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Nigeria Office

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.

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The Supreme Court has ordered the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) not to end the use of old Naira notes on February 10. A seven-member panel of the court gave the order of interim injunction amid an acute scarcity of newly redesigned N 200, N 500 and N 1.000 currency notes. The court temporarily gave the order, cancelling the CBN's deadline to end the validity of the old versions of the banknotes based on an ex parte application filed by three northern states controlled by the All Progressives Congress (APC). The three applicant states are Kaduna, Kogi and Zamfara. [The Premium Times \(February 8th\)](#) reports.

On Wednesday, the Attorney-General of the Federation (AGF), Abubakar Malami, asked the Supreme Court to dismiss the suit filed by three state governments challenging the naira redesign policy of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN). In a preliminary objection filed by the AGF through two of his lawyers, the Federal Government argued that the Supreme Court lacks jurisdiction to entertain the suit. Citing grounds supporting the objection, they said that the State Government's lawsuit challenges the Federal Government through its agency, the CBN, to withdraw old banknotes from the financial system and introduce new ones. Referencing Section 251 of the Constitution, the defence lawyers argue that the suit falls within the exclusive jurisdiction of the Federal High Court in matters of monetary policy of an agency of the Federal Government. Ignatius Igwe, [The Channels News \(February 10th\)](#) reports.

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has appealed the judgment of the Justice Kume-led Election Petition Tribunal in Osun State on 44 grounds. The petitioners, former Governor of Osun State, Adegboyega Oyetola, and his party, All Progressives Congress (APC), faulted the declaration of the candidate of Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Ademola Adeleke, on July 17, 2022, by the electoral body as the winner of the July 16, 2022 governorship election in the state. INEC filed the petition at the Court of Appeal in Akure, stating the tribunal erred in law by failing to consider and rule on the various preliminary objections filed by the first respondent and challenging the petition's

competency and jurisdiction to hear the plea but proceeded to determine the merit of the petition. Accordingly, INEC sought an order from the Appeal Court to set aside the entire decision of the trial tribunal and dismiss and strike out the petition for want of competence and jurisdiction. [The Guardian News \(February 9th\)](#) reports.

On Thursday, the Federal Government ordered university closure for students to participate in the 2023 general elections. The National Universities Commission (NUC) gave the directive in a letter addressed to universities' vice-chancellors and directors. NUC Deputy Executive Secretary for Administration Chris Maiyaki said the order will take effect from Wednesday, February 22. Maiyaki noted that the message was based on a charge from Nigeria's education minister Adamu Adamu. The suspension of academic activities comes days after the National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS) asked President Muhammadu Buhari to shut down all tertiary institutions until after the February 25 and March 11 elections. Dennis Erezi, [The Guardian News \(February 9th\)](#) reports.

Anger and frustration were widespread in many parts of the country as the permanent voter card (PVC) collection ended. The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) concluded collecting the PVCs 20 days before the February 25 presidential poll. Some of the registered voters in several collection centers said they had arrived as early as 6 am, yet they could only collect their cards after several hours. An INEC official said that two weeks ago, the Commission had received 444.626 PVCs, out of which 361.139 had been collected and 83.487 were uncollected PVCs. This led to discussions on stakeholders helping INEC with distributing the cards at no cost before the election. Clifford Ndujihe, [The Vanguard News \(February 6th\)](#) reports.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has urged the Federal Government to deliver on its commitment to remove fuel subsidies by mid-2023. An IMF report released this week said Nigeria's economy has recouped the output losses sustained during the Covid-19 pandemic supported by favorable oil prices and buoyant consumption activities. According to the organization, there was need for bold fiscal reforms to create needed policy space, put public debt on sound footing and reduce vulnerabilities. They urged the Nigerian government to deliver their commitment to remove fuel subsidies by mid-2023 and increase well-targeted social spending. Despite rising oil prices, the IMF said,

the government's fiscal deficit is estimated to have widened further in 2022, mainly due to high fuel subsidy costs. It explained that while the current account is estimated to have improved in 2022, foreign currency reserves declined amidst capital outflow pressures. Mary Izuaka, [The Premium Times News \(February 8th\)](#) reports.

13 Political Parties Threaten to Redraw from Contesting Upcoming Elections Over Naira Redesign Controversy, INEC Chairman Meets Central Bank Governor Over Election Operation, Zinox Technologies Set to Supply Tech Components for 2023 National Census in 85 Billion Naira Contract, FG Says Oil Marketers Responsible for High Costs of Fuel, Immigration Officers Seize 6.216 Voters Card from Foreigners

13 of the 18 political parties have threatened to withdraw from the 2023 general elections over the Central Bank of Nigeria's Naira redesign policy. Speaking at a briefing by a coalition of chairpersons of political parties in Abuja, National Chairman of the Action Alliance, Kenneth Udeze, said the parties will not be interested in the elections if the new deadline of February 10, 2023, is shifted as demanded by some governors of the All Progressives Congress (APC). Useze commended President Muhammadu Buhari on redesigning the N 200, N 500 and N 1.000 banknotes. However, the 13 parties condemned Kaduna, Kogi and Zamfara State Governments for heading to the Supreme Court about the validity of the old notes. Dennis Ezezi, [The Guardian News \(February 6th\)](#) reports.

