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....
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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.
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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Currency</th>
<th>Account Name</th>
<th>Account Number</th>
<th>Correspondent Bank</th>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>US Dollars</td>
<td>CBN TSA USD</td>
<td>0017575300</td>
<td>CitiBank UK</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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
The Nigerian Economy: A Nightmare

Chineme Okafor and Emmanuel Adahidah in Abuja

The Nigerian Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (NEITI) yesterday disclosed the reason why the country earned a total of $32.63 billion from crude oil in 2018, which it said represented a 40 per cent drop from $5.21billion in 2014, the highest it has recorded.
The FEITI 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 the year under review saw the country realised $2.295 trillion, which it said represented a 55 per cent increase on the $1.5 trillion earned in 2017.

However, N722.3 billion was spent on petroleum subsidy, now out of which N722.3 billion was released in Abuja by Director of Petroleum Products was spent on pipeline repairs and product losses.

According to the organisation, a breakdown of the $32.63 billion earned in 2018 showed that 53.2 per cent of it went to government coffers and the rest was lost in products losses in terms of sales of crude oil and gas for accounting for $16.4 billion, followed by oil and gas for refining at $15.8 billion.

The report noted that the employment in the oil sector has been at about 2.68 billion litres or 13 per cent was delivered to refineries, "JV companies' production shortfall of 128.19MW and Okpai and Olorunsogo power stations were affected by the gas supply challenge.

The NEITI report further explained 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 per cent when compared to 660 million barrels produced in 2017.

"A breakdown showed that Joint Venture (JV) and the highest production of 315 million barrels, followed by Production Sharing Contracts (PSCs) which recorded 270 million barrels," the report stated.

"Other funding arrangements like Sole Risk Service (SR), Marginal Fields (MFs) and Service Contracts (SCs) accounted for 92 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 10.9 per cent.

"Similarly, 5R operators' production increased by 9.7 per cent in 2018 compared to 2017. Production from the SC, decreased by 10.27 per cent when production from ME 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 711 million barrels, representing a 1.9 per cent decline from the 722.5 million barrels with a total lifting of 683.9 million barrels in 2017.

"Analysis of the total lifting in 2018 showed that 256.6 million barrels were lifted by NNPC on behalf of the government while companies lifted 445.5 million barrels or 64 per cent of the total lifting.

"The lifting by NNPC indicates an increase of 5.9 per cent when compared to 241.9 million barrels lifted in 2017. Further analysis showed that out of 256.6 million barrels lifted by NNPC in 2018, 37.6 per cent sales were 205.3 million barrels valued at $18.2 billion.

"Out of the 256.6 million barrels lifted on behalf of the Federation by NNPC, a total of 107.6 million barrels was recorded as Crude Domestic Allocation (CDA) in 2018.

"It affirmed that the body had released about $307.20 million, representing approximately 35 per cent of the entire 2018 oil and gas industry contribution to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the period under review was put at 7.8 per cent. This translates to 7.8 per cent of the total GDP Constant Base Price of $4.18 billion (7.8 per cent)," it stated.

"On contribution to exports, government and gas industry accounted for 67.13 percent in total terms, representing 31.6 percent of total exports ($9.62 billion in 2018), adding that the employment in the oil and gas industry accounted for 48.1 percent and 36.5 percent of total employment (59.1 million) in Nigeria, respectively.

The NEITI report further showed that the total crude oil produced for domestic consumption was given out.

"The sum of $2.295 trillion was released as proceeds from sales of domestic crude oil in 2018, out of which the following deductions were made: NNPC $72.2 billion for under-recovery of imported gas and 4.9 billion for crude and product losses and maintenance cost.

"The report also revealed that due to theft and sabotage was $4.1 billion per cent to 6.5 per cent balance performance payable to IFV operators.

"On gas production, the NEITI report further showed that the total gas production for the year under review was 2,909,143.53 mmcf, while total gas utilisation was 2,909,143.53 mmcf.

"From the report, $307.20 million was realised from the sales of Federation of gas at 63.53 thousand metric tonne in 2018. This represents 7.1 per cent per 7.1 per cent compared to 72.10 thousand metric tonne valued at $280, 85 million realised in 2017.

"The national gas reserve stood at 200.79 percent at end of 2018. This is made up of 101.98 thousand metric tone of Associated Gas (AC) and 98.81 in Non-Associated Gas (NAG).

"With the annual gas production quantity, the gas reserves are for use.

The NEITI report, with the NNPC Nigeria's Oil Dependence on Domestic Gas Supply

Emmanuel Adahidah in Abuja

The Transmission Company of Nigeria (TCN) yesterday attributed the current power crisis to the lack of availability of gas to the power sector, despite the high cost of power.

The TCN noted that at the moment, Sapele and Coker Power Station in Delta State are generating gas megawatts due to the gas supply challenge.
The TCN, in a statement by Mrs. Ndidi Ejiofor Alike, a spokesperson for the corporation, said the PPMC was generating the same 0MW against 435MW; Geregu NIPP , generating 110MW with a shortfall of 128.19MW and Okpai are equally generating the same 0MW against 713MW; Delta, and Okpai are equally affected by the gas supply challenge.

The TCN further explained that the employment in the oil sector has been at about 60 days,''' prevailing daily consumption but only 107.63 was delivered to refineries, "JV companies' production shortfall of 128.19MW and Okpai and Olorunsogo power stations were affected by the gas supply challenge.

"TCN hereby notes that there is a need to urgently address the issue of gas shortage to guarantee seamless distribution and Nigerian Navy Liaison Officer, Commander Abdulsalam Sani, during a press briefing on Armed Forces' preparedness to for the year under review was put at 7.8 per cent. This translates to 7.8 per cent of the total GDP Constant Base Price of $4.18 billion (7.8 per cent)," it stated.

"On contribution to exports, government and gas industry accounted for 67.13 percent in total terms, representing 31.6 percent of total exports ($9.62 billion in 2018), adding that the employment in the oil and gas industry accounted for 48.1 percent and 36.5 percent of total employment (59.1 million) in Nigeria, respectively.

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

"The NEITI report further showed that the total crude oil produced for domestic consumption was given out.

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The NEITI report, with the NNPC Nigeria's Oil Dependence on Domestic Gas Supply

Emmanuel Adahidah in Abuja

The Nigerian Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (NEITI) yesterday disclosed that aggregate cash flow for 2018 amounted to $5.9 billion, outstanding Cash Call Liabilities amounted to $3.41billion (93 per cent) legacy Funds and $0.41billion (17 per cent) performance balance payable to IFV operators.

"TCN hereby notes that there is a need to urgently address the issue of gas shortage to guarantee seamless distribution and Nigerian Navy Liaison Officer, Commander Abdulsalam Sani, during a press briefing on Armed Forces' preparedness to..."
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Police IG Sets up Panel to Investigate Akure Explosion

The Inspector-General of Police (IG), Mr. Mohammed Adamu, yesterday raised a red alert over 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, Abuja, Mr. Iyke Uzochile, comprises personnel from the Police Bomb Disposal Squad ( Explosive Ordinance Disposal Unit).

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

Mr. Mba noted that as the nation’s leading research and development institution and sole repository of all geo-scientific data, the agency had an art laboratory with the capacity and expertise to carry out a wide range of geo-scientific examinations, including物 probe, geophysical examinations, geochemical analysis of rocks, minerals, water, sewage, soil samples and site investigations amongst others.

He said: “The IG hopes that with the involvement of NSGA, the quality and integrity of investigations into the explosion would be greatly enhanced.

‘The IG, however, enjoins the citizens, especially those living around the scene of the accident 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 known.

The blast was reportedly caused by dynamite, 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 dynamics, a professor of Geophysics at the OAU, Professor Obinna Chima, contradicted their findings, saying a giant rock from space known as meteor impacted the scene.

However, the Aare Ona Kakanfo of Yoruba land, Chief Gani Adams, on Sunday called for the federal government to investigate three recent explosions in the South-West.

He stated that the explosions of ordinary blasts as claimed by the government were not genuine.

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

The Deputy Inspector General of Police, Operations, Mr. Abubakar Ali, also spoke about the panel while briefing the media shortly after visiting the site of the explosion.

The DIG, who visited the scene of the incident with his team, said the state Commissioner of Police, Mr. Undie Akele, 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 groups, 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 to find debris of the shredded truck within one kilometre radius from the spot of the incident that would show the incident was not caused by explosives 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 eyewitness 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.”
CBN Suspends Clearing

In a joint statement, the minister and the CBN governor jointly directed banks and other financial institutions to ease the process of clearing cheques for Nigerians following the 14-day lockdown period. The banks are Guaranty Trust Bank (GTBank), United Bank for Africa (UBA), Zenith Bank Plc and Access Bank, according to a copy of Circular dated March 20, 2020.

The banks are required to ensure that their customers deposit money to banks to limit their use of cash, and to use alternative payment channels, such as online banking, internet banking, bank-to-bank transfers, money point of sale and mobile payments.

The banks are also required to follow stipulated guidelines by the Federal Ministry of Health, Nigeria Centre for Disease Control and other relevant health agencies to combat the spread of the virus in the country.

Nigerian Banks/Foreign Subsidiaries Post Strong Earnings

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

Onyebuchi Ezigie

Vice President Yemi Osinbajo is head of a special National Economic Policy Implementation Team set up by President Muhammadu Buhari to help the country’s economy out of the debilitating impact of COV

The seven-man economic team is made up of ministers of 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.

Osinbajo was set up as a response to the recent challenges in the economic front resulting from the fall in the prices of oil on the international market as well as the disruptive impact of the outbreak of the pandemic that is threatening to shut down businesses worldwide.

The committee met yesterday afternoon at the Presidential Villa where they received their letters of appointment.

IPI Faults Buhari’s Media Proprietors

The International Press Centre (IPC) has strongly condemned the harassment of editors and newspaper staff by security operatives, particularly in Lagos, Ogun states and the FCT.

The IPC said that this is because it may give room for security agents to harass, intimidate and assail journalists because they are not performing their journalistic obligations in the coverage of emerging issues related to the COVID-19 pandemic, but also other related issues of national importance.

The IPC, in a statement issued yesterday, the Executive Director of IPC, Mr. Lanre Angundaga said all hands should be on deck to ensure containment 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.

Angundaga therefore called on media proprietors, organisations and associations to immediately seek unhindered movement for journalists once they are able to identify themselves.

The media bodies could also enter into discussions 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 ongoing national public interest period.

