.50	21.80	8.81 ↑	889
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS	MARKET CAP(N)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES
4 FBN HOLDINGS PLC	276,350.75	7.70	10.00 ↑	527
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS				297
FINANCIAL SERVICES				2,807
ICT				
SIN TELECOMMUNICATIONS SERVICES	MARKET CAP(N)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES
5 MTN NIGERIA COMMUNICATIONS PLC	2,225,815.38	105.00	1.77 ↓	247
TELECOMMUNICATIONS SERVICES				247
INDUSTRIAL GOODS				
SIN BUILDING MATERIALS	MARKET CAP(N)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES
6 DANGOTE CEMENT PLC	2,704,645.21	50.60	0.59 ↓	225
7 LAFARGE AFRICA PLC	239,200.70	55.85	5.06 ↓	279
BUILDING MATERIALS				504
INDUSTRIAL GOODS				504
DE AND GAS				
SIN EXPLORATION AND PRODUCTION	MARKET CAP(N)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES
8 SHELL PETROLEUM DEVELOPMENT COMPANY PLC	345,046.07	500.50	-	50
EXPLORATION AND PRODUCTION				50
DE AND GAS				50
PRICES FOR REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT TRUST & CLOSE END FUND SECURITIES				
CONSTRUCTION/REAL ESTATE				
SIN REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT TRUSTS (REITS)	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES
9 SKYE SHELTER FUND PLC	1,710.00	85.50	-	0
10 UNION HOMES REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT TRUST (REIT)	10,175.81	40.70	-	0
11 UPDC REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT TRUST	10,806.49	4.05	-8.99 ↓	28
REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT TRUSTS (REITS)				28
CONSTRUCTION/REAL ESTATE				28
FINANCIAL SERVICES				
SIN OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES
12 NIGERIA ENERGY SECTOR FUND	411.91	552.20	-	0
13 VALUEALLIANCE VALUE FUND	3,312.39	103.20	-	0
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS				0
FINANCIAL SERVICES				0
REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT TRUST & CLOSE END FUND TOTALS				28

Price List (Equities)

MAIN BOARD	DEALS	MARKET PRICE	QUANTITY TRADED	VALUE TRADED (N)
PRICES FOR MAIN BOARD SECURITIES				
AGRICULTURE				
SIN CROP PRODUCTION	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES
14 FTN COCOA PROCESSORS PLC	440.00	0.20	-	8
15 OKOMU OIL PALM PLC	57,234.60	60.00	6.10 ↑	85
16 PRESCO PLC	52,000.00	52.00	8.00 ↑	34
CROP PRODUCTION				127
SIN FISHING/HUNTING/TRAPPING	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES
17 ELAN LAKES PLC	9,500.00	4.25	-	0
FISHING/HUNTING/TRAPPING				0
SIN LIVESTOCK/ANIMAL SPECIALTIES	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES
18 LIVESTOCK FEEDS PLC	1,500.00	0.50	8.76 ↑	10
LIVESTOCK/ANIMAL SPECIALTIES				10
AGRICULTURE				137
CONGLOMERATES				
SIN DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIES	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES
19 JOHNHOLT PLC	217.92	0.56	-	1
20 S C O A MFG PLC	1,903.99	2.93	-	1
21 TRANSNATIONAL CORPORATION OF NIGERIA PLC	44,306.31	1.05	8.83 ↑	156
22 U A C N PLC	26,075.72	9.65	0.64 ↑	178
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIES				338
CONGLOMERATES				338
CONSTRUCTION/REAL ESTATE				
SIN BUILDING CONSTRUCTION	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES
23 ARBICO PLC	521.24	3.51	-	0
BUILDING CONSTRUCTION				0
SIN INFRASTRUCTURE/HEAVY CONSTRUCTION	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES
24 JULIUS BERGER NIG PLC	28,842.00	21.85	9.86 ↑	42
25 ROADSDIG PLC	165.00	6.80	-	0
INFRASTRUCTURE/HEAVY CONSTRUCTION				42
CONSTRUCTION/REAL ESTATE				
SIN REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES
26 UACH PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT COMPANY PLC	2,998.48	1.00	-7.41 ↓	18
REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT				18
CONSTRUCTION/REAL ESTATE				60
CONSUMER GOODS				
SIN AUTOMOBILES/AUTO PARTS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES
27 ON TYRE & RUBBER PLC	954.53	0.20	-	0
AUTOMOBILES/AUTO PARTS				0
SIN BEVERAGES-BREWERS/DISTILLERS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES
28 CHAMPION BREW PLC	7,045.55	0.90	-5.25 ↓	20
29 GOLDEN GUINEA BREW PLC	242.72	0.89	-	0
30 GUINNESS RIB PLC	93,821.99	29.05	-	32
31 INTERNATIONAL BREWERIES PLC	79,031.82	9.20	-1.85 ↓	50
32 NIGERIAN BREW PLC	448,226.24	35.05	-	107
BEVERAGES-BREWERS/DISTILLERS				209
SIN FOOD PRODUCTS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES
33 DANGOTE SUGAR REFINERY PLC	100,000.00	15.00	-8.25 ↓	137
34 FLOUR MILLS NIG PLC	95,940.88	23.40	8.04 ↑	70
35 MORAYWA FLOUR MILL PLC	8,223.22	1.10	4.91 ↑	47
36 MULTITREK INTEGRATED FOODS PLC	1,340.18	0.36	-	0
37 IN NIG FLOUR MILLS PLC	702.28	4.50	-	2
38 NISCON ALIQUID INDUSTRIES PLC	33,874.65	15.05	3.70 ↑	30
39 UNION BIODIN SALT PLC	3,221.87	12.15	-	0
FOOD PRODUCTS				232
CONSUMER GOODS				18,520,932
SIN FOOD PRODUCTS-DIVERSIFIED	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES
40 CADBURY NIGERIA PLC	19,815.03	10.55	-	32
41 NESTLE NIGERIA PLC	1,765,125.42	1,480.90	-	71
FOOD PRODUCTS-DIVERSIFIED				103
SIN HOUSEHOLD DURABLES	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES
42 NIGERIAN ENAMELWARE PLC	1,680.31	22.10	-	0
43 VITAFOAM NIG PLC	6,004.05	4.80	2.35 ↑	63
HOUSEHOLD DURABLES				63
SIN PERSONAL/HOUSEHOLD PRODUCTS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES
44 P 2 CUSONS NIGERIA PLC	23,227.29	5.85	4.48 ↑	72
45 UNILEVER NIGERIA PLC	112,602.11	19.00	-2.00 ↓	69
PERSONAL/HOUSEHOLD PRODUCTS				131
CONSUMER GOODS				788
FINANCIAL SERVICES				19,851,012
FINANCIAL SERVICES				
SIN BANKING	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES
46 ECOBANK TRANSNATIONAL INCORPORATED	146,796.41	8.00	5.26 ↑	156
47 FIDELITY BANK PLC	68,676.27	8.22 ↑	2.65	265
48 QUADRANT TRUST BANK PLC	919,224.25	31.25	2.45 ↑	323
49 JAZZ BANK PLC	28,624.97	0.70	7.05 ↑	52
50 STERLING BANK PLC	57,560.84	2.00	-1.00 ↓	142

