



June 2023
Nigeria Office

Nigeria Press Review

02.06. – 09.06.2023

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

Removal of Fuel Subsidy: Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority Rejects Nigeria Air's Request for Certification, Labor Unions Suspend Strike After Meeting with Government, House of Representatives Urge President Tinubu to Address the Demands of Organized Labor, Governors Support Fuel Removal Subsidy, Tinubu Meets Oil Marketers and National Economic Council to Discuss Fuel Subsidy Removal, OPEC Cuts Global Quota for Price Stability

INEC Staff Testify in Court on Presidential Election Petition, House of Representatives Demand Audit of National Petroleum Company for Unaccounted NGN 2 Trillion Assets, House of Representatives Alleges Fraud in the Unveiling of Nigeria Air and Calls for Prosecution, Nigerian Health Workers Suspend Strike After Meeting with President Tinubu, INEC Publishes Final List of Candidates for Off-Cycle Gubernatorial Elections

Insecurity: Bandits Kill over 50 People in Sokoto and Zamfara, Bandits Abduct 30 For Failure to Pay Levies in Kaduna, 82 ISWAP Terrorists Drown in Borno, Nigerian Air Force Admits to Carrying Out Consequential Airstrikes in January 2023, Nigeria and Niger Republic Commit to Strengthened Border Security

Removal of Fuel Subsidy: Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority Rejects Nigeria Air's Request for Certification, Labor Unions Suspend Strike After Meeting with Government, Tinubu Meets Oil Marketers and National Economic Council to Discuss Fuel Subsidy Removal, OPEC Cuts Global Quota for Price Stability

Barely two weeks after the unveiling of the national carrier, Nigeria Air, the Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA) rejected an application for certification required to process and obtain the Air Operator's Certificate (AOC) due to the unavailability of a formal application form and other necessary documents. Former aviation minister Hadi Sirika had repeatedly promised Nigerians that Nigeria Air would commence operation before the swearing in of the new administration. The rejection by NCAA now, once more, shows the non-adequate preparation for the operation of the national carrier. In July 2022, the Federal Executive Council (FEC) had approved the leasing of 3 aircrafts to enable the airline commence operations. Later, Ethiopian Airlines emerged as a core investor in Nigerian Air holding 49% of the shares. This announcement was trailed by a law suit by local airline operators who claimed they could manage the national airline better. The matter is still pending in court. This was reported by Abdulkareem Mojeed, [Premium Times News \(June 4th\)](#).

After initially planning to embark on a nationwide strike as of Wednesday, Nigerian labor unions have suspended the proposed strike following a meeting with government officials at the presidential villa in Abuja. The proposed strike came as a result of the removal of fuel subsidy by the federal government, causing petrol prices to jump to over NGN 500 per liter across the country. The unions agreed to suspend the strike on the condition that the government would introduce plans to cushion the effect of fuel subsidy removal on Nigerians. Prior to the meeting, the National Industrial Court restrained the defendants, the Trade Union Congress (TUC) and Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC), from embarking on the planned strike. Dennis Ezeji, [The Guardian News \(June 5th\)](#) reports.

The governor of Ogun state, Dapo Abiodun, led major marketers on a courtesy visit to president Bola Tinubu. They expressed solidarity with him for removing the fuel subsidy. They admitted that it would cause some discomfort for a while but would eventually pay off over time. The marketers announced their intention to donate 100 mass transit buses, worth NGN 10 billion, as a way to

cushion the effect of subsidy removal, hoping that other well-meaning corporate bodies would do the same. The oil marketers said that the petroleum price has more than doubled compared to the pre-subsidy removal price, now standing at NGN 479.50 per liter. The National Economic Council (NEC) led by vice president Kashim Shettima was directed by the president to begin the process of working on interventions to ameliorate the impact of subsidy removal. Collins Olayinka et al., [The Guardian News \(June 8th\)](#) report.

In a bid to maintain global oil stability, members and non-members of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) at the joint ministerial monitoring committee meeting agreed to cut crude oil production volumes. Saudi Arabia announced a further cut of one million barrels of oil per day following an agreement with OPEC. However, Nigeria, Congo and Angola were allowed to produce maximally. Nigeria's highest crude oil production was achieved in February 2023 at 1.38 million barrels per day out of its 1.74 million barrels per day quota. The Nigerian delegation at the meeting expressed confidence that the ongoing security intervention under the leadership of president Bola Tinubu would enable the restoration of the country's production to 1.58 million barrels per day and be complemented by condensate of about 400,000 barrels per day. Okechukwu Nnodim, [The Punch News \(June 5th\)](#) reports.