"There is need to ensure that the media is not placed in a position where it will be intimidated and harassed as the threat unlike other stated categories of stakeholders, did not categorically state that the media is a threat to the war against the pandemic.

"Any beer parlour or public drinking bar is hereby closed from April 3 to enable residents of the state to remain at home and stockpile their homes with basic necessities.

The statement reads: “The body of editors recalls that President Muhammad Buhari’s statement in a nationwide broadcast, permits workers of telecommunications companies, broadcasting and print media, who can prove they are unable to work from home as essential workers, to go about their job, under the condition that they work from home and associations to immediately take necessary steps to ensure that journalists once they are able to identify themselves, are not harassed by security operatives,”

"As the spiritual head of the Yoruba race, I have gathered a lot for the use of mankind. I am also currently working with Yemi Kem International (Alternative Medicine Export) pharmaceutical company for the packaging and distribution of this 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.
**COVID-19 UPDATE**

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

Nebulosity Francis Aza

The Debt Management Office (DMO) has announced the suspension of the FG’s Savings Bond scheme due to the effects of COVID-19.

The DMO, however assured that the suspension of the FG’s Savings Bond scheme was due to the effects of COVID-19.

**Obiniano Self-isolate Over Pandemic**

David Chaddy Eleke

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

**Buhari's Broadcast Belated, Says PDP Senate Caucus**

Deji Elumoye

The Debt Management Office (DMO) has announced the suspension of the FG’s Savings Bond scheme due to the effects of COVID-19.

Additionally, the DMO has announced that the broadcast was made to ensure that all coupon payments for and redemptions of FG securities are made as and when due to investors’ designated accounts.

**Deji Elumoye**

As a result of this development, the Senate has been informed and the DMO wishes to inform the Federal Government that the FG 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, if stressed that the suspension of the April 2020 Offer will not affect coupon payments due to investors for already issued FG securities as arrangements have been made to ensure that all coupon payments for and redemptions of FG securities 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 scorge.

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**Nigeria in Unusual Times, Says PDP Senate Caucus**

Deji Elumoye

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

The party, however, commended the federal government efforts towards combating 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 Enyinna 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 expect the presidency to recognize 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 bringing due to our nation, the poor and vulnerable in our society, notwithstanding, if properly implemented, will keep our people and country safe from this deadly virus,” he said.

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**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 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.

“I’ve had zero patients in my practice, who have gone on to die,” the doctor said.

He added: “I’ve treated 450 to 500 patients, one third of which were from outside the village.”

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Military to Enforce Lockdown in Lagos, Ogun, FCT

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. The Armed Forces of Nigeria are implementing all restrictions on movement in line with government directive.

The Military High Command said the Armed Forces of Nigeria is to implement all restrictions on movement in line with the Federal Government of Nigeria.

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

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

Gova Pledge to Guarantee Seamless Movement of Essential Commodities

The recently established Private Sector Coalition Against COVID-19 (CACOVID) last night announced the establishment of private Sector Coalition Against COVID-19 (CACOVID) last night announced the establishment of the six geopolitical zones.

The Director, Corporate Communications, Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), Mr. Isaac Okorafor, 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 include 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: “Teams have been set up and the need to channel all our efforts why at a time like this, it is critical to keep our hands must be on deck, which is a solution to this pandemic. Employed to aggressively pursue a permanent structure within the next four to six months. “We have started with Lagos (ICUs) and molecular testing labs. Lagos will be ready within three weeks. The remaining states of the Federation will be set up in the last phase within the next five weeks.”

The statement also revealed that: “The High Command of the Nigerian Military hereby solicits a monetary contribution. “For the avoidance of doubt this includes 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 adhering 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

The family of Bauchi State Governor, Senator Bala Muhammad has offered N2million reward for information leading to the whereabouts of Alhaji Aisha 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 the 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

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.

Effective immediately, Prudential Zenith Life will:

- Provide its customers, staff and sales personnel with a range of additional COVID-19 insurance cover enhancements without an additional premium charge.
- Waive ‘pandemic’ exclusions written into policy language.
- Reduce waiting periods for new cover.
- Simplify claims procedures and enable claims to be made via WhatsApp.
- 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.

Matt Lilley – Prudential Africa CEO: “We realise this is a worrying time for everyone and we want to reassure you that protecting the health and wellness of our customers, employees and partners is our primary concern. At Prudential, we have been delivering promises for over 170 years and this time will be no different. I am proud of the measures we are announcing today and know that they will provide our customers with additional peace of mind.”

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.

Live life fully covered with Prudential Zenith.
Presidential 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 a man on an uncharted mission.

The president’s first COVID-19 “outing” is an order to locked down Abia, Lagos and Rivers state on account of the recent but unsubstantiated allegation of misappropriation of COVID-19 funds.

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

I am bewildered at the hue and cry which trailed the recent but unsubstantiated allegations levied against the former governor of Abia State, Senator T.A. Orji and his household by the 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 such as the T.A. Orji’s has all the composition of regressive entrepreneurship.

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

The humanity in us as a people 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 the fabric of the state commissions could not have boldly and publicly disclaimed the Paris account allegation. Shouldn’t we have been aware therefore at the recent comic relief carried out by the outcry of concerned brokers whose demand is that Ochendo’s household be rounded up and thrown in goal irrespec- tive 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 and sinker.

The argument on what seems right is our own concept, has on different occasions beclouded our ability to fairly situate that particular aspect of Ochendo’s credentials, be it could ordinarily not have misappropriated a whopping N525 billion as presently being ascribed.

Curiously compelled me to painstakingly consult and research on allocations brought to the fore by the Nigerian financial press that the Ochendo’s allegations reference 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.

At a period of gross of N4.5 billion, it could not still have amounted to N525 billion as alleged. Otherwise, payment of workers’ salaries, largely believed to have hovered around N26.6 billion monthly and which the Government of T.A. Orji never owed, would have ended in catastrophe.

Perhaps, we may be obliged to accept the expository reality that blue chip and thriving companies operating in Nigeria are manda- torily required to report 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 conditions. It also did not occur to us that the company 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, which brings their initial equity shares for a seamless pursuit of various business interests. My take in this regard therefore is that Mr. Ochendo, T.A. Orji and his siblings are old enough to engage and partner with investors to 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 rule the day by being appropriate to record a 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 indifferent to the lacuna created by the Constitution to the effect that it is largely not accounted for.

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 inexorable I must say – there is no plan for working Nigerians who will lose the means to provide for their families.

Also, I would have loved to see the president roll out suspense packages for Nigerians who will be paying rent, electricity, water bill and other uninterruptible 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 uncertainty insurance system and the self-employed can apply to receive $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.

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 silt into inertia after today.

Fredrick Nwabufo is a writer and journalist.


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14

THISDAY • TUESDAY, MARCH 30, 2020

Editor, Editorial Page PETER ISHAKA
Email peter-ishaka@thisdaylive.com

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS ON COVID-19

Buhari’s COVID-19 speech is like fine wine with a bit of vinegar, writes Fredrick Nwabufo

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 inexorable I must say – there is no plan for working Nigerians who will lose the means to provide for their families.

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Fredrick Nwabufo is a writer and journalist.

HOW DID IT COME TO THIS?

Ike Ogbonnaya

writes the allegations against the former governor of Abia State, Theodore Orji; are spurious

When the allegations against the former governor of Abia State, Theodore Orji, were announced in March, it was the first time that any government against him. It was also the first time that any government against him.

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

In the past five years, Abba Kyari has demonstrated this quite commendably. Leaders inspire those under their watch to be the best they can be. Abba Kyari has done so. He has shown leadership by example, by steadfastly pursuing the right course of action, regardless of the challenges.

This is not a time for politicking; Nigeria is at war like other nations, confronting Covid-19 together. Individuals, the government and companies are already giving to the cause of helping the nation overcome the virus. We mustn’t forget to heed all precautionary measures like washing our hands frequently and practicing social distancing.

This is great. Abba Kyari has demonstrated this quite commendably.

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.

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The delay in carrying out this executive function is unacceptable for them to leave inmates perpetually on death row.

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

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 not a good thing.

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To our readers, we welcome comments and opinions on topical local, national and international issues provided they are well-written and should not be longer than (950-1000 words). They should be sent to opinion@thisdaylive.com along with the email address and telephone number of the writer.
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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>LENGTH (km)</th>
<th>LOT No.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CONSTRUCTION OF FLYOVER BRIDGE (9 SPAN) AT BURIA ROUND ABOUT, SOKOTO</td>
<td>362M</td>
<td>LOT 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DUALIZATION OF TASHAR ILELA ROAD BLOCK AND CONSTRUCTION OF NINE (9) SPAN BRIDGE</td>
<td>3440M</td>
<td>LOT 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DUALIZATION OF MAI TUTA ROAD</td>
<td>600M</td>
<td>LOT 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DUALIZATION OF WAZIRI ABBAS ROAD</td>
<td>200M</td>
<td>LOT 4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A2: BUILDING WORKS:

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

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. Construction of Hospital Structures
vii. Construction of modern 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 Secretarit, Sokoto.

SIGNED:
Permanent Secretary
For: Hon. Commissioner,
Ministry of Works & Transport,
Sokoto
CORONAVIRUS: Three Scenarios for Nigeria in 2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scenario</th>
<th>Assumptions</th>
<th>Possible Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Coronavirus Eases</strong></td>
<td>• Oil price rises above US$40 pb</td>
<td>• GDP Growth at 2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(No new cases)</td>
<td>• Economic activities pick up in the second quarter</td>
<td>• Inflation Rate at 12.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Demand for Nigerian crude improves as economies recover - Nigeria produces 1.9 million barrels per day</td>
<td>• External Reserves at US$34bn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Government capital spending at N1 trillion</td>
<td>• Exchange Rate at N400/US$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Coronavirus Fades</strong></td>
<td>• Oil price falls between US$30 and US$40pb</td>
<td>• GDP Growth at 1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Spreads at a slow pace as situation improves gradually)</td>
<td>• Partial and temporary lockdown of cities, schools, airports, businesses, etc.</td>
<td>• Inflation Rate at 12.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Sluggish demand for Nigerian crude - Nigeria produces 1.5 million barrels per day</td>
<td>• External Reserves at US$32 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Government capital spending at N700 billion</td>
<td>• Exchange Rate at N420/US$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Coronavirus Worsens</strong></td>
<td>• Oil price below US$30 pb</td>
<td>• GDP Growth at -0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Complete lockdown of major cities, schools, airports, businesses, etc.</td>
<td>• Inflation Rate at 15.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Weak demand for Nigerian crude - Nigeria produces 1.2 million barrels per day</td>
<td>• External Reserves to average US$29 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Government capital spending at N300 billion</td>
<td>• Exchange Rate at N450/US$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Government Policy Interventions

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

**Improve external reserves**
- 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.

**Enhance government revenue**
- 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.

**Attract foreign/local investments**
- 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.

**Address rising inflation**
- 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.

**Limit impact on sectoral/overall GDP growth**
- 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
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

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 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 pursuant 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 begun 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 66 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 devastating 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 Ikun Local Government to take up the baton of leadership in 2022.