MAIN BOARD	DEALS	MARKET PRICE	QUANTITY TRADED	VALUE TRADED (N)
FINANCIAL SERVICES				
SIN BANKING	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES
51 UNION BANK NIG PLC	184,916.78	0.35	9.48 ↑	76
52 UNITY BANK PLC	9,351.47	0.80	-	54
53 WEMA BANK PLC	30,473.88	0.79	1.39 ↑	62
BANKING				1,131
SIN INSURANCE CARRIERS, BROKERS AND SERVICES	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES
54 AFRICAN ALLIANCE INSURANCE PLC	4,117.00	0.20	-	0
55 AIGID INSURANCE PLC	5,485.56	0.78	4.00 ↑	47
56 AXAMANDARD INSURANCE PLC	21,525.00	2.86	2.50 ↑	9
57 CONSOLIDATED HALLMARK INSURANCE PLC	3,176.70	0.39	8.33 ↑	4
58 CONTINENTAL REINSURANCE PLC	22,825.04	2.29	-	0
59 CORNERSTONE INSURANCE PLC	10,163.36	0.89	6.02 ↑	28
60 GOLDLINK INSURANCE PLC	909.00	0.20	-	0
61 GUINER INSURANCE PLC	1,228.00	0.29	-	0
62 INTERNATIONAL ENERGY INSURANCE PLC	487.80	0.58	-	0
63 LASACO ASSURANCE PLC	2,860.58	0.25	7.69 ↑	8
64 LAY UNION AND ROCK INS PLC	2,181.13	0.51	-	1
65 LINKAGE ASSURANCE PLC	3,840.00	0.48	-	3
66 MUTUAL BENEFITS ASSURANCE PLC	2,234.55	0.29	-	13
67 NCM INSURANCE PLC	13,778.80	2.42	-	13
68 NIGER INSURANCE PLC	1,825.26	0.21	5.00 ↑	3
69 PRESTIGE ASSURANCE PLC	2,460.40	0.56	-	0
70 REGENCY ASSURANCE PLC	1,333.75	0.29	-	3
71 SOVEREIGN TRUST INSURANCE PLC	2,272.80	0.20	-	0
72 STACO INSURANCE PLC	4,482.72	0.48	-	0
INSURANCE CARRIERS, BROKERS AND SERVICES				0
FINANCIAL SERVICES				10,400
SIN INSURANCE CARRIERS, BROKERS AND SERVICES	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES
73 STANDARD ALLIANCE INSURANCE PLC	2,582.21	0.20	-	0
74 SUNU ASSURANCES NIGERIA PLC	2,800.00	0.20	-	3
75 UNIC DIVERSIFIED HOLDINGS PLC	516.40	0.20	-	0
INSURANCE CARRIERS, BROKERS AND SERVICES				0
INDUSTRIAL GOODS				
SIN BUILDING MATERIALS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES
76 CONCRETE INDUSTRIES PLC	2,700.00	0.20	-	1
77 INTERNATIONAL INSURANCE PLC	2,700.00	0.20	-	0
78 TRAFIC INSURANCE PLC	8,800.00	0.20	-	0
INSURANCE CARRIERS, BROKERS AND SERVICES				11,800,000
SIN MISCELLANEOUS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES
79 MTD HOLDINGS (NIG) PLC	2,700.00	1.10	-	11
MISCELLANEOUS				11
SIN BUILDING MATERIALS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES
80 ABBEY MORTGAGE BANK PLC	2,700.00	1.10	-	3
81 AND-SERVINGHOOD HOLDING PLC	2,700.00	0.20	-	0
82 TRINITY TRUST HOLDINGS (NIG) PLC	2,700.00	1.10	-	0
83 MOUNT SAVANNA HOLDING PLC	2,700.00	0.20	-	0
84 UNION HOMES REAL ESTATE PLC	2,700.00	0.20	-	0
MISCELLANEOUS				3
INSURANCE CARRIERS, BROKERS AND SERVICES				0
SIN OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES
85 MIFCO PLC	2,700.00	0.20	-	0
86 INTERNATIONAL TRUST (NIG) PLC	2,700.00	0.20	-	0
87 TRUST CAPITAL MANAGEMENT & TRUST PLC	2,700.00	0.20	-	0
88 FIDELITY BANK PLC	2,700.00	0.20	-	0
89 FIDELITY BANK PLC	2,700.00	0.20	-	0
90 XAVIER OIL HOLDINGS PLC	2,700.00	0.20	-	0
91 UNIC CAPITAL PLC	2,700.00	0.20	-	0
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS				0
FINANCIAL SERVICES				11,800,000
HEALTHCARE				
SIN HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES
92 EKOCORP PLC	2,243.70	4.50	5.88 ↑	2
93 UNION DIAGNOSTIC & CLINICAL SERVICES PLC	781.69	0.22	10.00 ↑	5
HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS				7
SIN MEDICAL SUPPLIES	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES
94 MORISON INDUSTRIES PLC	494.58	0.50	-	2
MEDICAL SUPPLIES				2
SIN PHARMACEUTICALS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	<		

