



April 2023
Nigeria Office

Nigeria Press Review

07.04. – 14.04.2023

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

Fuel Price Soars by 81% Despite 6 Trillion Naira Subsidy Payment, Details on Nigeria's 800 Million USD World Bank Loan for Fuel Subsidy Removal Palliatives, IMF Urges Nigeria to Increase Tax and Reduce Borrowing, Advises Central Bank on Potential 3.2% Growth in 2023

INEC, APC Have Asked the Presidential Election Petition Court to Dismiss Peter Obi's Lawsuit, House of Representatives Probe Missing 48 Million Barrels of Crude Oil, Nigerian Doctors Abroad Write National Assembly On New Bill, Labour Party's Presidential Candidate Peter Obi Stirs Fresh Controversy with London Arrest

Insecurity: At Least 143 Benue State Residents Killed by Armed Invaders in Five Days, UK Pledges Improved Intelligence Sharing with Nigeria, Navy Says its Operations will use Maritime Domain Awareness to Locate Tanker Boarded by Pirates, ISS Report Show Concerns for Nigeria Over ISWAP Use of Advanced Technology

Fuel Price Soars by 81% Despite 6 Trillion Naira Subsidy Payment, Details on Nigeria's 800 Million USD World Bank Loan for Fuel Subsidy Removal Palliatives, IMF Urges Nigeria to Increase Tax and Reduce Borrowing, Advises Central Bank on Potential 3.2% Growth in 2023

The price of premium motor spirit (PMS), i.e. petrol, has risen by 81% in the past three years according to a National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) report. Their data showed that between February 2020 and February 2023, the fuel price rose from 145.41 Naira per liter to 263.76 Naira per liter. The NBS report shows that the average retail price paid by consumers for PMS within a year alone from February 2022 to February 2023 increased by 54.76%. In addition, a September 2022 report by the Nigeria Extractive Industries Initiative disclosed Nigeria had spent 13.7 trillion Naira (an equivalent of 74.386 billion USD) on fuel subsidies between 2005 and 2022. The federal government has continued to restate plans to remove fuel subsidies with a plan to deregulate the oil market by June this year. The Minister of Finance, Budget and National Planning, Zainab Ahmed, said last week Nigeria had borrowed 800 million USD from the World Bank for palliatives for Nigerians ahead of fuel subsidy removal. Deborah Dan-Awoh, [The Punch News \(April 12th\)](#) reports.

Last week, the Minister of Finance, Budget, and National Planning, Zainab Ahmed, disclosed that Nigeria had borrowed 800 million USD from the World Bank for palliatives for Nigerians ahead of fuel subsidy removal. According to her, the 800 million USD is the first tranche of palliatives to be disbursed through cash transfers to about 50 million Nigerians who belong to the most vulnerable category in society. The amount is part of a sum considered to be "concessional financing", the document showed. According to the World Bank's International Development Association (IDA), concessional loans, or soft loans, have more generous terms than market loans. They include below-market interest rates, grace periods in which the loan recipient is not required to make debt payments for several years, or a combination of low-interest rates and grace periods. For Nigeria, the first payment is due on January 15, 2027, and the last payment is due on July 15, 2051. Business insider Kelvin Emmanuel, Chief Executive Officer of Dairy Hills, explained "the hand-outs, like billions of naira spent in the past, will do nothing to reduce

the unemployment rate projected to reach 40.6% in 2023 or raise the per capita income of Nigerians from 2100 USD, which has dropped 48.5% within the last eight years". The Federal Government is asking the Senate to convert 23.7 trillion Naira in Central Bank of Nigeria overdrafts to a 40-Year government bond. The federal government is also shopping for 7.5 trillion Naira in bilateral loans, treasury bills and Eurobonds to do deficit financing in the 2023 Appropriation Act. President Buhari's attempt to obtain approval for a loan that had already been spent caused uproar in the Senate as lawmakers accused him of violating the constitution. Ayodeji Adegboyega, [The Premium Times New \(April 12th\)](#) reports.