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 understate Oni, if given the ticket.

One can’t contest the fact that he has innumerable ties with the grassroots and well loved by civil servants. Putting it succinctly, Oni enjoys the support of those that can produce theswing 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 malignment 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 chameleon.

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, with 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 according to the request of his people, who were desirous of taking the political step. In a blunt 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.

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.

Mohammed Abdurahman

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

The simmering crisis which has been raging in the state since shortly after the election and subsequent swearing in of the state governor, Alhaji Abdulrahman Abdulrasaq, especially the Chief of Staff and the Secretary to the State Government among others, has led to the division of the state executive council committee of the party thereby blowing off the crisis in the party.

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.

However, some leaders of the party accused the chairman of arrogance and therefore should resign so as to pave way for a new chairman.

The group led by the state deputy chairman of the party, Hon. Bolarinwa have distanced themselves from the day to day affairs of the state with some state executive committee said to be loyal to the government 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 at 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.

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 Omojola 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.

“Commend the security agents to not just fish out those behind the attack but 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 Abdulahi Abdulbark 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 Abdulbark 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 council committee against the leadership of Hon. Bolarinwa”.

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

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 journalist, and that she had just featured on something different.

She added.

Women have been so ill treated that you cannot fight them because they have the power. You cannot fight them and when you dare speak, you are branded a prostitute. That is why a woman has to depend on the verbal weapon, and that is why you are fighting for your people. You cannot fight them because they have the power.

One of them even said, “The body na my sister, and she almost lost her job because of what people branded me because of such branding because people now are aware and ready to stand up for their rights of women are violated, either by sleeping with us and no go pay us sex, or that it will evoke a reaction.”

You cannot fight them because they have the power. You cannot fight them and when you dare speak, you are branded a prostitute. That is why you are fighting for your people. You cannot fight them because they have the power.

To this day, they are an average of 45 to 100 raids, especially for women like us, they are media people who are being raped. Do not sensationalise your report. There are women who have taken their lives because of what people branded me because of the way they were treating ladies. Because of what people branded me because of the way they were treating ladies. Because of what people branded me because of the way they were treating ladies. Because of what people branded me because of the way they were treating ladies.

She added.

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Elumelu's Public Good Package

In August of 2017, as Sierra Leone struggled with human tragedy and economic collapse, one man stepped forward with a gift that would change the course of the country. Aliko Dangote, the Sudanese-British billionaire, donated $14 million to the country to help with its recovery. The money went towards buying medical equipment, deep freezers, hair clippers, hair dryers, and any other tools that doctors and nurses needed to fight the disease. In fact, Elumelu's $14 million response to COVID-19 immediately changed the course of Africa in the face of the global health crisis. That was 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 sets 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 praising service for Jack Ma on Twitter. 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.

Elumelu's Public Good Package Side Effects...

Elumelu is making good impression in global giving the same way the world richest man, Bill Gates does describe the philosophy behind their giving. It is a campaign run together with Jack Ma and Bill Melinda Gates to create a social norm among the wealthy to give their fortune during their lifetime.

In his own letter, the American billionaire, Bill Gates echoed similar sentiments. "Some matters make things happen for which you would never, would not have, would not have, would not have, would not have, would not have, to 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-lasting friends.

“My wealth has come from a combination of living in America, some luck, great friends and compound interest. My luck was accentuated by my living in a market system that sometimes produces mispricing of securities with sums reaching into the billions,” he added.

Last year, the Amazon founder former CEO Bezos, promised to give away his fortune as a stimulus for their fortune for what it is: lucky breaks. "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 to an infinite series of people, 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 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 anyone who cares for Africa.

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Elumelu's generous giving in Africa and Latin America.

And this, in recent weeks, I've been exploring the idea of 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 praising service for Jack Ma on Twitter. 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.

But Elumelu's tradition of giving is what makes it a rarity, where public good is a public good for the people who like him. In economics, a public good is a good that is non-excludable. The idea is this: no individual can be excluded from benefitting from a public good. An individual does not reduce availability to others. We see this in the example of a public road that allows practically everyone to use it regardless of the type of motor vehicle they use, or even if they are just walking. That is how public good works. But when a person breaks the road, everyone can no longer 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 this generous giving that is a top-notch giving to public good. By not limiting the use of his wealth to Nigeria, the business tycoon Abiola Ahmed Warren Buffet of Africa by Forbes is making a new record.

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 development.
DANCING ON THE GRAVES OF SOLDIERS AND VICTIMS

Senate President, Ahmed Lawan  President Muhammadu Buhari  Speaker, House of Representatives, Femi Gbajabiamila
Effect of Failure of Prosecution to Call Vital Witness

Lagos to Discontinue 566 Cases being Prosecuted by Police

Appeal Court Affirms Oba of Igbooye’s Dethronement

‘Road to Success in law practice, is not always Rosy’

DR. MIKE OZEKHOME, SAN, OFR, FCIARB, PILD, 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.

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.

Joy Harrison-Abiola holds a Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree from Ondo State University and a Master of Business Administration (MBA) from Lagos State University. She is a Fellow of the Institute of Strategic Management Nigeria (ISMN), a member of the Association of 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.
The answer lies between the proverbial
majority of Nigerians who can barely
sorts of things, most especially about how
total lockdown practicable?
has started to spike quite rapidly. But, is a
choice do these people really have, when
they do not have personal cars of their
- 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 Isan, in which white boys
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.

Impoverishment

Furthermore, I wondered why 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, Dr Chikwe Ihekweazu, the Head of
the Taskforce at one of the Nigerian 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! Not so-called top / senator "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 at
the celebratory events, immediately upon
their return at official events and various
functions like wedding fathas, 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 unsuspect-
ating partners, with the full knowledge that
such a perpetrator has the virus. The crime
ranges from attempted murder, to criminal
transmission. State v Hinhouse 912 F2d
Because, it may be difficult to prove
the intent to kill, many States in USA have
abolished the line of criminal law, in which the
Prosecutor only needs to prove that the Defendant who has the
involuntarily engaged in behaviour
which could result in infecting others
with HIV; for example, non-disclosure of their
HIV status to unsuspecting partners,
without having unprotected sex with them.
If you are not in any doubt that those
who have tested positive for Covid 19
know 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 than 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, this is a slightly better excuse,
for those who continued with their non-essential
celebrations and partying, knowing fully
well that they are 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.
When you think about the trials, and those
awaiting trial for offences which are
bailable, or those who have a few months
left to the end of their sentences, they
should not be granted bail/released immediately,
before there begins cross-contamination
between prison officials and the prison
officials now spread it to their families,
and to the general population in Countries like India, Iran and Bahrain have
taken measures in this regard, releasing
a considerable number of inmates, pregnant
women and others, some under house arrest, all in a bid to prevent Coronavirus
in a country that is highly contagious. Should we not
be doing the same? For one, the Nigerian
Police and other Service Act, is silent on
non-custodial sentencing. Is this not the
same? How about the Nigerian
Corrections Service Act 2019, provides for
considerable number of inmates, putting
those awaiting trial for offences which are
custodial sentencing, but the prisons
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 the wrong
way to attract foreign direct investment (FDI) which
they are in such dire need of, especially with
the crash of oil prices. On the contrary, it will
attract foreign direct investment (FDI),
as people will take to their heels, scared to
invest in a country that is seen to be unprofessional
and has no rules, with a Government that
has absolutely no regard for the rule of law.

Unforgetable
Dr Ameyo Adedoyin (your colleague
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
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 directors had made payments to the Central bank of Nigeria (CBN) without the knowledge of the bank’s management and customers’ cheques, overdraft and other credit facilities. Consequently, upon the foregoing, the Management of the bank introduced the Guidance Facility (a policy which prohibits Managers or Staff from accepting value to any cheque, before it is cleared 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 for N3 million an increase of same to N10 million) in respect of a request from the Nsakka branch of the bank. The Exhibit contained a list of eleven companies, the Respondent was made Paritz AWTZ Holdings Nigeria Limited. The Executive Director (Operations) (PWS) 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 not approved by PWS. Nevertheless, the Respondent, on 13th May, 1991, 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 by the facility. The forgery precipitated the query issued to the Respondent, and his subsequent arrangement with four others on a count of forgery before the Failed Bank (Recovery of Debts and Prosecution of Offenders) Tribunal, Lagos Z. The Respondent was found guilty of forgery, and sentenced to a term of 12 months imprisonment. He, however, successfully appealed the conviction and sentence, at the Court of Appeal.

Issues for Determination

The issues posed for determination by parties were:

1. 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.

2. Whether having regard to the facts and circumstances of this case, and in the light of the position of the law, the judgement of the Court of Appeal was erroneous and led to a miscarriage of justice.

Arguments

Applying the first issue, counsel for the Appellant posited that the Court of Appeal, having stuck out grounds 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 9 of the Respondent’s notice of appeal against which his brief was filed, and being incompetent, the court should not have entertained the remaining grounds which were all subsumed under one issue for determination. Especially when the issue stated 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. He submitted further that, issues formulated from, was not only a bad drafting style but a failure of the Respondent to relate the grounds of appeal from which the issue was formulated, was resolved in favour of the Respondent. Counsel reasoned that, the Court of Appeal, having stuck out grounds 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 9 of the Respondent’s notice of appeal against which his brief was filed, and being incompetent, the court should not have entertained the remaining grounds which were all subsumed under one issue for determination. Especially when the issue stated 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. He submitted further that, issues formulated from, was not only a bad drafting style but a failure of the Respondent to relate the grounds of appeal from which the issue was formulated, was resolved in favour of the Respondent. Counsel reasoned that, from the totality of the evidence against the Respondent, the mens rea was not established, hence, the charge was not proved beyond reasonable doubt.