Sterling Bank Floats N30bn Commercial Paper to Boost Working Capital

Goddy Egene

Sterling Bank Plc is seeking to raise up to N30 billion in the first and second series of its commercial paper (CP) programme to finance its short-term working capital

requirements.

The series one CP has a tenor of 182 days and yield of 7.5 per cent, while the series two has a tenor of 270 days and a yield of 8.0 per cent. The offer opened last Wednesday and closed yesterday.

Sterling Bank Plc last Friday reported gross earnings stood at N150.2 billion, up from N148.7 billion in 2018. Profit after tax (PAT) rose from N9.2 billion to N10.6 billion in 2019, showing an increase of 15 per cent.

Commenting on the financial

performance, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Sterling Bank Plc, Abubakar Suleiman, said the bank recorded an increase in gross earnings, driven majorly by growth in fees and commissions by 24.3 per cent, despite a steady loan base – as

it continues to diversify into key sectors of focus - and a decline in trading income.

According to him, in 2019, the bank delivered more than 200 per cent increase in loans to its retail and consumer segment with its loan-to-deposit ratio

(LDR) above the regulatory limit all year round.

Abubakar explained that the bank's digital lending product continued to set the trend with more than N45 billion disbursed to more than 50,000 customers.

A Mutual fund (Unit Trust) is an investment vehicle managed by a SEC (Securities and Exchange Commission) registered Fund Manager. Investors with similar objectives buy units of the Fund so that the Fund Manager can buy securities that will generate their desired return.

An ETF (Exchange Traded Fund) is a type of fund which owns the assets (shares of stock, bonds, oil futures, gold bars, foreign currency, etc.) and divides ownership of those assets into shares. Investors can buy these 'shares' on the

floor of the Nigerian Stock Exchange.

A REIT (Real Estate Investment Trust) is an investment vehicle that allows both small and large investors to part-own real estate ventures (eg. Offices, Houses, Hospitals) in proportion to their investments. The assets are divided into shares that are traded on the Nigerian Stock Exchange.

GUIDE TO DATA:

Date: All fund prices are quoted in Naira as at 27-Mar-2020, unless otherwise stated.

Offer price: The price at which units of a trust or ETF are bought by investors.

Bid Price: The price at which Investors redeem (sell) units of a trust or ETF.

Yield/Total Return: Denotes the total return an investor would have earned on his investment. Money Market Funds report Yield while others report Year-to-date Total Return.

NAV: Is value per share of the real estate assets held by a REIT on a specific date.



