

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 Covid-19 and the situation in Nigeria.

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Covid-19: USAID Announces USD 10 Million Support

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has announced its new funding of USD 10.6 million that will finance boosting Covid-19 vaccination efforts to reach targets of 600,000 citizens a day. This funding increases the total US assistance to Nigeria to USD 179 million under the five-year USD 2.1 billion Development Objectives Assistance Agreement signed between USAID and the Ministry of Finance, Budget and National Planning as affirmed by the US Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken during his visit to Nigeria in November 2021. Kazeem Biriowo, [Nigerian Tribune \(March 10th\)](#) reports.

Fuel Scarcity Worsens Across Nigeria, Disrupts Domestic Flight Schedules, Six Airlines Form Alliance, IMF Warns of High Food, Fuel Prices in Africa

Premium Times has reported persisted queues in Abuja, Lagos and several other cities throughout last and early this week as people scrambled to get petrol for their cars and their electricity generators. The crisis, which has lingered for weeks – and in some places like Abuja for several months –, continued despite the Federal Government (FG) assuring it had sufficient stock of petroleum products for distribution across the country. In February, the FG said methanol found in recently imported fuel exceeded Nigeria's specification. The development has resulted in a shortage of petrol and queues reappearing in major cities. It has since spread to all parts of the country. Mary Izuaka, [The Premium Times \(March 7th\)](#) reports.

On Wednesday, the country's biggest carrier announced disruptions due to jet fuel scarcity. "Unfortunately, the fuel scarcity is starting to seriously impact our operations," Air Peace disclosed. Three other carriers, Dana Air, Ibom Air and United Airlines, have responded to customer's complaints on social media saying they faced challenges in sourcing. Another carrier, Arik Air, delayed all its flights already on Tuesday and cancelled several more, explaining that it had no certainty on the situation in the coming days. Despite being Africa's largest producer, Nigeria imports nearly all its jet fuel, which has nearly doubled to as high as N 625 (USD 1.50) a liter since December, Arik Air said. [Aljazeera News \(March 10th\)](#) reports.

Responding to complaints of the public, six Nigerian airlines on Tuesday – including Air Peace, Azman Air, United Nigeria Airline, Arik Air, Aero Contractors and Max Air – have signed a pact named the 'Spring Alliance' to mutually support one another's operations and improve service delivery for their clients. The Managing Director of Aero Contractors, Abdullahi Mahmood, noted that the formation of the Spring Alliance was a historic move in prioritizing the satisfaction of passengers, adding that "this is the first time something like this is happening in Nigeria's aviation industry". Abdullateef Aliyu, [The Daily Trust News \(March 9th\)](#) reports.

In a meeting with African ministers of finance, Central Bank Governors and representatives from the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa to discuss the impact of the crisis in Ukraine, the Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Kristalina Georgieva, said Nigeria and other African countries were vulnerable to higher food and fuel prices, low tourism revenues and difficulty accessing the international capital market due to the ongoing war in Ukraine. Also, she explained, "the war and the unprecedented sanctions imposed on Russia are having far-reaching consequences. They come at a delicate time for Africa". Just as the global economy and the continent were beginning to recover from the ramifications of the Covid-19 pandemic, this new crisis threatened to undo some of that progress. Temitayo Jayeola, [The Punch News \(March 11th\)](#) reports.

House to Reconsider Gender Bills, Court Stops President Buhari, National Assembly from Amending Electoral Act, Senate Rejects Order at First, Legal Practitioners, Political Parties Commend the Senate for Rejecting Electoral Act Amendment Request by President Buhari, INEC Rejects APC's Invitation to Attend Emergency Meeting

The Speaker of the House of Representatives, Femi Gbajabiamila, has announced the House would rescind its decision to reject three gender-related bills and allow for fresh voting on them in four weeks. The decision was taken following the protest by the Nigeria Governors' Wives Forum (NGWF) who stormed the National Assembly Complex on Tuesday to reject the outcome of the gender bills. Addressing the gathering, chairperson of the NGWF, Bisi Fayemi, said by rejecting the bills

the National Assembly has rejected the progress of Nigerian women. She maintained: "This country belongs to all of us. Fifty per cent of the country's population is women. No women, no nation. We want our leaders in this building, whom we campaigned and voted for, to recognize that Nigerian women's lives matter. Anything less than that is totally unacceptable". Azimazi Momoh Jimoh et al., [The Guardian News \(March 9th\)](#) reports.