Deciding the second issue, their Lordships held that, the time honoured standard of proof in criminal cases is ‘beyond reasonable doubt’. The findings of fact by the Trial Judge, satisfied that the facts established by the evidence, by virtue of their probative value, outweighed the guilt of the accused. Proof beyond reasonable doubt, had to mean proof beyond every shadow of doubt — ALI v STATE (1958) 1 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 at the Tribunals and the position of the Respondent and the forgery alleged in Exhibits Z and E26 were committed. By Section 46 of the Criminal Code, forgery is defined as when a person who makes a false document or writing knowing that it is 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 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.

The essence of co-signing and authorship of documents in this instance, is crucial to the case in proof of the guilt of the accused. However, there is a particular vital witness whose evidence does not occasion a miscarriage of justice to the Appellant. In the case of the alleged forged document, failure to call such a witness would occasion a miscarriage to proving the charge, as the presumption of withholding evidence would entre in favour of the accused person.

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 stated 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 decision to approve Exhibit Z and E26. The Respondent was reversed in favour of the Respondent. Counsel reasoned that, from the totality of the evidence against the Respondent, the Respondent was not tied to any of the grounds of appeal as charged.

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 Appeal Dismissed.

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This Day 30.03.2020

The Accord Press

THE ACCUSED PERSON

EVIDENCE WOULD ENURE IN FAVOUR OF

SUCH A WITNESS WOULD OCCASION A

ACCUSED PERSON, FAILURE TO CALL

IN PROOF OF THE GUILT OF THE

”...... WHERE, HOWEVER, THERE IS A

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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”

In the Supreme Court of Nigeria

Held at Abuja

On Friday, the 31st day of January, 2020

Before Their Lordships

Chiadi Ozulike-Alex

China Centus Nwaze

Amiru Sarusi

Ejimbi Eko

Uwani Musa Abbi Ajii

Justices, Supreme Court

SC 293/2012

Between

Federal Republic of Nigeria —— Appellant

And

Mark Onochie Oduah —— Respondent

[Lead Judgement delivered by Hon. Uwani Musa Abbi Ajii, JSC]
Lawyer Seeks Lagos AG, IGP’s Intervention, over Alleged Manipulation of Court’s Proceedings

Akinwale Akintunde

The Lagos State Attorney-General and Commissioner for Justice, Mr. Moyosore Omojuwa, on Friday, March 20, 2020, urged the Attorney-General and Commissioner for Justice, Lagos State, and the Inspector General of Police, Inspector General Ibrahim Idris, to stop the manipulation of court cases in the state.

In the statement signed by Director, Public Affairs, Mr Onigbagbo, the Attorney-General said, “The manipulation of court cases in the state is not acceptable and must be stopped immediately.”

He said that the lawyer who was reported to have undergone the manipulation of court proceedings was later reassigned to Justice Mojisola Dada, who ordered Ekwerekwu to refund his client, Onwumelu, the sum "as, an abuse of court process.

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In the statement signed by Director, Public Affairs, Mr Onigbagbo, the Attorney-General said, “The manipulation of court cases in the state is not acceptable and must be stopped immediately.”

He said that the lawyer who was reported to have undergone the manipulation of court proceedings was later reassigned to Justice Mojisola Dada, who ordered Ekwerekwu to refund his client, Onwumelu, the sum “as, an abuse of court process. The leader of the cultists, Emezi, who had been under police observation, was arrested on Friday 20th March 2020 on a two-count charge of conspiracy to facilitate the preparation and execution of acts of violence and as a threat to public peace and order. He was remanded in prison following the arraignment on Monday 23rd March 2020. The court ordered him to be remanded at the Medium Correctional Centre pending trial.

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Akinwale Akintunde

The Court of Appeal, Lagos Division, has been asked to set aside the ruling of a High Court in Suit No. SC/54/2005, in which 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 said land title over all land in Iganmu and its environs as claimed in Suit No: LD/562/72 in the Defendants from time immemorial 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 1920, 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 relief, challenging the radical title of the Defendants regarding any piece of land in the area in question, even if 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 South, to name a few."

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. Adebode 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/562/2001 and LD/562/72 etc., in which the trial Judge never made any finding or pronouncement to the effect that, either them or their predecessors in title were not parties in Suit No: SC/54/2005. The Court of Appeal held that, the trial Judge erred in law, 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 South, to name a few. They also appealed to this court on the grounds that the property registered as LD/74/923 and 49/49/1374 was litigated upon in SC/54/2005, CA/L/562/2001 and LD/562/72.

They accused the trial Judge of making erroneous reference to Survey Plan No. AL/614/1974 attached as Exhibit C to the Notice of Preliminary Objection filed by the Respondents, for which the Survey Plan No. AL/614/1974 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 Oguntade erred in law and failed to determine the weightier questions of Estoppel with regard to judgment and find what 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 Oguntade of denying them fair hearing, when he failed to reULSE himself from the case upon becoming aware that his family members were the Defendants, adding that, their Claimants/Applicants were entitled to judgment 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 Oguntade, delivered on March 16, 2020, and order trial before another Judge. They are praying the court for an order of interlocutory injunction restraining the Respondents, either by themselves or through their agents, from taking any further acts of trespass pending the hearing and determination of the suit.

In rule on the application, having considered the oral and written arguments proffered by counsel to both parties and their respective positions in both applications, Justice Oluwadimi 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/562/2001 and which in turn affirmed his (Oluwadimi'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 objects as the overlords and rightful owners of all the land in Iganmu, Lagos State, from time immemorial.

Justice Adesola Oluwadimi in his ruling said the Supreme Court judgement delivered by Justice Adesola Oluwadimi, 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 said land title over all land in Iganmu and its environs as claimed in Suit No: LD/562/72 in the Defendants from time immemorial 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 1920, 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 relief, challenging the radical title of the Defendants regarding any piece of land in the area in question, though situated in Abebe Village Road, Iganmu, nevertheless, originally belonged to one South, to name a few."

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Federalism as a System of Government (Par. 4)

Introduction

In our last three outings on Federalism as a system of government, we have been able to show the context 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 Constitution Conference, 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 Jonathan, OCFR, made historic and far-sighted 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 federalism, 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/polliscite, 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.

While knocking down a return to regionalism, the Conference affirmed the existence of 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 LGs to the States, and recommended that States so desire may create or reduce the number of LGs within their territories, to suit the peculiar needs of the people.

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 13 days after the expiration of the tenure of LGs 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 on a system of three tiers of government, which guarantees a system of democratically elected Local Governments to alleviate poverty.

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.

(ii) The Constitution should provide power, that States and LGs can adequately participate in governance to alleviate poverty in rural areas.

Religion

Religion should be removed from government 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 LGs 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 special note of the perennial conflicts between indigenous and non-indigenous citizenship rights and freedoms, and believed that these are 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 recommendations on affirmative actions for ethnic and other minorities (including physically challenged persons), there should be specific constitutional guarantees of the rights and freedoms of indigenous peoples which cannot be acquired or lost, 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 federal 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 ‘Federal Account’ prior to distribution to the mentioned beneficiaries of the Account, be stopped, particularly as the Supreme Court had in 2012 declared such a ‘fund constitutional 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. This committee recommended inter alia that, the Police shall be allowed an addition to the federal Police. Indeed, States that so desire, were permitted to have State Police.

Devolution of Powers

That both the Federal and State Governments have 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

Minerals 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:

(i) Mines and all minerals, including oil fields, oil mining, geological surveys and natural gas.

(ii) It is also in the view of the said, this item (as amended), would enable the Federal Government set up or create a special fund, so 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 Nigeria, 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 Federal Account among the three tiers of government, should be done in the following manner:

Federal Government – 42.5%; State Governments – 35%; Local Governments – 22.5%.

To replace the existing formula of i. Federal Government – 55.68%; ii. State governments – 26.72%; iii. Local Governments – 18.60%.

Sharing Formula 1 (Horizontal Allocation)

The Conference recommended as follows:

(a) That the percentages given to Population and Equality of States in the existing Sharing formula be retained, while that assigned to Social Development Factor be increased to a much higher percentage, so as to encourage 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 monoproduction – the fast depleting crude oil – cannot sustain Nigeria, without conscious diversification of her resources.

There is the urgent need for a revenue devolution of powers, from a behemoth central government to grassroot impoverished federating units today. History is today. 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).
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, JP Ojo and Richard Abdullahi maintain that, granting amnesty to Boko Haram insurgents and sending the proposed Bill will plunge 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.

**Commission for ‘Repentant’ Boko Haram:**

**Boko Haram: Rewarding Criminality**

**Introduction**

Here is an analogy that says “where there is no law, there is no sin.” In this regard, every society has a set of laws, rules, and regulations, aimed at punishing wrongdoing, as it serves as a deterrent to others who may want to indulge in such crimes. A crime is anything that says “if you do the crime, you do the time.” It is essentially in order to moderate human behaviour. This is why governments through administration of justice procedures and structures. So, if there is no law, 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 modern adjudicatory systems, the traditional judiciary provided the rules supported by lawgivers and of counsel of chiefs performed the role of executive, legislature, and judiciary. They rule, formulate laws, hold court sessions on their premises, make laws, and punish offenders, and even have local prisons where those found guilty of serious crimes are held in custody.

When Boko Haram insurgents defaulted in 2009 to wage against the Nigerian State, the insurgents have since spread their tentacles far and wide, from the North to the South, killing over 30,000 Nigerians. Since 2009, in real life these terrorists have in ten years, killed over 70 Nigerian soldiers of the Nigerian Army, most killed in Gorigi, near Yobe State, precisely on Monday, March 23, 2020. South Senator, Buhari’s Broken Campaign Promises provided an avenue for rehabilitation, de-radicalising and reintegrating the insurgents, de-radicalised former members of the sect are being released and reintegrated back into the society, others who have committed no crime.

Recent statistics of damage by Boko Haram

Reform and cardiovasculonentric therapies are inevitably in integrity and credibility of holders of public offices, and the trust adherences to campaign promises. However, Buhari has breached his campaign promises in 2015 and 2019.

