

Nigeria Press Review

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Welcome to Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung's Nigeria Weekly Press Review

The weekly press review seeks to explore and keep you informed on selected issues relating to politics, business and economy, insecurity, infrastructure and development, health related issues, new trends and matters bothering on the overall situation in Nigeria.

Content

Nigeria Seeks UN, IMF, World Bank Reforms, Nigeria is Evacuating Citizens from Tunisia Amid Attacks on African Immigrants, FG Summons Burkina Faso Envoy Over Death of 16 Nigerians

Supreme Court Extends Old Naira Notes Validity until December, Banks Begin Dispensing Old Notes, FG intercepts 200 Cyber-Attacks during Presidential, NASS Elections, Six States Ask Supreme Court to Nullify Presidential Elections, PDP Presidential Candidate Atiku Abubakar Leads Protesters to INEC, Court Orders BVAS Reset Ahead of March 18 Gubernatorial Polls, Lagos State Governor Sanwo-Olu Suspends Campaign, Declares 3-Day Mourning Over Train Accident

Insecurity: 1.250 Boko Haram Terrorists Surrender after the Death of 200, Troops Attack ISWAP, IPOB, Bandits and other Terrorists in Nationwide Military Operations

Nigeria Seeks UN, IMF, World Bank Reforms, Nigeria is Evacuating Citizens from Tunisia Amid Attacks on African Immigrants, FG Summons Burkina Faso Envoy Over Death of 16 Nigerians, FAO Report Shows 25 Million People to Face Food Insecurity

Nigeria has called for a reform of the United Nations (UN), the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank to make them more alive to the needs of developing countries. The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Geoffrey Onyeama, while speaking at the first Foreign Ministers' Meeting at the G20 Summit in New Delhi, India, underscored the need to reform the UN along the line of its three pillars – Peace and Security, Development and Human Rights. Speaking further on strengthening multilateralism and the need for reforms, Onyeama pointed out that "Nigeria recognizes the fact that the most pressing issues of our time cannot be addressed without multilateral cooperation", but rather a more vital collaboration and cooperation among diverse regions was the only path to a peaceful, stable and prosperous world for all. The minister stressed the need for Nigeria to become a permanent member of G20 as the largest economy in Africa with "stable and uninterrupted democratic governance". Kingsley Joshua, [The Independent News \(March 5th\)](#), reports.

The federal government has joined other sub-Saharan African countries to repatriate its citizens from Tunisia over a series of attacks and shocking statements by the Tunisian President, Kais Saied. The Nigerians in the Diaspora Commission (NiD-COM) said while some sub-Saharan African countries evacuated their nationals last week, the Nigerian ambassador to Tunisia, Asari Allotey, is in consultation with the Nigerian community on a decision on evacuation. Still to date, only a few have agreed to return to Nigeria. The development came after president Saied said the continuous illegal immigration aims to turn Tunisia into "only an African country with no belonging to the Arab and Muslim worlds", alleging that the ones behind the scheme are involved in human trafficking. In a statement on Monday, the Chairman of the NiD-COM said that those that have agreed to return to Nigeria are very few and the mission was working with the IOM to arrange tickets for them. He further stated that "many others want to wait it out, praying it will soon pass following the intervention

of the African Union and the African Group of Ambassadors". [The Sahara Reporters News \(March 6th\)](#) reports.

In order to unravel the circumstances surrounding the killing of 16 Nigerian Muslim pilgrims to Kaolack, Senegal, allegedly by security forces of Burkina Faso, over a month ago, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Zubairu Dada, summoned the Burkina Faso Chargé D'Affaires to Nigeria. The Minister expressed dismay over what he described as an "unnecessary delay" in discovering the truth about the incident. He said families of the victims were looking for answer and therefore there was a need to hasten the investigation started by the Burkinabe government. The Chargé d' Affairs who first commiserated with the families of the victims as well as the government and the people of Nigeria over what he described as an unfortunate incident, said they understood the pains that the families of the deceased were going through. He said an investigation has already commenced to single out the perpetrators of the killing by the Burkinabe government, adding that his country is ready to work with a team of experts from Nigeria to resolve what happened. Innocent Odoh, [The Leadership News \(March 5th\)](#) reports.

The Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) has projected that about 25.3 million people in Nigeria would face acute food insecurity during the June to August 2023 lean season. A quarterly report released by the organization shows that the figure projected is higher than the 19.45 million forecasts from 2022. The report assessed 45 countries to provide insight into their food situation, mainly focusing on low-income food deficit countries. According to the report, the state of insecurity in northern Nigeria plays a significant role in the country's projected rate. "Acute food insecurity is mostly driven by the deterioration of security conditions and conflicts in northern states, which as of March 2022 (latest data available) have led to the displacement of about 3.17 million people and are constraining farmers' access to their lands", the FAO report said. Nigeria has been largely impacted by insecurity in the country. In some parts of the north, conflicts among farmers and herders have led to crises in which many Nigerians have been killed, displaced from their homes and their farmlands destroyed. Ntiedo Ekott, [The Premium Times News \(March 6th\)](#) reports.