DAILY PRICE LIST FOR MUTUAL FUNDS, REITS and ETFs

MUTUAL FUNDS / UNIT TRUSTS			
AFRINVEST ASSET MANAGEMENT LTD aaml@afinvest.com			
Web: www.afinvest.com; Tel: +234 818 885 6757			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
Afrinvest Equity Fund	114.44	118.09	-21.89%
Afrinvest Plutus Fund	100.00	100.00	6.50%
Nigeria International Debt Fund	295.35	295.35	-5.49%
ALTERNATIVE CAPITAL PARTNERS LTD info@acapng.com			
Web: www.acapng.com, Tel: +234 1 291 2406, +234 1 291 2868			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
ACAP Canary Growth Fund	0.87	0.87	3.03%
ACAP Income Funds	0.77	0.77	34.43%
AIICO CAPITAL LTD amfm@aiicocapital.com			
Web: www.aiicocapital.com, Tel: +234-1-2792974			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
AIICO Money Market Fund	100.00	100.00	7.07%
AIICO Balanced Fund	2.45	2.50	-0.42%
ANCHORIA ASSET MANAGEMENT LIMITED info@anchoriaam.com			
Web: www.anchoriaam.com, Tel: 08166830267; 08036814510; 08028419180			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
Anchoria Money Market	N/A	N/A	N/A
Anchoria Equity Fund	N/A	N/A	N/A
Anchoria Fixed Income Fund	N/A	N/A	N/A
ARM INVESTMENT MANAGERS LTD enquiries@arminvestmentcenter.com			
Web: www.arm.com.ng; Tel: 0700 CALLARM (0700 225 5276)			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
ARM Aggressive Growth Fund	12.68	13.06	-17.23%
ARM Discovery Fund	308.26	317.55	-10.76%
ARM Ethical Fund	25.17	25.93	-13.44%
ARM Money Market Fund	1.00	1.00	6.53%
AXA MANSARD INVESTMENTS LIMITED investmentcare@axamansard.com			
Web: www.axamansard.com; Tel: +2341-4488482			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
AXA Mansard Equity Income Fund	87.33	87.94	-9.11%
AXA Mansard Money Market Fund	1.00	1.00	6.06%
CAPITAL EXPRESS ASSET AND TRUST LIMITED info@capitalexpressassetandtrust.com			
Web: www.capitalexpressassetandtrust.com ; Tel: +234 803 307 5048			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
CEAT Fixed Income Fund	N/A	N/A	N/A
CHAPELHILL DENHAM MANAGEMENT LTD investmentmanagement@chapelhilldenham.com			
Web: www.chapelhilldenham.com, Tel: +234 461 0691			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
Chapelhill Denham Money Market Fund	0.07	0.05	7.04%
Paramount Equity Fund	9.67	10.05	-21.93%
Women's Investment Fund	104.35	105.19	-5.53%
CORDROS ASSET MANAGEMENT LIMITED assetmgteam@cordros.com			
Web: www.cordros.com, Tel: 019036947			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
Cordros Money Market Fund	100.00	100.00	6.41%
Cordros Milestone Fund 2023	92.57	92.95	
Cordros Milestone Fund 2028	99.54	100.02	
CORONATION ASSET MANAGEMENT investment@coronationam.com			
Web: www.coronationam.com , Tel: 012366215			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
Coronation Money Market Fund	1.00	1.00	4.82%
Coronation Balanced Fund	0.82	0.83	-11.70%
Coronation Fixed Income Fund	1.32	1.32	-0.40%
EDC FUNDS MANAGEMENT LIMITED mutualfundng@ecobank.com			
Web: www.ecobank.com Tel: 012265281			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
EDC Nigeria Money Market Fund Class A	100.00	100.00	5.88%
EDC Nigeria Money Market Fund Class B	1,000,000.00	1,000,000.00	5.24%
EDC Nigeria Fixed Income Fund	1,187.84	1,191.65	2.29%
FBNQUEST ASSET MANAGEMENT LTD invest@fbnquest.com			
Web: www.fbnquest.com/asset-management; Tel: +234-81 0082 0082			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
FBN Fixed Income Fund	1,299.26	1,300.90	0.63%
FBN Balanced Fund	129.18	130.06	-12.01%
FBN Money Market Fund	100.00	100.00	6.20%
FBN Nigeria Eurobond (USD) Fund - Institutional	111.66	112.31	-6.36%
FBN Nigeria Eurobond (USD) Fund - Retail	112.24	112.89	-6.33%
FBN Nigeria Smart Beta Equity Fund	101.92	103.10	-21.68%
FCMB ASSET MANAGEMENT LIMITED fcbamhelpdesk@fcbm.com			
Web: www.fcbassetmanagement.com; Tel: +234 1 462 2596			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
Legacy Money Market Fund	1.00	1.00	7.19%
Legacy Debt Fund	3.72	3.72	1.69%
Legacy Equity Fund	0.94	0.96	-16.69%
Legacy USD Bond Fund	1.09	1.09	1.06%
FSDH ASSET MANAGEMENT LTD coralfunds@fsdhgroup.com			
Web: www.fsdhaml.com; Tel: 01-270 4884-5; 01-280 9740-1			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
Coral Growth Fund	2,820.83	2,849.61	-5.45%
Coral Income Fund	3,140.61	3,140.61	14.57%
FSDH Treasury Bills Fund	100.00	100.00	6.56%
GREENWICH ASSET MANAGEMENT LIMITED assetmanagement@gtigroup.com			
Web: www.gtigroup.com ; Tel: +234 1 4619261-2			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
Greenwich Plus Money Market Fund	100.00	100.00	5.26%
Nigeria Entertainment Fund	115.00	115.75	6.97%

GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT ASSET MANAGEMENT LIMITED			
assetmanagement@gdl.com.ng			
Web: www.gdl.com.ng ; Tel: +234 9055691122			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
GDL Money Market Fund	N/A	N/A	N/A
INVESTMENT ONE FUNDS MANAGEMENT LTD enquiries@investment-one.com			
Web: www.investment-one.com; Tel: +234 812 992 1045, +234 1 448 8888			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
Abacus Money Market Fund	N/A	N/A	N/A
Vantage Balanced Fund	N/A	N/A	N/A
Vantage Guaranteed Income Fund	N/A	N/A	N/A
Kedari Investment Fund (KIF)	N/A	N/A	N/A
LOTUS CAPITAL LTD fincon@lotuscapitallimited.com			
Web: www.lotuscapitallimited.com; Tel: +234 1-291 4626 / +234 1-291 4624			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
Lotus Halal Investment Fund	1.13	1.15	-3.12%
Lotus Halal Fixed Income Fund	1,128.36	1,128.36	2.70%
MERISTEM WEALTH MANAGEMENT LTD info@meristemwealth.com			
Web: http://www.meristemwealth.com/funds/ ; Tel: +234 1-4488260			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
Meristem Equity Market Fund	7.51	7.58	-23.37%
Meristem Money Market Fund	10.00	10.00	4.66%
PAC ASSET MANAGEMENT LTD info@pacassetmanagement.com			
Web: www.pacassetmanagement.com/mutualfunds; Tel: +234 1 271 8632			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
PACAM Balanced Fund	1.27	1.28	4.21%
PACAM Fixed Income Fund	11.37	11.40	1.21%
PACAM Money Market Fund	10.00	10.00	5.00%
PACAM Equity Fund	0.91	0.91	
PACAM EuroBond Fund	86.33	88.33	
SCM CAPITAL LIMITED info@scmcapitalng.com			
Web: www.scmcapitalng.com; Tel: +234 1-280 2226, +234 1- 280 2227			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
SCM Capital Frontier Fund	109.92	110.76	-11.16%
SFS CAPITAL NIGERIA LTD investments@sfsnigeria.com			
Web: www.sfsnigeria.com, Tel: +234 (01) 2801400			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
SFS Fixed Income Fund	1.03	1.03	2.68%
STANBIC IBTC ASSET MANAGEMENT LTD assetmanagement@stanbicibtc.com			
Web: www.stanbicibtcassetmanagement.com; Tel: +234 1 280 1266; 0700 MUTUALFUNDS			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
Stanbic IBTC Balanced Fund	N/A	N/A	N/A
Stanbic IBTC Bond Fund	N/A	N/A	N/A
Stanbic IBTC Ethical Fund	N/A	N/A	N/A
Stanbic IBTC Guaranteed Investment Fund	N/A	N/A	N/A
Stanbic IBTC Iman Fund	N/A	N/A	N/A
Stanbic IBTC Money Market Fund	N/A	N/A	N/A
Stanbic IBTC Nigerian Equity Fund	N/A	N/A	N/A
Stanbic IBTC Dollar Fund (USD)	N/A	N/A	N/A
Stanbic IBTC Shariah Fixed Income Fund	N/A	N/A	N/A
UNITED CAPITAL ASSET MANAGEMENT LTD www.unitedcapitalplcgroup.com; Tel: +234 803 306 2887			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
United Capital Balanced Fund	N/A	N/A	N/A
United Capital Bond Fund	N/A	N/A	N/A
United Capital Equity Fund	N/A	N/A	N/A
United Capital Money Market Fund	N/A	N/A	N/A
United Capital Eurobond Fund	N/A	N/A	N/A
United Capital Wealth for Women Fund	N/A	N/A	N/A
QUANTUM ZENITH ASSET MANAGEMENT & INVESTMENTS LTD service@quantumzenithasset.com.ng			
Web: www.quantumzenith.com.ng; Tel: +234 1-2784219			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
Zenith Equity Fund	9.06	9.16	-11.90%
Zenith Ethical Fund	10.79	10.88	-7.20%
Zenith Income Fund	23.26	23.26	4.61%
Zenith Money Market Fund	1.00	1.00	4.71%
REITS			
Fund Name	NAV Per Share	Yield / T-Rtn	
FSDH UPDC Real Estate Investment Fund	3.20	-66.85%	
SFS Skye Shelter Fund	120.83	1.45%	
Union Homes REIT	52.49	0.85%	
EXCHANGE TRADED FUNDS			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
Lotus Halal Equity Exchange Traded Fund	7.17	7.27	-17.55%
SIAML Pension ETF 40	74.53	76.10	-19.41%
Stanbic IBTC ETF 30 Fund	56.31	57.35	-23.63%
VETIVA FUND MANAGERS LTD funds@vetiva.com			
Web: www.vetiva.com; Tel: +234 1 453 0697			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
Vetiva Banking Exchange Traded Fund	2.45	2.49	-30.68%
Vetiva Consumer Goods Exchange Traded Fund	3.23	3.31	-45.04%
Vetiva Griffin 30 Exchange Traded Fund	10.01	10.11	-17.01%
Vetiva Industrial Goods Exchange Traded Fund	10.31	10.51	-0.76%
Vetiva S&P Nigeria Sovereign Bond Exchange Traded Fund	164.40	166.40	-11.91%
INFRASTRUCTURE FUND			
Fund Name	NAV Per Share	Yield / T-Rtn	
Chapel Hill Denham Nigeria Infrastructure Debt Fund	108.69	17.60%	

The value of investments and the income from them may fall as well as rise. Past performance is a guide and not an indication of future returns. Fund prices published in this edition are also available on each fund manager's website and FMAN's website at www.fman.com.ng. Fund prices are supplied by the operator of the relevant fund and are published for information purposes only.

TUESDAYSPORTS

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Mikel Obi is the Greatest Nigerian Footballer, Says Amokachi

Duro Ikhazuagbe

Former Super Eagles forward, Daniel Amokachi yesterday picked John Mikel Obi, 32, as the greatest Nigerian Footballer of all time.

Despite arguments amongst Nigerian football fans who is the greatest between former Green Eagles winger, Segun Odegbami, former captains Austin Jay Jay Okocha and Nwankwo Kanu, Amokachi opted for the former Chelsea midfielder.

Speaking during his "The Bull's Pit" Brila FM Sports Radio show yesterday, Amokachi insisted that in terms of laurels won for both club and country, Mikel stands shoulder above all other former Nigerian internationals.

"Mikel is the greatest player. He has won everything that a player can hope to; the Champions League, Europa, AFCON in 2013 and he also captained the national team," observed Amokachi fondly called the Bull during his playing career.

He said laurels decide who a great footballer is. "As a footballer, your laurels count and that will surely count for Mikel because nobody has won that much in Nigerian football," stressed the

former FA Cup winner with Everton.

Amokachi who earned 44 caps for the senior national team is Nigeria's Football Ambassador. He's also speculated to be in the shadow to take over as the Technical Director of the Nigeria Football Federation (NFF).

Mikel who recently walked away from Trabzonspor in the Turkish topflight, played 11 years at Stamford Bridge during which he won the UEFA Champions League, the Europa League, two Premier League and the FA Cup.

Mikel who will be 33 years old on April 22, began his football career with Plateau United of Jos before joining Norwegian club Lyn Oslo at the age of 17 in 2004.

In 2006, barely months after leading Nigeria to a silver medal finish at the 2005 FIFA Under-20 World Cup in The Netherlands, made a controversial transfer to English club Chelsea. Manchester United claimed they had earlier signed him.

Mikel stayed with Chelsea for 11 years, before moving to China with Tianjin TEDA in 2017.