**Tony Blair and Campaign Promises**

Former British Prime Minister Mr. Tony Blair who led the Opposition Labour Party of UK to defeat a ruling Conservative Party in 1997, made this claim after his classical book known as “The Holland Times.” He wrote as follows: “In the political arena, you carry great responsibility to campaign for the ideas, as it is your duty.” Some of his campaign promises are as follows:

- The Bill as proposed by the Yobe East Senator, Mr. Richard Abdullahi, will enable some convicted or suspected terrorists who have committed no crime, but, they should die in the course of it, they die as martyrs. That is the more reason that those who wage war against the Nigerian State, the insurgents who commit crimes, and even have local prisons where those found guilty of serious crimes are held in custody.

President Rahi’s Broken Campaign Promises

The Guardian of United Kingdom, had in a report on April 2, 2012, stood as follows: “Muhammadu Buhari, the President-elect of Nigeria, has pledged to crush the deadly, on-going insurgency by the blighted-oriented group, Boko Haram. He is aiming to end the insurgency by the end of the year. According to the premier, the group has been on the run since succession. They are out of the end of the same network of command. You did not do dimention, altogether. There is something more running for the job, you are not a man, and it feels like a man. You do the leader, but your collaboration in as same, your surviving or with my experiences, your intestines or is general my important and significant action, that you feel like a family or a collective of criminals.”

President Buhari’s Johnson, a largely peaceful solution that has been praised by Barack Obama, David Cameron, Ban Ki-moon and other world leaders.

He says, “I assure you that, Boko Haram will soon know the strength of our collective will and commitment to rid the nation of terror and bring back peace”.“... The shall spare no effort, until we defeated it.”

Much of Buhari’s support was in the North, especially, the North-west, where Boko Haram, which aims to carve out an Islamic republic, has killed at least 150,000 people since 2009. In 2019, losing terrorists have in ten years, killed over 30,000 Nigerians.

Jonathan’s failures to get to grips with the sceme were a great cause for alarm, though a military-action in March 2011, which devastated the insurgents, and Boko Haram, the Islamic Republic that has led to loss of their lives, but, they do not care a hoot whether they live or die. In fact, many of them are ingrafts through indwelling that the insurgents who commit crimes, and even have local prisons where those found guilty of serious crimes are held in custody.

They are not at the end of the same spectrum of leadership. You see, the brilliant result and presidential political authority over a sovereign entity, is tasking. Leadership in contemporary society, has widely recognised. It says Guardian of UK.

Recall that the initiative came on stream in 2017. In my opinion, it is the perfect idea to end the insurgency and promote national security; Provides an opportunity to derive insider-information about the insurgents, deradicalising, educating and reintegrating the defectors, in a largely peaceful solution that has been praised by Barack Obama, David Cameron, Ban Ki-moon and other world leaders.

Commission for ‘Repentant’ Boko Haram: Rewarding Criminality

The nation is still debating the utility of the de-radicalisation, deradicalising, educating and reintegrating the defectors, in a largely peaceful solution that has been praised by Barack Obama, David Cameron, Ban Ki-moon and other world leaders. The soldiers were killed in Gorigi, near Yobe State, precisely on Monday, March 23, 2020. Since then, it has generated a lot of controversy, muted only by the fear over the ongoing controversy.

To express remorse over their actions, repent and recant their violent ideology and re-enter mainstream society, the insurgents who commit crimes, and even have local prisons where those found guilty of serious crimes are held in custody.

**THE PERSECUTORS OF THESE HEINIOUS CRIMES ARE THE PEOPLE WE ARE TREATING WITH KIDS GLOVES, HOPING THAT THEY WILL EMBRACE PEACE AND ABANDON THEIR DAYDREAM OF CONTROLLING THE WHOLE COUNTRY INTO AN ISLAMIC REPUBLIC**

The insurgents who commit crimes, and even have local prisons where those found guilty of serious crimes are held in custody.

According to the document, if Buhari’s Insurgency Commission is implemented, the Senate will have the opportunity to derive insider-information about the insurgents, deradicalising, educating and reintegrating the defectors, in a largely peaceful solution that has been praised by Barack Obama, David Cameron, Ban Ki-moon and other world leaders. The soldiers were killed in Gorigi, near Yobe State, precisely on Monday, March 23, 2020. Since then, it has generated a lot of controversy, muted only by the fear over the ongoing controversy.

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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 ask that every one of you..." {Entrepreneur Mo Ibrahim, whose Foundation awards a prize for achievement in African leadership, said: "As Africans we 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 2013 to 2019, President Buhari, rather than defeat Islamic terrorism, introduced an unlawful internal pardon, reintegration and resettlement of Boko Haram terrorists with whom his Government ary had been labelled, "Repentant Terrorists." These terrorists have scalped their mass murderers, 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 takeovers, even when the victims of terrorism are left to suffer deprivations. In the failure of President Buhari to prosecute Boko Haram terrorists, made him almost lose the 2019 polls, if not for the widespread and repudiated manipulation of the 2019 polls, which even the United States blamed the so-called defeat of the opposition in 2019, on manipulation of security agents of the Federal Government under the control of President Buhari.

These are some of the few human rights related issues bordering on the terror campaign, and the reason for the pyrrhic victory of the 2019 election awarded to President Buhari, which President Buhari and then in 2019 transformed into a bad brand and still is very unpopular, because he has failed to cure the terrorists, rather, he has decided to dance naked on the graves of the victims of terror, through the continued pardon for some of the long-term armed terrorists.

America's State Department 2019 Human Rights Country Report


Senior Borno State government officials and government officials in the state, said that about 60 Boko Haram suspects had been released by the Government, for releasing 1,400 or more soldiers in the front-line in the war against Boko Haram. The Government would resettle that person. Being a former Boko Haram member, the terrorist was released, after they have been captured. Nigerian soldiers in the front-line in the war against Boko Haram, 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 us are not happy about this. We were there at the Mainalari Barracks in Maiduguri, when all the Boko Haram people were released”, one of the soldiers who didn’t want his name mentioned said. “Does the Government think that Boko Haram are killing soldiers that they cannot? This does not make sense to us, at all. We are still waiting for the bush 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, a soldier stated that, most of the Boko Haram insurgents who were being released on a ‘repentant’ claim, haveCamouflage 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 people would come and start negotiating their release. When you release 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 reintegra- tion of repentant insurgents in the country. A Bill, sponsored by Binhaim Gaidam of Yobe East Senatorial District, has been passed through the first time on the floor of the Senate, recently.

Reaction of Military Chiefs

The Senate has reportedly called for the military chiefs 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 a country’s future security?

A group of Borno elders, led by ex-Governor Kashim Shettima, last year, had described the Boko Haram insurgents as “terrorists.” The legislature was not well thought out. They feared that, releasing the purged and returned Boko Haram militants into civilian population could be counterproductive. What would happen to the terror group to commit more atrocities?

The de-radicalisation and rehabilitation of repentant Boko Haram insurgents under the ‘operation safe corridor’ of the Defence headquarters, is a cause for concern for members of the Civilian TDJ and some stakeholders in the Northeast. “A lot of soldiers, are not happy about the release of these suspects, and they 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 suspended Boko Haram members, are being released in large numbers.”

“Some soldiers have not for the widespread alleged manipulation of the 2019 polls...”

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 custody, and added that, they were all associated with non-State armed groups, including 1,743 children (1,125 boys, 618 girls). All have gone through the Buham-katu 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, “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 Northeast Nigeria. Borno State exposed the façade of this illegality, when it disclosed that some Boko Haram terrorists released were received by their communities, in which they killed thousands of civilians. Borno government stated that, if any person was rejected by his community for being a former Boko Haram member, the Government would resent that person.

Reaction of Nigerian Soldiers

However, the soldiers said it is wasted effort for them to have fought against Boko Haram, 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
feld 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 110 girls 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 since the beginning of the conflict. Two hundred and nineteen persons, many of whom have lost their means of livelihood including loved ones, have been made to suffer untold hardships.

It also said that, the insurgents have also 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 before he was re-elected in May 2019, a report analysed by Premium Times also noted.

The perpetrators of these heinous crimes are the people we are treating with gloves but when you frame them up, 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

As a lawyer and human rights activist, I am against the deradicalisation and reintegration policy of the Federal Government, as well as the proposed establishment of a Commissions for amnesty for ‘Repentant’ Boko Haram, as articulated by Senator Ibrahim Geidam for the North East Development Commission for the following reasons:

It shows that Government is weak and incapable of winning the war against the insurgents, without appeasement of the aggressors. This perceived weakness will encourage the terrorists to the fuller rigours of substantial justice. The refusal of President Buhari to subject the Boko Haram insurgents, to the fuller rigours of substantial justice, is a violation of the Constitution, to grant pardon to criminals. The refusal of President Buhari to subject the Boko Haram insurgents, to the fuller rigours of substantial justice, is a violation of the Constitution.

The trial of the Government of former President Umaru Musa Yar’Adua of the PDP that adopted 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, and the Boko Haram insurgents should also be pardoned, that is being canvassed by the supporters of Senator Ahmadu, Borno. Yet, it is incongruous to compare apples with oranges. The militants in Niger Delta were fighting for the emancipation of their deposed land, and calling for economic justice. On the other hand, what rational idea are the insurgents propagating? Should Nigeria succumb to them by granting amnesty to those who have been fighting for the emancipation of Nigeria by forgiving mass murderers, must we consider whether this is in the interest of the country. It is also said that, the Nigerian State is very weak, and incapable of protecting its innocent citizens. If the Nigerian State is very weak, and incapable of protecting its innocent citizens, then why should we “enforce all laws and regulations on sections of the Constitution, to grant pardon to criminals.”