Supreme Court Extends Old Naira Notes Validity until December, Banks Begin Dispensing Old Notes, FG intercepts 200 Cyber-Attacks during Presidential, NASS Elections, Six States Ask Supreme Court to Nullify Presidential Elections, PDP Presidential Candidate Atiku Abubakar Leads Protesters to INEC, Court Orders BVAS Reset Ahead of March 18 Gubernatorial Polls, Lagos State Governor Sanwo-Olu Suspends Campaign, Declares 3-Day Mourning Over Train Accident, FG Seek Funding Support for Census

The Supreme Court has extended the validity of the NGN 200, NGN 500 and NGN 1.000 Naira notes until December 31. A seven-member court panel unanimously directed that the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) must continue to receive the old notes from Nigerians. The court held that the directive of President Muhammadu Buhari for the redesign of the new notes and withdrawal of the old notes without due consultation was invalid. Emmanuel Agim, a panel member who read the lead judgement, also condemned the President's disobedience of the court's February 8 order that the old Naira notes should continue to circulate alongside the new ones. He said the President's broadcast of February 16 that only NGN 200 notes should remain legal tender made Nigeria's democracy look like a mere pretension while democracy is replaced with autocracy. Ade Adesomoju, [The Premium Times News \(March 3rd\)](#) reports.

Commercial banks in different parts of the country on Monday resumed issuance of the old NGN 500 and NGN 1000 notes to customers over the counter and through their automated teller machines (ATM). The move comes against the Supreme Court ruling on the Naira redesign policy of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) which compelled banks to issue the old notes to Nigerians. Since the Supreme Court ruling on Friday, the CBN and the federal government have not reacted to the new development. This caused further uncertainty, amidst which banks and business owners continue to express worry about the silence on the use of the old notes as legal tender. The policy caused widespread chaos throughout the country, resulting in protests in various regions as Nigerians faced challenges in their efforts to do business and access cash for daily transactions. Ayodeji Adegboyega et al, [The Premium Times News \(March 7th\)](#) reports.

The federal government blocked over 200 cyber-attacks during the just concluded presidential and

national assembly elections. Prof. Muhammad Abubakar, managing director of Galaxy Backbone (GBB), a public enterprise of the Nigerian government incorporated in 2006 with the primary mandate of setting up and operating a unified information and communication technology (ICT) infrastructure platform, disclosed this at the opening session of a two-day ministerial training for GBB board members and management staff. Abubakar stated that a business continuity and cyberspace protection committee was formed to safeguard and regulate digital activities while optimizing GBB'S technical services. Minister of Communication and Digital Economy, Prof. Isa Pantami, urged the agency to think out of the box to discover new areas for government revenue generation. Pantami stated that the train was geared towards evaluating and recalibrating GBB regarding management and leadership for optimal outputs and commended the agency's approach to digital infrastructural development while saving the cost of governance. Onyedika-Ugoeze, [The Guardian News \(March 8th\)](#) reports.

Adamawa, Akwa-Ibom, Bayelsa, Delta, Edo and Sokoto states have taken the federal government to the Supreme Court over the conduct of the February 25, presidential and national assembly elections. The suit filed by the Attorneys General of the six states has the Attorney General of the Federation as the sole respondent. According to the plaintiffs, the collation of the national election results from the 36 states and that of the Federal Capital Territory for the said elections have not been carried out in compliance with the mandatory provisions of relevant sections of the Electoral Act, 2022, the INEC Regulations and Guidelines for the Conduct of Elections, 2022, and the INEC Manual for Election Officials, 2023. They stated that non-compliance with the due process of law has led to a widespread agitation, violent protests, displeasure, and disapproval from a broad spectrum of the Nigerian populace, including international observers, political parties, well-meaning Nigerians and former head of states of the country. The plaintiffs urged the apex court to declare "that the federal government, through INEC, was bound to electronically transmit or transfer polling unit results using the bimodal voter accreditation system (BVAS) by uploading a scanned copy of the said result to the Independent National Electoral Commission Result Viewing Portal (IReV)". Esther Blankson, [The Punch News \(March 3rd\)](#) reports.

Days after announcing his decision to challenge the outcome of the February 25 elections, presi-

presidential candidate of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Atiku Abubakar, on Monday led followers and members of the party in a protest march to the headquarters of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in Abuja. They were carrying posters reading "Save our democracy from INEC", "INEC is an enemy of the Nigerian democracy", "Cancel 2023 general elections now" and "Nigerians have lost confidence in INEC", among others. Dressed in black attires, Atiku and party leaders reiterated their earlier rejection of the results, saying the election was marred with infractions and they would challenge it in court. The demonstrators marched from the PDP presidential campaign office to the Maitama office of the electoral umpire to protest the outcome of the elections won by the candidate of the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC), Bola Tinubu. Azimazi Momoh Jimoh et al., [The Guardian News \(March 7th\)](#) reports.