INEC Staff Testify in Court on Presidential-Election Petition, House of Representatives Urge President Tinubu to Address the Demands of Organized Labor, Governors Support Fuel Removal Subsidy, House of Representatives Demand Audit of National Petroleum Company for Unaccounted NGN 2 Trillion Assets, House of Representatives Alleges Fraud in the Unveiling of Nigeria Air and Calls for Prosecution, Nigerian Health Workers Suspend Strike After Meeting with President Tinubu, INEC Publishes Final List of Candidates for Off-Cycle Gubernatorial Elections

Two subpoenaed witnesses of the presidential candidate of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Atiku Abubakar, admitted at the presidential election petition court that the bimodal voter accreditation system (BVAS) failed to transmit the results of the election after the collation. The witnesses were a presiding officer in a polling unit in Abia state and an Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) ad-hoc staff in Plateau state. One

told the court that the most significant challenge she experienced during the election was uploading the presidential election results into the portal. Under cross-examination, the other witness explained that he resorted to an offline system in place of the BVAS machines. Further hearing on the petition has been shifted to June 9. Fadehan Opeyemi, [Daily Post News \(June 8th\)](#) reports.

The House of Representatives has moved a motion underscoring the need for an amicable settlement of the agitations by organized labor over the announcement of subsidy removal. The Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC) and Trade Union Congress (TUC) believe that the removal came too abruptly without proper consultations with relevant stakeholders and that it will further impose hardship on Nigerians. The House, preferring dialogue over a confrontational stance by labor unions, urged the leadership of the NLC to suspend its planned strike action and embrace dialogue. In the same fashion, it mandated the joint committees on labor as well as petroleum downstream to collaborate with the NLC and relevant authorities to ensure compliance with these resolutions. Kehinde Akintola, [The Nigerian Tribune \(June 6th\)](#) reports.

The Nigeria Governors' Forum (NGF) expressed contentment with president Bola Tinubu's decision on removing the fuel subsidy and promised to work with him to cushion the expected short-term impact. Tinubu advised the political leaders to downplay their differences and jointly focus on alleviating the sufferings and pains of the people. The president said he was prepared to share ideas, strengthen institutions and create bottom-up frameworks that will improve the livelihood of Nigerians. [Premium Times News \(June 7th\)](#) reports.

The House of Representatives has further called for a forensic audit of the Nigerian National Petroleum Company (NNPC) to determine its assets and liabilities as well as its current market value. A report of the House's ad hoc committee claimed from its findings that assets worth USD 64 billion were unveiled by former president Muhammadu Buhari and only USD 58.8 billion were transferred, leaving a balance of USD 5.2 billion unaccounted for. This report came about a week after NNPC chief executive director Mele Kyari said the federal government still owed the company NGN 2.8 trillion. The committee made several recommendations including a call on the government to outsource the nation's three refineries to international companies. The Trade Union Congress (TUC) opposed the call for privatization claiming it

was a ploy by the political elite to sell the assets to their peers. The Petroleum and Natural Gas Senior Staff Association of Nigeria (PENGASSAN) and the Lagos Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) support the call for privatization, describing it as long overdue. Okechukwu Nnodim et al, [The Punch News \(June 7th\)](#) report.

After interactions between the House of Representatives' committee on aviation and relevant bodies in the aviation sector, the House called for the suspension of the establishment of Nigeria Air and called for the prosecution of all those from the previous administration involved in the exercise. The permanent secretary of the ministry of aviation, Emmanuel Meribole, explained that the unveiling done by the former minister was not an official launching but a display of aspiration. He added that the ministry did not spend a dime on the event. The secretary admitted that Nigeria Air had not gotten the Air Operator Certificate (AOC) approval to operate as an airline. The aircraft, painted the Nigeria Air color, was a chartered flight that flew into Nigeria for 48 hours. Speaking on behalf of the airline operators, former managing director of the Nigerian Airspace Management Agency Roland Iyayi accused the ministry of conniving with Ethiopian Airlines at the detriment of Nigeria and the local aviation industry. Bakare Majeed, [Premium Times News \(June 6th\)](#) reports.

Nigerian health workers under the umbrella of the Joint Health Sector Unions (JOHESU) suspended their 12-day old indefinite strike after meeting with president Bola Tinubu. JOHESU vice president Obinna Ogbonna confirmed this development, explaining that they had made progress in their engagements with the president. They had given the government a 21-day timeline to assess the progress and commitment of state actors in resolving issues. Some of their demands include: immediate payment of the omission and shortfall in the Covid-19 hazard/inducement allowances of affected health workers in federal health institutions and unconditional payment of withheld salaries of some of their members. The union also called for the implementation of the increase in the retirement age from 60 to 65 years and 70 years for consultants in the health professions, among other demands. Nike Adebawale-Tambe, [Premium Times News \(June 5th\)](#) reports.