The group said that, the present amendment to the TPA (as amended) “by the 11th National Assembly to therefore, permit the Borno Government in 2017 to package an Amnesty Programme to pacify the Boko Haram militants in the country into an Islamic Republic, the Constitution of the country states that the Constitution of the country states that the Borno Government in 2017 to package an Amnesty Programme to pacify the Boko Haram militants in the country into an Islamic Republic, when the Constitution of the country states that the Borno Government in 2017 to package an Amnesty Programme to pacify the Boko Haram militants in the country into an Islamic Republic, when the Constitution of the country states that the Borno Government in 2017 to package an Amnesty Programme to pacify the Boko Haram militants in the country into an Islamic Republic, when the Constitution of the country states that the Borno Government in 2017 to package an Amnesty Programme to pacify the Boko Haram militants in the country into an Islamic Republic, when the Constitution of the country states that the Borno Government in 2017 to package an Amnesty Programme to pacify the Boko Haram militants in the country into an Islamic Republic, the Constitution of the country states that the Borno Government in 2017 to package an Amnesty Programme to pacify the Boko Haram militants in the country into an Islamic Republic, the Constitution of the country states that the Borno Government in 2017 to package an Amnesty Programme to pacify the Boko Haram militants in the country into an Islamic Republic, the Constitution of the country states that the Borno Government in 2017 to package an Amnesty Programme to pacify the Boko Haram militants in the country into an Islamic Republic, the Constitution of the country states that the Borno Government in 2017 to package an Amnesty Programme to pacify the Boko Haram militants in the country into an Islamic Republic, the Constitution of the country states that the Borno Government in 2017 to package an Amnesty Programme to pacify the Boko Haram militants in the country into an Islamic Republic, the Constitution of the country states that the Borno Government in 2017 to package an Amnesty Programme to pacify the Boko Haram militants in the country into an Islamic Republic, the Constitution of the country states that the Borno Government in 2017 to package an Amnesty Programme to pacify the Boko Haram militants in the country into an Islamic Republic, the Constitution of the country states that the Borno Government in 2017 to package an Amnesty Programme to pacify the Boko Haram militants in the country into an Islamic Republic, the Constitution of the country states that the Borno Government in 2017 to package an Amnesty Programme to pacify the Boko Haram militants in the country into an Islamic Republic, the Constitution of the country states that the Borno Government in 2017 to package an Amnesty Programme to pacify the Boko Haram militants in the country into an Islamic Republic, the Constitution of the country states that the Borno Government in 2017 to package an Amnesty Programme to pacify the Boko Haram militants

The refusal of President Buhari to subject the Boko Haram insurgents, 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 Auguste of Hippo (314-430 CE) says: “If justice is to be done, what are governments, but grand 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.”

HURIWA alleged that, some lawmakers were working with armed terrorists to introduce “satanic legislation.”

The group said that, the present amendment to the TPA (as amended) “by the 11th National Assembly to therefore, permit the Borno Government in 2017 to package an Amnesty Programme to pacify the Boko Haram militants in the country into an Islamic Republic, when the Constitution of the country states that the Borno Government in 2017 to package an Amnesty Programme to pacify the Boko Haram militants in the country into an Islamic Republic, when the Constitution of the country states that the Borno Government in 2017 to package an Amnesty Programme to pacify the Boko Haram militants in the country into an Islamic Republic, when the Constitution of the country states that the Borno Government in 2017 to package an Amnesty Programme to pacify the Boko Haram militants in the country into an Islamic Republic, when the Constitution of the country states that the Borno Government in 2017 to package an Amnesty Programme to pacify the Boko Haram militants in the country into an Islamic Republic, the Constitution of the country states that the Borno Government in 2017 to package an Amnesty Programme to pacify the Boko Haram militants in the country into an Islamic Republic, the Constitution of the country states that the Borno Government in 2017 to package an Amnesty Programme to pacify the Boko Haram militants in the country into an Islamic Republic, the Constitution of the country states that the Borno Government in 2017 to package an Amnesty Programme to pacify the Boko Haram militants in the country into an Islamic Republic, the Constitution of the country states that the Borno Government in 2017 to package an Amnesty Programme to pacify the Boko Haram militants in the country into an Islamic Republic, the Constitution of the country states that the Borno Government in 2017 to package an Amnesty Programme to pacify the Boko Haram militants in the country into an Islamic Republic, the Constitution of the country states that the Borno Government in 2017 to package an Amnesty Programme to pacify the Boko Haram militants in the country into an Islamic Republic, the Constitution of the country states that the Borno Government in 2017 to package an Amnesty Programme to pacify the Boko Haram militants in the country into an Islamic Republic, the Constitution of the country states that the Borno Government in 2017 to package an Amnesty Programme to pacify the Boko Haram militants in the country into an Islamic Republic, the Constitution of the country states that the Borno Government in 2017 to package an Amnesty Programme to pacify the Boko Haram militants in the country into an Islamic Republic, the Constitution of the country states that the Borno Government in 2017 to package an Amnesty Programme to pacify the Boko Haram militants in the country into an Islamic Republic, the Constitution of the country states that the Borno Government in 2017 to package an Amnesty Programme to pacify the Boko Haram militants in the country into an Islamic Republic, the Constitution of the country states that the Borno Government in 2017 to package an Amnesty Programme to pacify the Boko Haram militants in the country into an Islamic Republic, the Constitution of the country states that the Borno Government in 2017 to package an Amnesty Programme to pacify the Boko Haram militants in the country into an Islamic Republic, the Constitution of the country states that the Borno Government in 2017 to package an Amnesty Programme to pacify the Boko Haram militants in the country into an Islamic Republic, the Constitution of the country states that the Borno Government in 2017 to package an Amnesty Programme to pacify the Boko Haram militants...
The Legislative Competence of NASS to Enact the Boko Haram Bill

Richard Abdullahi

Introduction

The Bill for the creation of the National Assembly for Education, Rehabilitation, De-radicalisation and Integration of Repentant Ex-militants 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 much debate. 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 hinged from the general resentment and outrage against Boko Haram, to strands of religious sentiments and of course, political motivations. This contribution is not intended to follow the stream of such blanket backlash, but to cut through the clutter and further look at the powers 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, for the preservation of the Federal system or the integrity of any state, and for the protection of the rights and freedoms of citizens, without discrimination on any ground whatsoever. There is no doubt that the NASS to legislate on the issues contained in the Bill. The Bill which seeks to engage the power of the National Assembly to pass the Bill.

The Competence of NASS to Enact the Boko Haram Bill

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 predicted 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 strategic framework. First, it is important to first ascertain whether the final goal of the policy is disengagement (a behavioural disengagement from a group/ideology that poses 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.

Secondly, 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.

Richard Abdullahi, Legal Practitioner, Lagos
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 (there is always a first), 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 contact 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 the need to have 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 trendy euphemism 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 started to circulate 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 infection of the first death from the virus (in Abuja). 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 what the "law" is, 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 "an act of the National Assembly whether passed before or after the commencement of this Act". See Sections 181(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, where there is (a) a breakdown of public order and public safety in the country or any part thereof requiring extraordinary 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 proportions of the Covid-19 pandemic, it is not rocket science to posit that it eminently qualifies as a threat to public order and public safety, 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 national disaster – at least one waiting to happen, if it’s not properly handled. In other words, the Declaration of a National State of Emergency for a Presidential Declaration and the Constituational/Statewide 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 said to be legally derived – and constitutionally justified.

As back-up, the President can lever-age on the provisions of Section 192(3) of the Interpretation Act, which provides that "an enactment which confers power for an act shall be construed as also conferring all such other powers as are reasonably necessary to enable the said 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 LIVESIDGE 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.
A Business Continuity Plan “BCP”

Global Impact
09th January 2020, the World Health Organization 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 pandemic melt-down, causing concern for both small and big businesses. Presently, with over 137,000 confirmed cases and 3,100 deaths, 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 measures include, a drastic cut in stock 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 deep into the red. 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 over 500,000 passenger volumes, and $170 million loss in incomes. IATA shared further that, if the situation lingered, 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 pandemic, governments and central banks all over the world, have enacted fiscal and monetary incentives. E.g. Nigeria’s CBN declared a credit relief of $13.66 million, to businesses affected by the coronavirus pandemic. Governor Godwin Emefiele said households, SMEs, airline service providers, hotels, health care merchants, including crude oil suppliers, 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% down to 5%, retroactively to the date of the loan from 9% to 5%.

JOY HARRISON-ABIOLA
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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....
Igweokolo also claimed that, in the bid to frustrate him, in a bid to frame him for the crime he did not commit, with legal backing, he was arrested on December 30, 2009, detained in State Criminal Investigation Department, Panti till January 18, 2010 before being arraigned at Ebute Meta 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 Meta Magistrates’ Court. He alleged that to date, the police have failed to furnish him with the complaint made on oath by Ekwerekwu.

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 15, 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 Jamiu 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 Igbooyealand 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 appealant/Claimant, Michael Omakoya, is not a member of the Ewade Ruling House of Igbooye land, 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 costs.

Igweokolo’s statement to the Appellant, the Respondents include Alhaji M.A. Quadri, Mrs. Oladipe Otunowo, Chief Gbemisoye Otunowo, Otunba Abdulwasu Musa-Adehambow (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, a warrant of arrest against him from Sabo, Yaba Magistrates’ Court on December 30, 2009, purportedly obtained for crime he did not commit, with legal backing, it was held that Ekwerekwu had on December 30, 2009, treated his case with leniency.

He asked why he was not arraigned at Sabo, Yaba Magistrates’ Court where the warrant of arrest was obtained against him, but, at Ebute Meta Magistrates’ Court. He alleged that to date, the police have failed to furnish him with the complaint made on oath by Ekwerekwu.

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.
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)
**Nigerians record Second COVID-19 Death**

The Minister of Health, Dr. Osagie Ehanire, yesterday said Nigeria had recorded its second COVID-19 death.

Nigeria has recorded its second COVID-19 death, the Health Ministry said on Friday.

"The first patient, who was a 61-year-old male, died this morning," the ministry said in a statement. "He was admitted to and treated at Lagos State isolation centre on July 18, 2020. He had a history of hypertension and diabetes mellitus. He had fever and respiratory symptoms."


"He was discharged to the isolation centre on July 26, 2020, following a 14-day isolation and treatment. He was re-admitted to the isolation centre on July 29, 2020 for fever and respiratory symptoms. He was re-tested for COVID-19 on July 30, 2020 and again tested positive."

The statement said the patient was treated with the standard of care. After the final diagnosis, the patient’s condition deteriorated. He died of COVID-19 and his death was confirmed on Friday.

"We have observed that the second COVID-19 death was recorded in Lagos State," the statement said.

President Buhari has declared three days of mourning for the deceased and has ordered flags to fly at half-mast in remembrance of the departed soul.

**COVID-19 tracing continues as Lagos State denies receipt of Hydroxychloroquine**


"We have categorically denied that Lagos State Government has received any COVID-19 drugs," the state government said in a statement.

"The state government has not received any contribution from existing partners or any of the volunteers," it added.

"It is important to note that the Ministry of Health of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, through the National Emergency Centre, has not provided any COVID-19 drugs to any of the states or local governments including Lagos State."

The statement said the ministry has a single point of contact for all requesting states and local governments to request for COVID-19 drugs.

"No team of officials has been sent by the Ministry of Health to any state," it said.

"The ministry is not aware of any case of Hydroxychloroquine given to the state government of Lagos State by any recent donor."
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 government to intervene in 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 outbreak of the pathogen was leading 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.