Chairman of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), Prof. Mahmood Yakubu, met with the governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), Godwin Emefiele, over the new Naira policy. In this courtesy visit, Yakubu expressed concern about the procedure and how it might affect the 2023 general elections if not managed better. He said some service providers, especially transporters, must be paid in cash. Besides, experience has shown that emergencies arise on election day, which could demand the use of money by the Commission. However, the CBN governor assured INEC as well as Nigerians that the apex bank wouldn't do anything adverse to the successful conduct of the polls, ensuring that CBN would provide INEC with needed Naira notes as required. Azimazi Momoh Jimoh et al., [The Guardian News \(February 8th\)](#) reports.

The Federal Government, through the National Population Commission (NPC), has signed a landmark deal with Nigeria's leading integrated technology brand, Zinox, to supply tech components and other accessories for the 2023 national census project. The contract worth over N 85 billion, was awarded to Zinox after ratification by the Federal Executive Council (FEC). To actualize the project, Zinox hosted a high-powered delegation of commissioners and management team of the NPC led by Chairman Hon. Nasir Isa Kwarra, where the first 100.000 units of digital devices were presented to the commission. Speaking at the event, the NPC Chairman noted that the 2023 census would signal a new dawn in housing and human headcount in Nigeria as there would be no overcounting or undercounting, adding that the devices, when commissioned with the forms, maps and other digital enhancements, would ensure that enumerators are unable to go beyond the areas assigned to them. Samson Akintaro, [Nairametrics News \(February 8th\)](#) reports.

The Federal Government has blamed the oil marketers for the high fuel cost in some parts of the country. This is even as it has reiterated its directive to the Nigerian Midstream and Downstream Petroleum Regulatory Authority (NMDPRA) to sanction filling stations flaunting its directives on the sake of petroleum products at regulated prices. Minister of State for Petroleum Resources Timipreye Sylva stated this while fielding questions from the State House of the Correspondents at the end of the Federal Executive Council (FEC) meeting. Consumers of petroleum products, especially petrol, now pay as high as between N 200 and N 650 for a liter of the product, which is above the official pump price. Asked what the government was doing to alleviate the hardship brought by fuel scarcity and why he was turning a blind eye on the hardship, the minister said: "We have reports of profiteering by marketers, and I've directed NMDPRA to sanction anybody who profiteers on this kind of situation," reiterating that the government would not turn a blind eye on the situation. Juliana Taiwo-Obalonye, [The Sun News \(February 8th\)](#) reports.

The Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS) has seized 6.216 permanent voter cards and Nigerian national identity cards (ID) from foreigners in a clampdown across the country. The clampdown is one of the steps employed by the NIS to ensure that foreigners are not allowed to vote in the forth

coming elections, even as it revealed that plans are underway to close the borders during the elections and to continue to collect both voter and national identity cards from non-Nigerians. The Comptroller General of NIS, Isah Idris, also disclosed that the arrested foreigners caught with the two critical documents reserved only for Nigerian citizens had been eased out of the country. He explained that the voter and ID cards were intercepted across 21 states, mostly border states, due to the stepping up of surveillance by the NIS. He said the service had introduced an electric border management surveillance that uses technology to monitor activities at the country's borders for efficiency and better protection of the nation's borders. While noting that borders are usually closed during the elections to avoid incursion by foreigners and interruptions meant to destabilize the process, Idris said the same would be done during the next polls on the president's orders. Michael Olugbode, [This Day News \(February 9th\)](#) reports.

Insecurity: UN Calls for Counter-Terrorism Operations as Elections Draw Closer, Security Chiefs Assure INEC of Rancor-Free Elections

United Nations Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, Alice Nderitu, has urged the Nigerian authorities to conduct counter-terrorism operations in line with international human rights and humanitarian law. Nderitu voiced concern over Nigeria's seemingly worsening security situation, urging authorities to address the killings. She condemned the January 24 airstrike in which at least 40 herders, mainly ethnic Fulani, were killed and

scores of other civilians were injured. "In this highly volatile environment, it is crucial that the general elections do not trigger violence and even atrocity crimes," she warned. She called for all political leaders to abide by a peace accord they signed that included a commitment to peaceful campaigns. Furthermore, she urged religious and traditional leaders to work to appease tensions, prevent incitement to violence and address the risk of atrocity crimes ahead of the elections and beyond. [The Tide News \(February 4th\)](#) reports.

The National Security Adviser (NSA) to the President, Babagana Monguno, has assured Nigerians that the 2023 general elections would be conducted in an atmosphere devoid of malice. Monguno gave the assurance on Tuesday during his meeting with the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and leadership of security agencies in the country. There have been fears and concerns that the new Naira notes shortage and fuel scarcity may disrupt the forthcoming polls. However, the NSA advised Nigerians to dispel any form of misinformation, fake news and fear regarding the conduct of the 2023 general elections, saying the election would be conducted peacefully. Chief of Defense Staff Lucky Irabor restated the commitment of the armed forces to work with the police and other security agencies to ensure that INEC conducts the 2023 general elections without disruptions. In addition, the Inspector General of Police (IGP), Usman Alkali Baba, assured members of the public that the police, in collaboration with other security agencies, were fully prepared for the 2023 general elections. [The Premium Times \(February 8th\)](#) reports.

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