The Federal High Court in Abuja on Monday barred President Muhammadu Buhari, the Attorney-General of the Federation (AGF) and the Senate President from tampering with the newly amended Electoral Act 2022. Specifically, the court restrained President Buhari, the AGF and the National Assembly and other defendants in the suit from removing section 84 (12) of the Electoral Act or prevent it from being implemented for the purpose of the 2023 general elections. The judge, Inyang Ekwo, in a ruling on an ex-parte application by the opposition Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), said the Electoral Act having become a valid law could not be altered without following the due process of law. Ameh Ejekwonyilo, [The Premium Times News \(March 7th\)](#) reports.

Meanwhile, Senate President Ahmad Lawan commented on Tuesday that "no court process can stop the National Assembly from performing its legislative duties". Accordingly, on Tuesday the Senate committed to work on the amendment to the new Electoral Act sought by President Muhammadu Buhari despite the aforementioned court order barring the National Assembly from working on the law. Sunday Aborisade, [This Day News \(March 8th\)](#) reports.

On Thursday the Senate rejected President Muhammadu Buhari's request to delete section 84(12) of the Electoral Act despite the posture of the Senate President, Ahmed Lawan, according to which the amendment would proceed. Receiving commendations on the rejection, former Attorney-General and Commissioner for Justice of Abia State, Chief Awa Kalu (SAN), said the rejection of the request means that the recently signed amended Act remains "a victory for democracy. Regardless of whatever relationship that exists between the lawmakers and the presidency, the most important thing is that the request is now academic. Even if it is reintroduced, it cannot be for now." Similarly, Convener of the Vanguard for the Independence of the Judiciary, Douglas Ogbankwa, said the rejection of the request is one

of the hallmarks of democracy and a commendable development. Responding to the development, the Conference of Nigeria Political Parties commented that the Senate had again chosen to be in tune with the demands of the Nigerian people without a fight. Joseph Onyekwere, John Akubo, Ameh Ochojila and Saxone Akhaine, [The Guardian News \(March 10th\)](#) reports.

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) disclosed it rejected the invitation of the All Progressives Congress (APC) to attend its Emergence National Executive Committee (NEC) meeting. INEC explained the notice for the meeting was not signed by the National Chairman and National Secretary of the Caretaker Extraordinary Convention Planning Committee (CECPC) contrary to the provision of Article 1.1.3 of the Commission's Regulations and Guidelines for Political Party Operations (2018). INEC's stance, reportedly appears to "aggravate" the crises in the ruling party and puts the much anticipated March 26 National Convention in doubt. The APC invitation letter dated March 9, was signed by the controversially appointed Chairman of the party, Governor Bello of Niger State. However, unless National Chairman CECPC Mai Bala Buni returns to take over the leadership before the fixed date, the APC may have to extend its convention date again. It was debated and remains unclear as yet if Buni was kicked out of office or if the Yobe State Governor duly transmitted power to Governor Bello before leaving the country. Samson Adenekan, [The Premium Times News \(March 11th\)](#) reports.

Insecurity: Nigeria Removed from International Maritime Bureau's Piracy List, FG Speaks on Citizens Joining the War in Ukraine

President Muhammadu Buhari has commended the Nigerian Navy for its efforts in containing piracy in the country's maritime domain, the Chief of Naval Staff declared. He announced that piracy attacks in the country were put at 77 % due to counter security operations against maritime criminality, oil theft and other attacks, noting that the International Maritime Bureau had exited Nigeria from its Piracy List. Gambo committed to sustaining the tempo of maritime security operations efforts, while stating that the "same will be extended to our neighboring states to rid the entire Gulf of Guinea of acts of piracy and other criminal activities". Kingsley Ononobi, [The Vanguard News \(March 9th\)](#) reports.

The Federal Government has announced that it is working with the Nigerian Embassy in Ukraine to halt the move of citizens attempting to join forces with Ukraine in the ongoing war with Russia. A statement issued by the spokesperson for the Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Francisca Omayuli, made clear that such recruitment would not be tolerated by the Federal Government. The

statement partly read that “as a responsible member of the international community and consistent with our obligations under international law, Nigeria discourages the use of mercenaries anywhere in the world and will not tolerate the recruitment, in Nigeria, of Nigerians as mercenaries to fight in Ukraine or anywhere else in the world”. Ochogwu Sunday, [The Daily Post News \(March 7th\)](#) reports.

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