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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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Insecurity: Chief of Army Staff Expresses Kicks Against Amnesty for Bandits, Says Measures to End Plateau Crises Are in Place

### **Health: Several Dead and Hospitalized from Suspected Diphtheria Outbreak**

In Yobe state, about 30 children have died as a result of the outbreak of what is suspected to be Diphtheria; about 42 have been hospitalized. The hospital revealed that they are faced with inadequate drugs to contain the situation. Most of the children died at home, while about 5 died in the hospital. Mallam Musa, director of the health care unit, said they sensitized the public on how to prevent the disease. The acting executive secretary of the Yobe state primary health care management board, Umar Chiroma, confirmed the outbreak but stated that "for now, we cannot declare it as diphtheria till we take the sample and do a diagnosis from there we can announce what it is". [Daily Trust News \(11<sup>th</sup> July\)](#) reports.

### **Former CBN Governor Charged to Court, Tinubu Declares State of Emergency on Food Security, Business Owners Decry Harsh Effects of New Economic Policies, Nigeria's VAT Performance Lowest in West Africa**

Afer being detained in June, the Abuja High Court ruled that the former Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) governor Godwin Emefiele should be released within seven days or charged to court. The Department of State Service (DSS) responded to the ruling by confirming that Emefiele has been charged to court in compliance with the order. President Bola Tinubu had suspended Emefiele and ordered a probe of the apex bank under his watch. [Daily Trust News \(13<sup>th</sup> July\)](#) reports.

President Bola Tinubu has declared a state of emergency on food security in the country. This comes as the Senate approved the president's request to amend the 2022 Supplementary Act totaling NGN 819 billion. The declaration of a state of emergency by the president was sequel to observed food inflation in Nigeria. Special adviser to the president on special duties, communication and strategy, Dele Alake, disclosed this after a meeting of stakeholders on agriculture and food production value-chain. Alake said that measures in the action plan would include an immediate release of fertilizers and grains to farmers and households to mitigate the effects of the fuel subsidy removal. Following this, all matters pertaining to food and water availability and affordability, as well as essentials will be included in the purview of the National Security Council. Deji Elumoye et al., [This Day News \(14<sup>th</sup> July\)](#) report.

Manufacturers, small and medium enterprises (SMEs) operators, business leaders and economic groups made a call of distress to president Bola Tinubu on the need to cushion the harsh effects of the new administration's economic policies on businesses, lives and livelihoods. Despite the four executive orders (EOs) on tax signed by the president, they spoke in unison that more needs to be done urgently for their businesses to be saved from failing. Although the EOs may have addressed the issue of multiple taxation to some extent, they however stressed the need to alleviate economic hardship quickly. They have lamented to be in need of huge amount of unplanned funds which they have had to deploy to stay afloat since the removal of fuel subsidy. Further, they noted that rising inflation and the high cost of energy to run their plants had tripled the cost of operations. SMEs have contributed over 48% to the national gross domestic product in the last seven years. Tobi Awodipe and Gloria Nwafor, [The Guardian News \(9<sup>th</sup> July\)](#) report.

The federal government said the country's value added tax (VAT) performance was the lowest in the West African region. Basheer Abdulkadir, director at the Federal Ministry of Finance, Budget and National Planning, called for the exemption of a few products, goods and services from VAT so poor households could benefit from the VAT policy. The director of VAT with the Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS) stated the VAT's potential to raise a significant amount of revenue for the government. He further made clear, that the FIRS was not resting to ensure that the revenue profile of Nigeria was improved. Sadiq Omolaoye, [The Guardian News \(11<sup>th</sup> July\)](#) reports.

### **President Bola Tinubu Emerges as Chair of ECOWAS, Senate President Constitutes First Special Committees, Former Governors in the Senate to Receive Benefits worth NGN 5.6 Billion, House of Representatives Members Demand Salary Increase, Approve Tinubu's NGN 500 Billion Request for Palliatives, Labour Protests the President's NGN 500 Billion Palliative Proposal, Lagos State House Calls for Constitutional Review to Accommodate State Police**

President Bola Tinubu has emerged as the chairperson of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) at the 63rd ordinary session of the authority of heads of state and government in Guinea-Bissau. In accepting the responsibility to lead ECOWAS, Tinubu stated that he would run an

inclusive administration and noted that insecurity and creeping terrorism were stunting the progress and development of the region. He promised to harmonize the plans and mobilize resources to actualize the security architecture, including the Regional Plan of Action on Fight against Terrorism 2020-2024 as well as the operationalization of the ECOWAS Standby Force on Fight Against Terrorism. [Premium Times News \(9<sup>th</sup> July\)](#) reports.