After two years in China, he returned to England on a short-term deal with Middlesbrough, before joining Trabzonspor

on a free transfer in July 2019.

In a 14-year

international career between 2005 and 2019, he played 88 times for

Nigeria, scoring six goals.

He quit the Super

Eagles after he led the team to a bronze finish at AFCON 2019 in Egypt.



John Mikel Obi...tipped as Nigeria's all-time greatest footballer

Postponed Tokyo Olympics to Now Begin July 23 Next Year

The Tokyo Olympics will begin on July 23 next year, organisers said on Monday, after the coronavirus forced the historic decision to postpone the Games until 2021.

The announcement comes less than a week after organisers were forced to delay the Games under heavy pressure from athletes and sports federations as the global outbreak worsened.

"The Olympics will be held from July 23 to August 8, 2021. The Paralympics will be held from August 24 to September 5," Tokyo 2020 chief Yoshiro Mori told reporters at a hastily arranged news conference.

Only hours earlier, Mori had said he expected a decision from the International Olympic Committee (IOC) during the course of the week.

But on Monday evening, he said an emergency teleconference

had been held with the IOC and the date finalised.

"We agreed that the timing of the event will be in summer as originally planned, considering the coronavirus... and a certain amount of time needed for preparations, selection and qualification of athletes," he added.

In a statement, the IOC said the new dates would give health authorities and organisers "the maximum time to deal with the constantly changing landscape and the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic."

The decision would also cause "minimum" disruption to the international sports calendar, the body said.

The Tokyo 2020 Olympics were due to open on July 24 this year and run for 16 days, but the coronavirus pandemic forced the first peacetime postponement of the Games.

The IOC and Japan had for weeks insisted the show could go on but the rapid spread of COVID-19 prompted growing disquiet among athletes and sporting federations.

The Olympics was the highest-profile sporting casualty of the coronavirus that has wiped out fixtures worldwide and all but halted professional sport.

In a near-simultaneous announcement on Monday, World Athletics said it would now move its world championships, which had been due to take place in Eugene, Oregon on August 6-15 next year, to 2022.

There was some speculation that Japanese organisers could take advantage of the blank canvas to shift the Games to spring, avoiding the heat of the Tokyo summer that had been their main concern before coronavirus struck.

Due to the heat, the marathon

has been moved to Sapporo, a city some 800 kilometres (500 miles) to the north of Tokyo where the weather is cooler even in mid-summer.

The postponement has handed organisers the "unprecedented" task of rearranging an event seven years in the making, and Tokyo 2020 CEO Toshiko Muto has admitted the additional costs will be "massive".

According to the latest budget, the Games were due to cost \$12.6 billion, shared between the organising committee, the government of Japan and Tokyo city.

However, that number is hotly contested with a much-publicised government audit suggesting the central government was spending several times that amount - on items organisers claim are only tangentially related to the Olympics.

COVID-19 UPDATE

Messi Announces Barca Players Accept 70 Per cent Pay Cut

Barcelona players will take a 70% pay cut during the coronavirus pandemic and make additional contributions to ensure non-sporting staff receive full wages.

Captain Lionel Messi said the move was delayed as the players were "looking for a formula to help the club".

Juventus players and manager Maurizio Sarri have also agreed to freeze their pay for four months at the weekend.

Spain's national death toll now stands at 7,340, making it the worst-affected country in the world behind Italy.

German sides Bayern Munich and Borussia Dortmund, have also agreed to take pay cuts.

In a statement, Barca skipper Messi said: "Before going any further, we want to make it clear that we were always willing to reduce our salaries because we understand

perfectly that we are in an exceptional situation. We, as players, are always here to help the club when they ask.

"It does not cease to surprise us that from within the club there were those who tried to put us under the magnifying glass and tried to add pressure to do something that we always knew we would do.

"If we didn't speak until now, it's because the priority was to find solutions to help the club and to see who the most affected were during this situation.

"For our party, the moment has arrived that, the cut will be 70% of our wage during the state of alarm. We will also help out the club in order for the workers to be paid 100% of their wages."

Barcelona's board of directors, members of its professional sports teams and most of the basketball team have also agreed to reduce their salaries.

Man City Star, Gundogan, Gives Liverpool EPL Title

Liverpool should be awarded the Premier League title if the season cannot be completed due to the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic, Manchester City midfielder, Ilkay Gundogan, suggested yesterday.

Jurgen Klopp's men were a tantalising two wins away from their first league crown since 1990 when the season was suspended earlier this month.

The shutdown is currently due to last until April 30. Premier League chiefs are due to meet on Friday, with no indications of when football will resume.

Gundogan, whose side trail Liverpool by 25 points, told German broadcaster ZDF that if

the season could not be finished, Klopp's side deserved the title.

"It would be OK for me," he said. "As a sportsman you have to be fair."

The 29-year-old German international, who has won the Premier League title with City for the past two seasons, said it was unlikely that he and his teammates could resume training at the end of April.

"Honestly, I can't imagine (that happening) and also, I don't know how realistic it is," he said.

Figures on Sunday revealed that 1,228 people with coronavirus have died in Britain. Prime Minister Boris Johnson is

among more than 19,500 people who have tested positive for COVID-19.

Aleksander Ceferin, president of European football's governing body Uefa, said on Saturday that the 2019/20 campaign could be "lost" if it could not be restarted by the end of June.

Gundogan conceded that Premier League chiefs were faced with a difficult choice.

"There are different opinions," he said. "For clubs who have had a very good season, it obviously wouldn't be nice if it was cancelled now."

"On the other hand, for clubs who aren't doing as well and are maybe in

the relegation places, an abandonment would obviously suit them."