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has approved the final list of candidates for the three off-cycle governorship elections that are scheduled to hold in Kogi, Imo and Bayelsa states

on Saturday, November 11. The list was approved at this week's INEC's regular meeting. The list has also been published on the commission's website in line with section 32(1) of the Electoral Act 2022 which requires the list to be published no less than 150 days to the election day. The INEC chairman condemned the reported altercation that occurred between the convoys of the Kogi state governor and the governorship candidate of the Social Democratic Party (SDP). He urged the parties and candidates to conduct their activities with decorum and deescalate tensions ahead of the elections. [Vanguard News \(June 6th\)](#) reports.

Insecurity: Bandits Kill over 50 People in Sokoto and Zamfara, Bandits Abduct 30 For Failure to Pay Levies in Kaduna, 82 ISWAP Terrorists Drown in Borno, Nigerian Air Force Admits to Carrying Out Consequential Airstrikes in January 2023, Nigeria and Niger Republic Commit to Strengthened Border Security

Bandits last weekend unleashed terror on communities in Sokoto and Zamfara states, gunning down 62 persons. Further reports stated, that the bandits in Sokoto came from neighboring Niger Republic, Mali and Libya. When contacted, the spokesman of the Sokoto state police command confirmed the attacks but said the command was yet to get detailed information from the divisional police officer in charge of the area. In Zamfara state, bandits also attacked two communities, leaving over 25 people dead. Reacting, Zamfara state governor Dauda Lawal directed that security operatives be deployed to the affected areas to prevent further destruction of lives and property. Abubakar Auwal and Shehu Umar, [Daily Trust News \(June 5th\)](#) report.

Because residents in Kaduna state could not pay levies imposed on them before a given deadline, bandits opened attacks on farmers, killing two and abducting 30. A member of the affected community emphasized that as long as attacks were ongoing, food scarcity was imminent as farmers were afraid to go to their farms. Residents are appealing to president Bola Tinubu for help: "Based on experience, even if the levy is paid, the bandits will never stop carrying out their attacks". Abduganiyu Alabi and Ayodele Afolabi, [The Guardian News \(June 7th\)](#) report.

On June 2-3, in a bid to escape from military counter attacks, no less than 82 Islamic State of West Africa Province (ISWAP) terrorists and members of

their families drowned in Lake Chad. Sources say that the terrorists fled in fear after hearing of military invasions in the area. In another case, at least two soldiers were killed when ISWAP terrorists attacked troops in Borno state. Sources said that the troops later repelled the attack and held their position and equipment. The number of terrorists killed including a suicide bomber were unconfirmed. It has been gathered that ISWAP terrorists have intensified attacks using vehicle improvised explosive devices and mines to prevent troops incursion into their enclaves. Francis Okoye, [The Leadership News \(June 5th\)](#) reports.

A recent report by Human Rights Watch (HRW) states that the Nigerian air force has taken responsibility for the deadly airstrike which occurred on January 24, 2023 in the border-region of Nasarawa and Benue states. Nasarawa state governor Abdullahi Sule had exonerated the Nigerian Air Force from the attack. He said "no air force plane flew through the area", adding that the bombing was carried out by an unidentified drone. According to the HRW report, the Nigerian air force claimed that the airstrike was carried out in response to "suspected terrorist" activities around Nasarawa state, but provided no details. HRW said its enquiry revealed the victims of the air strike were "cattle herders and found no evidence that the targets of the airstrike had any link to bandit gangs or other armed groups". In response to the investigation, an air commodore admitted that the air force carried out the strike based "on credible intelligence and in synergy with other security forces and agencies in Nasarawa state". HRW decried the act as unacceptable and called on the military to provide full accountability for their actions as well as financial compensation and livelihood assistance commensurate with the needs of the victims and their families. Ameh Ejekwonyilo, [Premium Times News \(June 7th\)](#) reports.

The federal government of Nigeria and the Niger Republic have strengthened bilateral defense relations on border security. The permanent secretary with the ministry of defense, Ibrahim Kana, stated this during a delegation visit of Niger military high school participants. Nigeria would continue to strengthen defense bilateral relations with the Republic of Niger, pointing out that Nigeria and Niger have a long-standing relationship which is based on a shared border and common-culture and historical heritage. Strengthening the sharing of acquired information would further improve security for both nations. Tarkaa David, [The Leadership News \(June 9th\)](#) reports.



Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e. V.

Marija Peran, Resident Representative
Lukas Laible, Deputy Resident Representative
Kenechukwu Nlem, Project Assistant
Adams Adamu, Project Assistant

Nigeria Office

www.kas.de/nigeria

www.facebook.com/kas.nigeria

marija.peran@kas.de / lukas.laible@kas.de



The text of this publication is published under a Creative Commons license: "Creative Commons Attribution- Share Alike 4.0 international" (CC BY-SA 4.0), <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/legalcode>