On the sidelines of the ongoing International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank spring meetings in Washington D.C., the IMF has reiterated its advice to Nigeria to step up efforts to bring more people into the tax net, increase taxes and reduce the country's debt burden. The IMF also restated the need for Nigeria to phase out its controversial petrol subsidy and redirect such funding to targeted subsidies on critical development sectors like health and education. "We advocate raising taxes, which will create space not only to manage debt but also to spend on other priorities", the division chief at the IMF fiscal affairs department, Paulo Medas, said. He reiterated the emphasis should be on improving tax compliance and the tax bracket, insisting that Nigeria's tax revenue is one of the lowest in the world. Nume Ekeghe and Ugo Aliogo, [ThisDayLive News \(April 15th\)](#) report.

Additionally, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has advised the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) to maintain its current monetary policy rates to control inflation. In its newly released World Economic Outlook report, the IMF retained Nigeria's growth for 2023 at 3.2% but expects it to fall to 3% in 2024 when the next administration is in full flow. Speaking on Nigeria, the IMF division chief of the research department, Daniel Leigh, said: "For Nigeria, our forecast is one of the most stable for this year. We have a slight increase; we have 3.3% in 2022, an upward revision, and for 2023 about the same, 3.2%, and 3% in 2024". Regarding CBN's efforts to address inflation, the IMF advised the CBN to continue increasing interest rates as Nigeria's inflation rate remains at one of its highest levels in history, reaching 21.91% in February 2023. [Ripples Nigeria \(April 12th\)](#) reports.

INEC, APC Have Asked the Presidential Election Petition Court to Dismiss Peter Obi's Lawsuit, House of Representatives Probe Missing 48 Million Barrels of Crude Oil, Nigerian Doctors Abroad Write National Assembly On New Bill, Labour Party's Presidential Candidate Peter Obi Stirs Fresh Controversy with London Arrest

The All Progressives Congress (APC) and the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) have asked the Presidential Election Petition Court in Abuja to dismiss Peter Obi's suit challenging Bola Tinubu's victory. APC presidential candidate Tinubu polled 8.8 million votes to beat Atiku Abubakar of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), who came second in the race. Peter Obi, the Labour Party (LP) presidential candidate, came third in the February 25 presidential election. Obi and his party accused INEC and the APC of manipulating election results in favor of Tinubu. They are equally contending against his failure to secure 25% of lawful votes cast in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). However, in different responses to Obi's complaint, the APC and INEC said the LP and Obi's petition lacked merit. The APC contended that Obi was a member of the PDP as of May 24, 2022, during which the party screened him as one of its presidential aspirants in April 2022. Faulting Obi's petition, the APC argued that Section 77(3) of the Electoral Act mandates a political party to submit its membership register to the electoral umpire 30 days before its presidential primary election. It said Obi, "as of April 30, 2022, was still a member of the PDP, and his name was not and could not have been in the register of members submitted by LP to INEC". Ameh Ejekwonyilo, [The Premium Times News \(April 11th\)](#) reports.

The House of Representatives committee investigating the alleged sales of 48 million barrels of crude oil has summoned the Minister of Finance, Budget and National Planning, Zainab Ahmed. On Tuesday, the ad-hoc committee issued the summons at its inauguration sitting. The House had in December 2022 resolved to probe the alleged missing barrels of crude oil allegedly sold in China by Nigerian officials. In addition, the panel will investigate all proceeds recovered through the whistleblowers policy and the level of compliance with the policy. The committee also summoned the Attorney-General of the Federation, Abubakar Malami, Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limi-

ted representatives, members of the Nigerian Upstream Regulatory Commission and other relevant stakeholders. Speaking on the officials' failure to honor the committee's invitation, the chairman of the committee said there were allegations against Ahmed of breach of the government's whistleblower policy. He said the minister had been paying whistleblowers less than the recommended rate prescribed by the policy. In his opening remarks, the Speaker of the House, Femi Gbajabiamila, stated that the hearing was not to witch-hunt anyone but to end the corruption in the oil sector. He said the recommendations from the hearing would help in the passage of the whistleblower bill currently before the National Assembly. Bakare Majeed, [The Premium Times News \(April 11th\)](#) reports.

Nigerian doctors practicing abroad under the umbrella of the Diaspora Medical Associations (DMA) have registered their rejection of the proposed bill sponsored by a member of the House of Representatives. The Bill mandates Nigerian-trained medical and dental practitioners to practice in Nigeria for at least five years before being granted a full license by relevant authorities. The doctors' association, in a letter jointly signed by their representatives in Canada, Germany, South Africa, the USA and several other countries to the leadership of the National Assembly, said the bill will be counter-productive and not achieve its intended goal. The doctors' association asked the leadership of the National Assembly to embrace a purposeful systemic solution and ensure a quick fix and not allow attempts that might worsen the situation. Fred Ezeh, [The Sun News \(April 13th\)](#) reports.

