

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 Pandemic: The Discord over Death Numbers

The Covid-19 pandemic has thrown up new challenges on the number of victims (infections, discharged and deaths) recorded daily, as the numbers continue to rise. As the virus is spreading through almost all states and the Federal Capital Territory, with Lagos and Kano still leading in the numbers, controversy rages over the strange deaths occurring in Kano, which have been debunked by the state government. Reacting, the Minister of Health, Osagie Ehanire, quoting findings from the Presidential Task Force (PTF), that investigated the mysterious deaths in Kano, confirmed that about 60% of the deaths were a result of Covid-19. [Reuters \(9th June\)](#) explains. On a similar note, the Senate has asked for an investigation into the mysterious deaths occurring in Bonny Island, Rivers State. Sunday Aborisade, [Punch News \(10th June\)](#) writes. Commenting on the controversy, Jubrin Ibrahim of [Premium Times \(5th June\)](#), said that “states are playing politics with Covid-19, which is significantly increasing the risk of infections and death in their communities for the silly image-improving deception that their numbers are down, so that normal life can resume”.

Amid Covid-19: Imminent Job Losses Loom

As the negative impact of the Covid-19 pandemic continues to threaten the economies of nations, Nigeria is at risk of imminent job losses in several sectors. In efforts to remain afloat, businesses are restructuring their operational cost profile through job and pay cut, Francis Arinze Iloani et al report in [Daily Trust \(8th June\)](#). Similarly, Vice President Yemi Osinbajo stated that 39.4 million Nigerians may lose their job due to the pandemic. Aaron Ossai and Yomi Kareem, [Nigerian Pilot, \(12th June\)](#) details.

The ravaging effect of the pandemic has further compelled most states to cut their 2020 budget in a bid to maintain a sustainable economy by cutting costs, personnel, overhead, capital expenditure and debt servicing among others, [leadership News \(8th June\)](#) details. The analyst, Tunji Ogunyemi stated that about 32 states may find it difficult to pay salaries soon or in the post-Covid-19 era. [The Nation \(5th June\)](#) writes.

House of Representatives Revises National Budget

The House of Representatives has approved N10.805 trillion as national budget marking an upward revision of the initial N10.5 trillion submitted by President Muhammadu Buhari. The federal government had initially planned to cut the budget due to the effect of the corona virus pandemic which had affected the global price of crude oil. The House inserted additional N4 billion to provide for the request by members of the National Association of Resident Doctors Resident who had threatened strike action from next week if their demands were not met. The House further approved the request by President Muhammadu Buhari for an external loan of \$5.513 billion. An article by [The Nation \(11th June\)](#) gives a detailed breakdown of the budget. The budget has been sent to the Senate.

Financial Autonomy for State Legislature and Judiciary, Buhari Yields to Pressure from Governors and Suspends Executive Order 10

The financial autonomy granted to state legislature and judiciary through Executive Order 10 of 2020 signed by President Muhammadu Buhari seems to have suffered a setback as the President has yielded to pressure from state governors to suspend action on the order. The executive order which had taken away powers of state governors to dispense funds to state legislative and judicial arms, also gave power to the Accountant General of the Federation (AGF) to deduct from the accounts of erring states that refuse to comply with the allocation of funds to the legislature and judiciary. The Governors of the 36 states had raised concerns over the limitation of authority and control over what goes on within the state of their presiding and put pressure on the president to suspend the order. [Punch News \(7th June\)](#) details. Ukpno Ukong, [Daily Times \(9th June\)](#) writes. Reacting to this, the Attorney General of the Federation and Minister of Justice, Abubakar Malami reaffirmed that the executive order still stands and will be fully implemented according to the law. Soni Daniel of [Vanguard News \(10th June\)](#) details.

Amid Covid-19 Pandemic: High Civilian Casualties in North-East and North-West Nigeria

As the government struggles to contain the rising spread of Covid-19, the nation has recorded another week with high numbers of cases of armed banditry, arson, terrorism and other forms of criminality. New terrorist and bandit activities that have gained both local and foreign media attention are the massacre of at least 69 civilians in Borno State, [New York Times \(10th June\)](#) and the massacre of about 40 civilians in Katsina State. Wale Odunsi of [Daily Post \(10th June\)](#) details. President Muhammadu Buhari expressed his concern over the killings and warned off terrorist and bandits taking advantage of the pandemic to commit crimes. Sodiq Oyeleke, [Punch News \(12th June\)](#) reports.

The situation is worsened by the increase in number of internally displaced persons, even as the military and joint security agencies have intensified efforts to wipe out the criminals around the country. This has left a huge effect on Nigeria's ranking on the annual index of neglected displacement crises in the world released by the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) this week, [Aljazeera, \(10th June\)](#) details. Nigeria features also low on the annual Global Peace Index (GPI) for Sub-Saharan Africa. Cletus Ukong reports in [Premium Times \(10th June\)](#) that due to the prevailing insecurity Nigeria has been ranked 40 out of 44 countries.