The Court of Appeal has refused to restrain the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) from reconfiguring the bimodal voter accreditation system (BVAS) machines. The ruling delivered by a three-member panel held that this would restrain the commission from conducting the March 11 polls. Furthermore, in an unanimous decision, the court held that stopping the electoral body from reconfiguring BVAS would adversely affect the state elections. In an application, Peter Obi, presidential candidate of the Labour Party (LP), had sought an order of the court "restraining INEC from tampering with the information embedded in the BVAS machines until the due inspection is conducted and certified true copies (CTC) of them issued". The court said the application was unnecessary because it never granted permission to Obi nor to other candidates or parties to scientifically access and inspect INEC's database, including the BVAS devices. Furthermore, the tribunal said the apprehension being expressed by INEC, which includes the possible revelation of voters' identities and voting choices, was unnecessary because no applicant was granted leave to access the database, only election materials. Joseph Onyekwere et al., [The Guardian News \(March 9th\)](#) report.

Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu of Lagos has suspended political campaigns and declared three days of mourning for those who died in an accident involving a train and a state staff bus in Lagos state on Thursday. He also declared that all flags be flown at half-mast to mourn the train crash victims for the next three days. Six persons have died in the accident, while 85 passengers were involved

in the accident. While reacting to reports that treatment of the victims was delayed, Sanwo-Olu said health workers responded to the victims swiftly. Adelagun, [The Premium Times \(March 9th\)](#) reports.

Seventeen years after the last national census in 2006, Nigeria is set to conduct a new census. The green census, an approach to running a census that causes little to no environmental damage, is scheduled to hold between March 29 and April 2 across 774 local government areas. It is expected to cost a total of NGN 869 billion. But according to Nigeria's Minister of State for Budget and National Planning, Prince Clem Agba, the government has only committed about half of the sum. Speaking at a high-level partner's engagement in Abuja on Monday, Agba said the census would be conducted with various development partners, including the United Nations Populations Fund (UNFPA) and European Union. The minister noted that a total of NGN 869 billion (USD 1.88 billion) will be required for the exercise, including post-census activities. The costs per capita stand at USD 6. He therefore invited various development partners to support the government with funding. UNFPA was providing significant technical and financial support and would also be managing a basket fund established for the redemption of pledges. The Minister of Finance, Zainab Ahmed, also noted that digital technology would be deployed for credible, reliable and acceptable outcomes, adding that census allows the government to capture changes in the population correctly, the age structure or movement of the population for alignment of public policy and also for investment decisions. She noted that for the census people would not be asked about their ethnicity and religion owing to their sensitive nature. Chiamaka Okafor, [The Premium Times News \(March 7th\)](#) reports.

Insecurity: 1.250 Boko Haram Terrorists Surrender after the Death of 200, Troops Attack ISWAP, IPOB, Bandits and other Terrorists in Nationwide Military Operations

At least 1.250 fleeing Boko Haram fighters and family members have surrendered to Nigerian troops in the north east in the last seven days following a deadly clash with the rival Islamic State of West African Province (ISWAP) that claimed over 200 lives. Zagazola Makama, a counter-insurgency expert and security analyst in the Lake Chad region, reported how the ISWAP terrorists carried out reprisal attacks on Boko Haram fighters on

February 26 and 27, 2023, in north east Borno state. However, the ISWAP group successfully dislodged Boko Haram, killing many of them and forcing survivors to flee their camps together with their families. On Sunday, top military sources have informed Makama about the incident. Ndahi Marama, [The Vanguard News \(March 5th\)](#) reports.

In the past two weeks, both kinetic and non-kinetic operations against terrorists, insurgents, bandits and other groups were conducted throughout Nigeria with significant results recorded. In addition, troops' activities and operational successes were recorded within all six geopolitical zones. Troops of the Joint Task Force Operation Hadin Kai in the north east zone of the country have sustained and continued to dominate the joint area of operations in their fight against terrorists. In addition, operational activities were conducted in villages, forests, mountains, towns and various cities in

Borno state. Troops of Operation Safe Haven and Whirl Stroke in the north central zone have sustained the offensive against terrorists and other criminal elements in their general areas of operation. Furthermore, operational activities were conducted at different locations and villages within in Plateau state. Troops of operation Hadarin Daji and other functions in the zone have continued to sustain their dominance over the menace of terrorists and other criminal activities in the north west zone of Nigeria. Troops of Joint Task Force Operation Delta Safe and other operations in the south south region of the country have continued to sustain the war against oil theft, illegal refineries and other criminal activities in the Niger Delta through aggressive patrols, raids and clearance operations amongst other activities. For further details on all recent nationwide operations, kindly follow the link. Musa Danmadami, [PR Nigeria News \(March 9th\)](#) reports.

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