Cancellation would have a knock-on effect on the second-tier English Championship, with both Leeds United and West Brom occupying the two automatic promotion places.

Gundogan said he would be willing to take a pay cut if English clubs followed the examples of Serie A leaders Juventus and his former club Borussia Dortmund.

"Of course I think it's OK, that goes without saying -- (but) there's been no discussion in England yet," he said.



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THIS DAY

Tuesday March 31, 2020

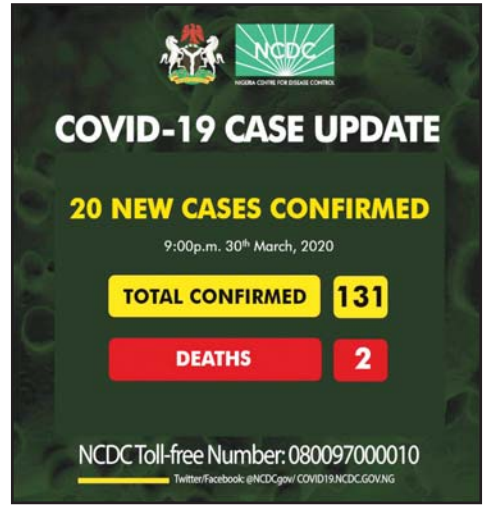
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MISSILE

Soyinka to Buhari

"Before this becomes a habit, a question: does President Buhari have the powers to close down state borders? We want clear answers. We are not in a war emergency"

- Nobel laureate, Prof. Wole Soyinka, questioning the legality of the lockdown ordered by the President Muhammadu Buhari.



COVID-19 CASE UPDATE

20 NEW CASES CONFIRMED

9:00p.m. 30th March, 2020

TOTAL CONFIRMED 131

DEATHS 2

NCDC Toll-free Number: 08009700010

Twitter/Facebook: @NCDCCgov/COVID19NCDCCGOVNG

TUESDAY WITH REUBEN ABATI

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The Psychology of COVID-19

Nigeria announced its first COVID-19 case on February 27 - an Italian who came into the country on February 24 and displayed symptoms of the disease while visiting Lafarge Cement Company in Ewekoro, Ogun State. He has been treated and discharged. Since then Nigeria has recorded a total of 111 cases, as at the time of this writing, with two reported deaths. The Nigerian government has introduced a number of measures: monetary measures by the Central Bank of Nigeria, and fiscal measures by the Federal Ministry of Finance. State governments and the private sector are also taking steps to contain the virus, treat the affected and prevent an escalation of the disease. But of all the measures taken so far, it seems to me that not enough attention is being paid to the psychological impact of COVID-19 and its effect on the mental health of Nigerians. Psychology is very important to our management of the pandemic. I am beginning to observe very unusual behaviour among Nigerians. People are responding to the Corona Virus pandemic in very unusual manners that may have a worse effect than the pandemic itself, such that long after the disease may have receded, we could have a large population of damaged persons who may be struggling with the after-effects.



Minister of Health, Dr. Osagie Ehanire

stockpiling food and other essentials. I advise you to do the same. Buy whatever you can buy because we don't quite understand how this Corona thing will turn out."

When I got into the supermarket, I was confused. Entry was controlled, the managers having adopted what they called a "Q" system. Despite the fact that there was no crowd inside, the few persons allowed in at a time were busy buying every available item as if the world was about to end. I saw a lady with a trolley-load of eggs. I ended up observing other people. I really couldn't buy as much as I wanted. I felt as if I was surrounded by persons suffering from what psychiatrists call obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), or better still, anxiety disorder. COVID-19 has turned so many persons into mental health cases. Fear has driven the people into all kinds of strange behavior. The fear of dying and suffering is probably at the root of man's survival instinct. My doctoral research in thanatos and thanatomimesis showed that the fear of dying is perhaps worse than death itself. See, for example: Leo Tolstoy, *The Death of Ivan Illyich* (1886); Thomas Mann, *The Magic Mountain* (1924), and Elisabeth Kubler-Ross, *On Death and Dying* (1969). In the face of COVID-19, many are dying silently out of fear, panic and anxiety. Who will save or help such persons?

Perhaps the biggest psychological indication that I have observed is the crisis of "over-confidence" fuelled by the illusion of control, dangerously complicated by ignorance of an African peculiarity. Over the weekend, I was in Ogun State. I was shocked to see the markets bustling with reckless energy and stupid community spirit. Nobody was observing social distancing. I saw young men hugging each other, shaking hands and carrying on as if COVID-19 was a foreign tale told by idiots. At a point, I had to challenge a group of youths, huddled together, playing draughts (that is - checkers), excitedly, without a care in the world.

"Eyin boys, what you are doing is not right. Have you not heard of Corona? You should observe social distancing. This is not the time to play draught, back-slapping, sitting close to each other. Corona Virus kills," I said.

"Baba Alaye, e gboju n be. Corona is a big man's disease. It cannot do anything to us. It only affects corrupt people. Awa o je gbi, a o le ku gbi. We are not corrupt. Corona cannot touch us. Let the elite deal with their problem. Corona for where? Me sef, I be Corona. If Corona see me, we go look at each other Coro, Coro. Oju koro ki i pa oju koro je."

I tried to offer some information. I didn't want to antagonize them, so I put the blame on the Ogun State Government, not doing enough to

sensitize and mobilize the people to see reason and respect Science. I talked about the supremacy of Science in these strange times... It didn't work.

"Egbon, oro alakowe le n so yen o. We local people have a solution to it. I know the herbal concoction that will drive Corona Virus away, by the time I use herbs, with incisions and spiritual meal, Corona will pick race so fast, it will find itself back in China. Awon a ti tari. Egungun be careful."