In its bid to support Nigeria in the fight against terrorism, the European Union (EU) has condemned the persistent attacks on citizens. EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Josep Fontelles said via Twitter: "More than 70 civilians have been killed in Borno State, Nigeria. Yet another despicable and deliberate act of terror in a region which is the victim of so many attacks. The European Union continues to stand with Nigeria in the battle against terrorism and extremism.", Kayode Oyero reports in [Punch News \(11th June\)](#).

Governor Abdullahi Umar Ganduje of Kano state has meanwhile called on the federal government to ban herdsmen from coming into the country in order to reduce the level of conflicts. Bashir Bello, [Vanguard News \(7th June\)](#) reports. Consequently, the House of Representatives and Middle Belt leaders have asked the federal government to restrict the movement of herders in the country in order to curb the activities of violent herders who

perpetrate insecurity in the region, Dapo Akinrefo and Tordue Salem write in [Vanguard News \(10th June\)](#).

Nigeria and AU Disagree over Nomination of Ngozi Okonjo Iweala for WTO Presidency

The nomination of Dr. Ngozi Okonjo Iweala for the seat of the Director General of World Trade Organization (WTO) by President Muhammadu Buhari appears to have hit a brick wall as the contest will pitch her against other candidates endorsed by the African Union (AU) risking sanctions according to AU's rules, Taiwo-Hassan Adebayo of [Premium Times \(9th June\)](#) details. The decision by President Buhari to move against the joint AU candidate, Nigerian Yonov Agah, has been faulted by Nigerians in diaspora. Egypt has also opposed Iweala's nomination on the grounds that it was within deadlines and therefore breached the rule of nomination. However, the WTO has acknowledged Iweala as a candidate. Obinna Chima, [This Day \(10th June\)](#) writes. Following Iweala's successes, analysts have examined her nomination as potentially WTO's first African head to lead the institution. Adedapo Adamolekun, [Premium Times \(11th June\)](#).

Corruption Cases Steam as Nigeria is Ranked Low in the 2020 Rule of Law Index

Inherent bureaucratic bottlenecks in processes and institutions in the fight against corruption have further eroded Nigeria's ability to effectively tackle corruption. In the recent 2020 Rule of Law Index conducted by the World Justice Project (WJP), Overall Nigeria ranks 108 among the 128 countries surveyed. Among others, in the order and security index Nigeria ranks 127 and in absence of corruption Nigeria obtained 109, John Chuks Azu, [Daily Trust News \(9th June\)](#) details.

Top on the myriad of corruption cases is the inability to solve the puzzle over lingering issues around the acquired Dominican citizenship by former Minister of Petroleum Resources, Diezani Alison-Madueke, the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) may have difficulty in processing Diezani's deportation from UK to Nigeria to face charges over alleged corruption. Yusuf Alli of [The Nation \(6th June\)](#) details. Other top corruption cases that have received media attention this week include the allegations and subsequent exoneration of the Speaker of Lagos

State House of Assembly, Mudashiru Obasa over misappropriation of funds among others, Sunday Ani in [Daily Sun \(8th June\)](#), furthermore, Senator Orji Uzor Kalu who returned to office after serving six months in jail over the 39-counts charges against him, Dennis Erezi in [The Guardian \(9th June\)](#), and the acquitted Kano state gubernatorial candidate over alleged fraud. Bashir Bello, [Vanguard News \(9th June\)](#), details. Finally, an anti-corruption group has taken President Buhari and Vice-President Yemi Osinbajo to the Court of Appeal over their refusal to declare their assets. Oladimeji Ramon, [Punch News \(8th June\)](#) reports.

June 12: After 21 Years of Nigeria's Return to Democracy

Following Nigeria's 1999 return to democratic governance after years of military rule, the nation marked the remembrance day on 29 May up till June 2019 when President Muhammadu Buhari announced a change in the date to 12 June in remembrance of the sacrifice made by late Mo-

shood Abiola in 1993, an election that was annulled by the military government at the time. One question that has remained in the minds of analysts since 1999 is how far Nigeria has come in achieving the dividends of good governance and adhering to the tenets and principles of democracy. In an article by Onozure Dania [Vanguard News \(11th June\)](#), a social critic and strong supporter of Abiola, Adesunbo Onitiri, said that "we are now farther than nearer democracy." "Since 27 (sic!) years of the so-called democratic rule as Nigerians cannot boast of democratic dividends, but rather poor governance and poor infrastructure." On a similar note, the former Vice-President, Atiku Abubakar, complains about the state of democracy in Nigeria, while Ahmed Lawan, the Senate President, and Osita Okechukwu, the Director-General of Voice of Nigeria (VON), call on the people to be proud of the achievements of the past 21 years. [The Daily Times \(12th June\)](#) and [Daily Sun, \(11th June\)](#) detail among others. Marking democracy day, President Buhari gave his national speech. [Daily Times \(12th June\)](#) gives full details.

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