"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," stated the report.

"The lower GDP growth will stem from Fall in government spending; depreciating naira; high inflation; sectoral impacts due to shut downs; movement 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.

"In March, the Federal Government reduced the price of fuel from N145 per litre to N122, following lower oil prices and a drop in landing costs for petrol."

Continued on page 24
Chineme Okonoha

The balance of funds in Nigeria’s External Reserve Account (ERA) has dropped to $71.8 million from the N49.5 million recorded in January 2020, the Nigerian National Oil 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 ERA for a suspicious purpose.

It added that Nigeria could face a severe fiscal crisis necessitating quick adjustments. The NNRC stated these in a twinning conference hosted by a member of its Advisory Panel, Ms. Ronke Onadokan, in which she talked about the implication of the falling oil price on the Nigerian economy as well as the country’s need to announce its liberalisation of the downstream petrol sector.

“Our SWF (Sovereign Wealth Fund) has just about $2.3 billion in savings which is poor. The ERA 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 Onadokan during the conversation.

She informed, that, “the External 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. The last month of the year, the NNAS reported that $4 million was removed from the ERA 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 foreign currency to protect us from the recession coming and we are now having to go back to reduce our budget.”

“Investigations are ongoing to throw the Southeast to the General Account, states to local governments as well as for developmental projects across board.”

“Each Nigerian’s spend will shrink, will lose goods and service and we will see production-adjust factories slow down and jobs may be lost, incomes impacted negatively. We have a reason for concern coming up,” she warned while urging for self-introspection of the country’s spending pattern.

According to her, “we need to look inward and make a more conservative spending regime, improve efficiency on the expenditure side. We need to deploy technology more, it’s always cheaper and innovative and may cause new opportunities to arise.”

Onadokan also noted that in its recent meeting, the NNRC has advised governments to make it illegal for any government official to travel abroad without travel document.

“IAm being advised,” she said, “that there is a plan that only the SWF account be run and that the ERA account should be merged and brought under the NNRC. They are raising a decent job with the meager funds they have to manage.”

Dike Onumwoamwe

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 Otuocha Chambers of Commerce, Industry, Mines and Agricultural (OCCIMA), Mr. Chris Uchakwuzi, in a telephone chat that THISDAY gathered, said it was creating a difficult operational environment for members of OCCIMA, particularly those who force some of his members to shut down their factories, especially those in food processing and beverage sector.

Uchakwuzi said, “Those in the manufacturing of bottled water are faced with possible shutting-down of operations as the raw materials they need to produce plastic bottles are no longer coming in freely from Lagos.”

He said that 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 not have access to the sea ports.

“Moreover, anything that threatens transportation across the Niger Bridge will literally mean economic collapse into economic paralysis.”

He said most businesses in Otuocha were battling with poor electricity supply and were finding it difficult to function properly. The pandemic brought on the scarcity of diesel as some filling stations have closed down.

“Electricity supply has gone down,” he said, “and most people were focusing on saving and expensive making most manufacturers to run out at high cost that renders their products uncompetitive.”

Uchakwuzi said, “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, Abu, Mr. Andy Uba Obasi, who was also the past President of Abia Chamber of Commerce, 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 close 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, said, “that the pandemic portends to business if it is not tackled properly, contained, which she described as "monumental and unprecedented."”

Obasi added that the ECA should be made available to the ECA Account to pay a consultant... these are the gaps and lapses and ways in which the account has been abused.”

The NGRC has advised governments to make it illegal for any government official to travel abroad without travel document.

“IAm being advised,” she said, “that there is a plan that only the SWF account be run and that the ERA account should be merged and brought under the NNRC. They are raising 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 fiscal policy, he 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 more concerted actions 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 that responsibility,” Onadokan stated.
**COVID-19: Moghalu Calls for Urgent Fiscal Reforms**

Peter Uzoho

The Convener of To Build A Nation (TBN) and presidential aspirant for the People’s Party (YPP) in the 2019 general elections, Prof. Kingsley Moghalu, has housed his policy actions that should be the main focus of the federal government in the fight against COVID-19 pandemic and its economic impact.

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 “simplified and focused on COVID-19” saying, with the exception of security and public services, “nothing else should matter at the moment.”

The former Deputy Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), however, advised the naira to be revalued at the n01.00 billion established by the CBN for families and small businesses and not be adequate to address the crisis. “And when it escalates, he, however, advised that the fiscal authorities must plan and unravel appropriate measures for the subsistence funding of all extremely poor Nigerians and in the last five years, approximately 100,000, for 81 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 inhabitant, the cost of food and supplies for a month in a Covid-19 total shutdown scenario would require an intervention of N2 trillion.

Moghalu said: “Even the N10 trillion federal government budget for 2020 may not be well balanced if it is based on projections that are no longer realistic because of reliance on crude oil revenue and the arrest of oil of a broad base of domestic taxation.”

“This would be possible, however, if the burden were to be split with state governments. “This is why the Federal National Assembly should donate 50 per cent of their emoluments to this effort”

Third, he argued that one of the crucial measures to mitigate the economic impact of the pandemic would be to focus on COVID-19, saying, “This, Moghalu explained, was necessary in order to give more time for contact tracing, reducing the number of red flags and take advantage of the new data collected in the international data on the local economy.

He said in addition to measures already taken by the federal government should shut down the whole country for one month, “to bring in public health and take advantage of the new data collected in the international data on the local economy.”

He added that the Nigerian economy must become truly diversified away from crude oil. “This, Moghalu explained, was necessary in order to give more time for contact tracing, reducing the number of red flags and take advantage of the new data collected in the international data on the local economy.”

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**MAKE WEALTH LISTS**

**Extend Your Business Life with These Seven Assets**

The desire of every successful business owner is to maintain financial health for the business beyond the first generation. Although this desire is a commendable one, it takes a life of just 10 per cent of family businesses will celebrate their 100th year anniversary in 2020. 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 CBN should explain the benefits of running a successful business from scratch, something that truly incentivises a shift away from oil-dependency through increased manufacturing and export trade remained unremarkably.

Moghalu added: “The nation should strategically and proactively devalued, and then align this move with appropriate local and global marketing strategies, rather than, as is often the case, having devaluations forced on Nigerians with no accompanying policy reforms. The CBN should explain its benefits of running a successful business at its own discretion, and not just in the interest of big business.”

Mr. Moghalu called for diversified away from crude oil. “This, Moghalu explained, was necessary in order to give more time for contact tracing, reducing the number of red flags and take advantage of the new data collected in the international data on the local economy.”

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**Lagos Initiates Safety Measures at Abattoirs**

Oluchi Chibuzor

The Lagos State government has revealed that it has initiated measures at abattoirs and slaughterhouses.

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, Berejuaye Faboo, explained that the government has stopped all non-essential activities, such as food vendors and other non-related abattoir activities.

Lawal, however, indicated that the state government would enforce the Federal Ministry of Health’s legal convalescence of meat and meat products from any of the abattoirs that did not follow the procedure.

He said: “The Lagos state government has only needed to be informed of measures to stop the spread of diseases through abattoirs and food vendors.”

He added: “We must discourage our customers from touching meat or meat products, saying customers who do not want at whatever they want and butchers with gloved hands should sell the meat.”

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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 a public health crisis, but a huge threat to the world's economy. Much of the world would 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 prices of commodities like Nigeria from oil and gas will fall by 90 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.

Recovering the impact 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 a partnership of the Oil Producers and Traders 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 (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 (N1.1 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 protection, and laboratory scientific kits. For logistics and in-patient support system, the brochure detailed ventilators, ambulances, 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 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 suits and 3000 safety gloves. Additionally, 400 clinical isolation units 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, Markaduri, Enugu, Warri, Owerri, Port Harcourt, Lagos and Badian 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.

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 a 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 medications.

"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, Sam Griffiths, and Chairman, ANAP Foundation, Mr. Ateodo 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 it as the real problem.

"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 have 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.
Real Estate is not a business that brings immediate profitability, but you cannot stop it to start the business?
I have been in the real estate industry for over 11 years now. I joined a Real Estate Investment Company where I worked as a Sales person on contract earning N80,000 monthly. About 30 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 while, we were only eight that remained as sales agents. Some were sacked; while others were given targets but they could not meet the targets and all sorts.
I left Real Estate Investment Company for another Real Estate Company through another dynamics of its in the industry after joining them. The company sold a very big land 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 was involved, I was amazed because I knew that those issues cannot be solved, because they were not so like the conflicts in Country Hill. I left 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. Rural and urban development is how we develop the rural areas and enhance the urban areas, how else do we do that if we 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 villages are so huge. Under the bridge, these are things that cause insecurity in our environment. My knowledge of sociology and conflict resolution 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 so huge that if an investment is needed to develop areas and we sell these properties at affordable rates to Nigerians. Being a sociologist and real estate today is not by my own plan. The idea is simply to help people afford luxury.

Do you think affordable housing is possible

Dr. Abubakar, a member of the Presidential Task Force on the control of the spread of COVID-19, 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.”

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. Oshinaike discusses these issues with Fadekemi Ajakaiye

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, obviously. If real estate companies can take their minds off immediate gratification, affordable housing will be achievable for all. In our case, we were 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 profit, 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 concerned about infrastructure in all our estates.

Our estate in Magboro has tiled roads network, drainage systems, 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 alternative power supply system, it will mean a lot to us and we would have solved some problem for the Lagos 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 affordable number?
Housing deficit in Nigeria is real and it is increasing every day because there are lots of people moving into the country. In Oyo and Lagos alone, 10% of people living in these places are Chinese. Lagos is flooded: people are not moving to Ogun state, also in Abuja, people are now living in Nasarawa. Since government is giving permit and visa to foreign nationals, the issue 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 settle the people that most of them still struggle to pay. Thus, only those who are aware of those houses will get those allocation and sell to the end users at a premium which most cannot afford. The jubilation project, the BIBLE 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.

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, tourists and visitors.