I was perplexed. Corona Virus is a matter of life and death. It does not respect geography. It does not distinguish between members of Nigeria's political parties: it doesn't know whether you belong to the Peoples Democratic Party or the All Progressives Congress. It is a contagion, a deadly, infectious disease. The smartest scientists in the world are struggling to understand what it is. Some characters sit in Nigeria's rural communities and insist that they have a herbal formula or a spiritual formula that can cure Corona Virus. If Corona Virus moves from Nigeria's cities to the hinterland and rural areas, we should expect death on a ferocious, Italy-like scale.

I mentioned ignorance earlier. There are also some religious leaders going about telling the people that Corona Virus cannot touch Christians or Muslims. One popular Pastor even preached on Sunday that whoever goes for testing is likely to be infected and so, no Christian should go for testing because Corona Virus is a manifestation of the anti-Christ. In Katsina, one Muslim cleric insisted on holding Friday prayers in defiance of official directives. The State Task Force on Corona Virus dispersed the crowd. What followed was that some of the members of the group stormed a police station and burnt down the vehicles in the compound. They said they were defending their right to pray and assemble. They are mad. Every Pastor or Imam who violates the rules on the containment of COVID-19 should be arrested and made to face the full wrath of the law.

Some Corona Virus lawyers have also been quoting the law and insisting that government does not have the right to shut down borders or states or ask people to stay at home. You see: the psychological aspect of Corona Virus should be addressed! Law is made for man, not the other way round. Corona Virus is a threat to human existence. No responsible lawyer should insist on those rights that can accelerate the extermination of the human race. Whoever is not happy should go to the courts and test the law: there are enough laws and precedents to sustain a counter-argument.

Along the spectrum of the psychotic disorder that COVID-19 has generated is the growing community of hypochondriacs and germaphobes. Have you met anyone like that in the last few weeks? I have. I am talking about the "don't-touch-me" "don't-come-near-me", "maintain-social-distance" crowd. These are overnight scientists. When they step out every morning, it is as if they are approaching a war zone armed as they are with face masks, sanitizers, and sanitary wipes. One even sprayed me before I could say "good morning". They have become obsessed with COVID-19. They soak in every piece of information on social media, particularly WhatsApp where a unique type of psychosis is on display. Every minute you are likely to get a forwarded message saying one thing or the other about the disease. I can't fully recall all that I have read - from conspiracy theories to jokes to treatment advisory: turmeric, ginger, lemon and all sorts.

Ordinarily, human beings are tactile. They like to relate with one another. We like to touch each other. All of a sudden, we are being told that we cannot touch, hug, kiss or do all the things we ordinarily do. Social distancing has disrupted our lives. I try to imagine what life would be like

after Corona Virus. We simply have to re-learn the habits that used to govern our lives. Even the way we speak has changed. Corona has affected human language and may find its way into the English Language dictionary. One famous phrase today is COVIDIOTS - persons who refuse to self-isolate or respect official health advisory on Corona Virus like the Pastor who says the disease is anti-Christian and the Imam whose followers attacked a police station in Katsina. You may also have heard of the word CORONIALS. These are children who may be born in the season of Corona Virus, products of love and passion in the time of COVID-19.

I recall meeting a lady the other day and somehow we started talking about Corona Virus, the key subject of the year. She told me:

"My biggest problem is that my husband is now always at home. He likes to watch football, but there is no football anymore on TV. All the European Leagues have been suspended. He has become restless and demanding. I don't know how I will cope with him."

"Madam", I said as quietly as I could. "Don't worry. You will be fine. The worst that can happen is that in nine months' time, we will come for the naming ceremony of a CORONIAL baby."

"Me? I reject that. I am done. What do you think I am? A baby-making machine? You can't sexualize me. I am a professional," she thundered.

I didn't push further but a big concern about the Corona Virus lock-down is that nine months from today, we may end up with a spike in Nigeria's population. Husbands are being forced to stay at home with their wives. A week ago, commercial sex workers in Nigeria were already complaining that Corona Virus is not good for business. The stock exchange in that sector has crashed, far worse than the spot price of crude oil, and the crisis in the foreign exchange market. All the customers are now at home. They are not allowed to keep roaming about, sowing wild oats.

In Germany, a state official committed suicide because of Corona Virus. SUICIDE! But perhaps we should also worry about substance abuse. Across Africa, people are abusing drugs, herbs and alcohol. I have seen young men in our local communities who insist that Corona Virus cannot survive in an alcoholic environment and so from sun up to sun down, they are busy taking alcoholic drinks to attack any virus that may find its way to their throats. To the best of my knowledge, the only link between alcohol and COVID-19 is the advisory that we must all use alcohol-based sanitizers. I have also heard the tale being bandied around that Corona Virus is an evil spirit and that marijuana and cigarette will neutralize it. I don't think that is true. But of course, the COVID-19 crisis has created a virtual and physical industry in myths, conspiracy theories and fake news. The way I see it, the world is going crazy and we need to deal with that.

Governments, in countries, where it is possible, should not just mobilize doctors and nurses, they should immediately mobilize psychologists, psychiatrists, mental health experts, and counsellors who can help stem the tide of global psychosis, before and after COVID-19. The latter is even more important because the pandemic is disrupting the equilibrium of households and livelihoods. It has also made small scale entrepreneurs who are hiking prices for opportunistic reasons crazy. Unfortunately, the emerging poverty and hunger viruses may last longer than Corona Virus. We are certainly in a tight corner. Beyond social distancing, we should reach out to one another as a community and as friends, families and colleagues. The short and long term solution to this plague probably lies in collective strength, co-operation and good leadership at all levels.