Reactions have continued to trail the arrest of the Labour Party (LP) presidential candidate, Peter Obi, in London, United Kingdom (UK), over alleged impersonation. It was revealed that he was detained for said cause. Confirming the incident, the head of Obi-Datti Media, Diran Onifade, disclosed that Obi was harassed and spent the Easter holidays in detention: "He was questioned for a long time, and it was very strange for a man who lived for over a decade in that country." Onifade insinuated a possible plot against Obi by the federal government, accusing it of bugging Obi's phone while possibly looking for information to portray him badly. Tope Templer Olaiya and Ameh Ochojila, [The Guardian News \(April 13th\)](#) reports.

Insecurity: At Least 143 Benue State Residents Killed by Armed Invaders in Five Days, UK Pledges Improved Intelligence Sharing with Nigeria, Navy Says its Operations will use Maritime Domain Awareness to Locate Tanker Boarded by Pirates, ISS Report Show Concerns for Nigeria Over ISWAP Use of Advanced Technology

Benue state governor Samuel Ortom has said armed invaders have killed at least 134 people within five days in separate attacks on villages in the state. Ortom, who spoke to journalists when he visited over 36 injured victims, mainly women and children, described the attacks as "heinous and cowardly". He, however, appealed to the community and its leaders to continue to be law abiding and be vigilant at all times so as to be able to wade off the assailants. The governor reiterated his call on President Muhammadu Buhari to match words with action by deploying more troops to halt the senseless killings. [Sahara Reporters News \(April 10th\)](#) reports.

On Tuesday, the United Kingdom (UK) minister for armed forces, James Heapey, said Britain was committed to improving intelligence sharing with Nigeria and other countries to tackle terrorism and piracy in the Lake Chad Basin and the Gulf of Guinea. Heapey said that the UK would support countries within the region to provide their solutions to the security challenges. The minister added that the UK and Nigerian armed forces enjoyed a long and robust relationship, stressing that the conversation focused on the region's security challenges. Heapey also noted that both countries have collaborated in naval operations with the UK Royal Navy, providing support to Nigeria with a combination of training and developing capability in the Gulf of Guinea. Ezekiel Oyero, [The Punch News \(April 12th\)](#) reports.

According to the naval spokesman, Olukayode Ayo-Vaughan, the Nigerian Navy high command has said it is intensifying operations through the use of maritime domain awareness (MDA) to locate a tanker boarded by pirates in the Gulf of Guinea. However, the spokesman revealed that the attack occurred in the deep sea, off the coast of Ivory Coast and not in Nigerian waters. The recent successful attacks on vessels in the Gulf of Guinea have been reportedly attributed to the recent departure of a Danish frigate from the area. The frigate had reportedly protected ships, deterred attacks and arrested pirates since 2021 but was pulled back late last year. The International Maritime Bureau (IMB) has reportedly warned that sustained efforts are needed to ensure the continued safety of seafarers in the region, which remains dangerous, as proven by these latest incidents. Odita Sunday, [The Guardian News \(April 12th\)](#) reports.

Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) could be close to using delivery drones for attacks in the Lake Chad Basin. Weaponizing and adapting unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) is a new trend in the group's operational strategy and could worsen the conflict. Institute for Security Studies (ISS) research shows that ISWAP is already trialling delivery drones to carry improvised explosive devices. ISWAP relies heavily on high-speed satellite internet to communicate with other groups. Sources told ISS that ISWAP spends about 6.000 USD monthly on data. They said Lagos was the primary supply source but that ISWAP encountered a problem with the supply, forcing it to switch to Chad. Although Thuraya satellite phones and internet services are illegal in Chad, they are used secretly. There is no single way to deal with the problem of ISWAP's use of technology but the solution lies in various measures working together. Malik Samuel, [The Premium Times News \(April 13th\)](#) reports.



Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e. V.

Marija Peran, Resident Representative
Adams Adamu, Project Assistant

Nigeria Office

www.kas.de/nigeria

www.facebook.com/kas.nigeria

marija.peran@kas.de / adamu.adams@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>