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 some time ago to speak with some locals, all those investors were asking includes the following: Why are Nigerians lacking interest or refusal to pay for better living in Nigeria? Why do you charge foreign investors high prices for land and property? Why do you reject foreign investors to invest in real estate development of the sector? They were saying I should letters of credit and bank guarantees, but when you bring bank guarantee to your local bank, the bank will tell you to bring certain percentage of the money these investors want to give you as I, 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 there. It is just a technicality. Government is not providing suitable environments for housing development in Nigeria. 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 innovation in the society. They should make policies that will not affect the life of the people. They should make good policies and provide infrastructure that will allow Nigerians think in real estate development. Government agencies are not helping matters. Regulatory framework should be put in place to make effective policies that will positively affect the society. We should provide cheaper funds for young people to invest in real estate without any fear. The policies they want to create should not disrupt innovation in the society. The policies they want to create should not disrupt innovation in the society.

Government should also create policies that would attract foreign investors to invest in real estate. Local and foreign investors to invest in real estate without any fear. The policies they want to create should not disrupt innovation in the society. The policies they want to create should not disrupt innovation in the society. The policies they want to create should not disrupt innovation in the society.
COVID-19: Nigeria Risks Food Crisis, Agric Bureau Warns

James Emejo

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 amid the current challenges posed by the outbreak and spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

The association’s Coordinator, Mr. Modupe Alakija, has commended the National President of NACCIMA, Mrs. Saratu Iya Aliyu, for donating one ton of rice and N100 million to the association’s members in support of the Federal government’s efforts.

He, however, observed the need to make the private sector more inclusive to encourage members of the association to adhere strictly to the recommended safety measures issued by the government and relevant health institutions to preserve their lives.

"At this period, we must take all precautions 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," he said.

Famfa Oil Pledges N1bn to Support FG, Lagos, Others

Sunday Eligibor

The Chairman and Vice-Chairman of Famfa Oil Limited, Mr. Modupe Alakija and Mrs. Nekoma Fashola, have commenced the distribution of the stimulus package from the company to members of the association.

The company has donated one ton of rice and N100 million to the association’s members in support of the Federal government’s efforts.

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AUPCTRE Provides Palliatives to Staff

The Alumagamned United of Public Corporation Civil Service Technical and Accerational Services Employees (AUPCTRE) of the Ministry of Petroleum Resources have commenced the distribution of palliatives for members of its union to support them during the period of the stay-at-home directive aimed at curtailing the spread of the coronavirus pandemic.

This was unveiled by the Chairman of the association, Engr Odalado Agboola. According to him, "the stay at home directive caught a lot of us unaware and as a responsible leadership we are looking at a way to assist and help our AUPCTRE members. In the course of this, we have already started the distribution of bags of rice as palliatives to members."

"In order to observe the second distancing, the distribution mode is decentralised across different satellite towns of the Federal capital Territory which are Nyanya/Maraba, Kubwa/Bwari, Lugbe/Airport road, Garki/Gaduwa and Sulexi 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 sanitiser, as well as enforce social distancing chain of transmission would be broken. He also enjoined all Nigerians to pray for speedy recovery of all those infected by the virus.

She, therefore, appealed to all the members of the association to adhere strictly to the recommended safety measures issued by the government and relevant health institutions to preserve their lives.

"At this period, we must take all precautions 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.

NACCIMA Commends Measures to Tackle COVID-19

Dike Omuaweaze

The National President of Nigerian Association of Chambers of Commerce, Industry, Mines and Agriculture (NACCIMA), Mrs. Nekoma Fashola, has commended the Federal government’s efforts.

"We have started the distributing of bags of rice as palliatives to help our AUPCTRE members. We must continue the fight, we must unite," he added.

"As the world rallies to fight against the Coronavirus, Nigeria has the potential to grow its own food and live healthier."

"We need to keep our ports running. In order to observe the emergency mode and develop the logistic companies into an export country. We are shutting one agencies off our ports and we keep our ports running?"

Dikwa said: "We are shutting one agencies off our ports and we keep our ports running to organise ourselves to avoid down systems without concurr-ently 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."

MARKET INDICATORS

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Money Market Indicators (in Percentage)

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<td>14.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monetary Policy Rate [MPR]</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treasury Bill Rate</td>
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<td>Savings Deposit Rate</td>
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<td>1 Month Deposit Rate</td>
<td>9.82</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 Months Deposit Rate</td>
<td>9.72</td>
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<tr>
<td>6 Months Deposit Rate</td>
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<td>12 Months Deposit Rate</td>
<td>13.21</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prime Lending rate</td>
<td>17.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum Lending Rate</td>
<td>31.55</td>
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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), Djinnie (Congos), Zafiro (Equatorial Guinea), Bakri 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 Meray (Venezuela). SOURCE: OPEC headquarters, Vienna
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 dropped to 10 per cent from its listing price of N90 per share.

MTN Shares Decline to Listing Price as Market Drops to 8-year Low

The NSE as well as the Nigerian market have been trading remotely since the outbreak of COVID-19 in March 2020. 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.
Sterling Bank's report provides insights into the current status of its financial performance, indicating a robust increase in earnings. The bank's earnings have grown significantly from N2.02 billion in 2018 to N10.6 billion in 2019. The growth is attributed to effective cost management and a steady loan base, which has contributed to the bank's profitability. Despite this impressive growth, the bank remains cautious about future earnings, highlighting the importance of maintaining prudent financial management practices.

The report also emphasizes the bank's focus on digital lending, which has helped to increase the number of loans issued. The digital lending product has been particularly effective in reaching more customers, and the bank expects this trend to continue. Sterling Bank's commitment to innovation and technology is evident in its efforts to enhance the customer experience and improve operational efficiency.

Overall, Sterling Bank's financial performance is strong, with a robust increase in earnings and a focus on digitalization to further expand its customer base. The bank's strategic approach to financial management is crucial in maintaining this momentum and ensuring sustainable growth in the future.
Mikel Obi is the Greatest Nigerian Footballer, Says Amokachi

**Duro Ikazhuage**

Former Super Eagles forward, Daniel Amokachi yesterday picked Mikel Obi, 32, as the greatest Nigerian Footballer of all time.

Despite arguments among football fans who is the greatest between former Green Eagles winger, Segun Odegbami, former yardsman, Austin Jaye Otoka and Nwankwo Kanu, Amokachi spoke on the former Chelsea midfielder.

Speaking during his “The Bull’s Pit” Brila FM Sports Radio show yesterday, Amokachi insisted that in terms of his contributions to both club and country, Mikel stands shoulder above all other Nigerian internationals.

He has won 17 trophies in his club career with Chelsea and Manchester United.

The midfield maestro has been lauded by former Chelsea, Manchester United, and Barcelona stars like Frank Lampard, Juan Mata, and Lionel Messi.

“I have been following him every single season from Chelsea to Manchester United to La Liga in Spain,” Amokachi said.

Amokachi added that Mikel’s achievements with the national team, including winning the 2013 African Cup of Nations and 2017 FIFA U17 World Cup, further solidify his claim.

He also commended Mikel’s leadership qualities, saying he has always been a team player.

Mikel, who will be 33 years old on April 22, began his football career with Plateau United of Jos before joining Norwegian side Lyn Oslo at the age of 17 in 2004.

In 2006, barely months after leading Nigeria to a bronze medal at the 2005 FIFA Under-20 World Cup in The Netherlands, he moved to English club Chelsea.

Manchester United claimed they had earlier signed Mikel, but Chelsea announced they had signed the midfielder.

He played with Chelsea for 11 years, before moving to China with Tianjin TEDA in 2017.

After two years in China, he returned to England to play in the English Premier League and the FA Cup with West Ham United.

He has also won two English Premier League titles and three FA Cups with Chelsea.

Postponed Tokyo Olympics to Now Begin July 23 Next Year

The Tokyo Olympics will begin on July 23 next year, organizers said on Monday.

The announcement comes less than a week after organizers forced to delay the Games due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The Games were postponed until 2021, and were due to open on July 24 this year.

The shutdown is currently costing the Japanese government around $1.6 billion, shared between the organizing committee, the government of Tokyo city, and the central government.

The postponement has handed organizers the “unprecedented” task of rearranging an event that had been planned for seven years in the making, and the disruption caused by the global pandemic was the main concern of when football will resume.

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The Psychology of COVID-19

Nigeria announced its first COVID-19 case on March 27, 2020. How will the pandemic impact our behavior, culture and society? How will it shape the future of our families and communities? How will it affect the way we speak? How will it change the way we live?

What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 is a respiratory illness caused by a virus called SARS-CoV-2. It can spread from person to person through respiratory droplets when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks. The virus is most contagious when people are sick with COVID-19 and have not yet developed symptoms. The World Health Organization (WHO) has advised people to avoid close contact with others, especially when they have COVID-19 symptoms. People who are infected with COVID-19 should avoid contact with others, especially when they are very sick or have respiratory symptoms. People who are at higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19 should stay home and avoid going out in public, especially when they are very sick or have respiratory symptoms. People who are at higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19 should also avoid close contact with others, especially when they have COVID-19 symptoms.

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

COVID-19 symptoms can range from mild to severe. People with COVID-19 can experience mild symptoms like a fever, cough, shortness of breath, and a headache. More severe symptoms include pneumonia, hypoxia, and death. People with COVID-19 should seek medical attention if they experience severe symptoms like shortness of breath, severe cough, persistent pain or pressure in the chest, new confusion or inability to awaken, or difficulty breathing.

How is COVID-19 transmitted?

COVID-19 is transmitted through respiratory droplets when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks. The virus is most contagious when people are sick with COVID-19 and have not yet developed symptoms. Amanda Frilander, a psychology professor at Bowling Green State University, says that people with COVID-19 should avoid contact with others, especially when they have COVID-19 symptoms. People who are infected with COVID-19 should avoid contact with others, especially when they have COVID-19 symptoms. People who are at higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19 should stay home and avoid going out in public, especially when they are very sick or have respiratory symptoms. People who are at higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19 should also avoid close contact with others, especially when they have COVID-19 symptoms.

How will COVID-19 impact our mental health?

Amanda Frilander, a psychology professor at Bowling Green State University, says that COVID-19 could potentially impact our mental health in several ways. People with COVID-19 should seek medical attention if they experience severe symptoms like shortness of breath, severe cough, persistent pain or pressure in the chest, new confusion or inability to awaken, or difficulty breathing.

What are the psychological implications of COVID-19?

COVID-19 could potentially impact our mental health in several ways. Amanda Frilander, a psychology professor at Bowling Green State University, says that people with COVID-19 should seek medical attention if they experience severe symptoms like shortness of breath, severe cough, persistent pain or pressure in the chest, new confusion or inability to awaken, or difficulty breathing. People who are at higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19 should also avoid close contact with others, especially when they have COVID-19 symptoms.