President of the Senate Godswill Akpabio on Tuesday constituted the Selection Committee and eight other special panels. He announced that president Bola Tinubu had sought the screening and confirmation of newly appointed service chiefs. Akpabio named himself as chairman of the Selection Committee, saying the deputy Senate president Barau Jibrin would be the deputy chairman. He said all the eight newly elected principal officers from both the majority and the minority caucuses of the senate would serve as members of the panel. Akpabio also announced appointments to different committees of the house including: Rules and Business Committee, Senate Services, Ethics and Public Petitions, Public Accounts, National Security and Intelligence, Legislative Compliance, Media and the Appropriations Committee. The Senate president said the Appropriation Committee was set up in anticipation that president Tinubu would soon forward a supplementary budget. Sunday Aborisade, [This Day News \(11<sup>th</sup> July\)](#) reports.

Lagos State House of Assembly has urged the National Assembly to review the 1999 Constitution to allow state police to curb security challenges bedeviling the country. The speaker Mudashiru Obasa said to combat insecurity in the country, the current constitution needs to be amended to give legal backing to state police. He urged governor of Lagos state Babajide Sanwo-Olu to further equip the neighborhood security corps to enhance security in the state. The motion was supported by other lawmakers who complained about the inadequate number of police personnel in Lagos. The lawmakers argued further that the establishment of state police would boost employment across the country. Shakirah Adunola, [The Guardian News \(12<sup>th</sup> July\)](#) reports.

No fewer than 14 former governors who are current members of the senate, including the Senate president Godswill Akpabio, will draw pensions and other benefits worth NGN 5.6 billion from their states for the duration of the 10th Senate. Senator Gbenga Daniel, former governor of Ogun

state, as exception, requested that he be exempted from pension largesse. The deputy director of the Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP) Kolawole Oluwadare, commended Daniel for doing the “right thing”. According to him, there is a subsisting judgment of the Federal High Court that declared life pensions for ex-governors illegal. Femi Falana, a human rights lawyer, stated that there is a judgment against this practice, with binding effect. Muyiwa Adeyemi, [The Guardian News \(12<sup>th</sup> July\)](#) reports.

Members of the House of Representatives are demanding an upward review of their salaries and allowances following the removal of fuel subsidy and the current economic situation in the country. The lawmakers had also demanded from the speaker, Tajudeen Abbas, the reason for the delay in the payment of their salaries and allowances, causing some of them to resort to loans. The speaker, however, told his colleagues that their demand for a review of their salaries and allowances was not in the 2023 budget. The agency that decides the salaries and allowances of public officials, the Revenue Mobilisation Allocation and Fiscal Commission, had proposed a 100% increase in the salaries of public officials but this is yet to be approved by the president or reflected in the budget. [Premium Times News \(July 13<sup>th</sup>\)](#) reports.

The House of Representatives has approved the NGN 500 billion requested by president Bola Tinubu for the provision of palliatives to mitigate the impact of petroleum subsidy removal on Nigerians. The House amended the 2022 Supplementary Appropriations Act to accommodate the president's request. The lower chamber considered the amendment bill and passed it on Thursday. A similar request was sent to the Senate with a letter from the president urging the Senate to consider the request expeditiously. Bakare Majeed and Abdulqudus Ogundapo, [Premium Times News \(13<sup>th</sup> July\)](#) report.

The Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) and the Trade Union Congress (TUC) have thumbed down the NGN 500 billion palliative proposed by president Bola Tinubu, stating that it is grossly inadequate to assuage the hardships confronting workers, sequel to the fuel subsidy removal. The NLC noted that the money would not be enough to cater for 125 million Nigerians who are believed to be living in poverty. The national treasurer of the NLC, Ha-keem Ambali, stated that the government should provide social benefits for aged and unemployed

youths, agricultural loans to farmers, provide alternative energy supply, compressed natural gas to motorists, fix the refineries, reverse the privatization of electricity back to the state and reduction of school fees for students. Labour is also demanding a 300% salary increase to enable workers to cope with the challenges imposed by the deteriorating economic situation that came with the removal of the fuel subsidy. Tope Omogbolagun et al., [The Punch News \(13<sup>th</sup> July\)](#) report.

### **Insecurity: Chief of Army Staff Opposes Amnesty for Bandits, Says Measures to End Plateau Crises Are in Place**

The chief of army staff, Taoreed Lagbaja, has opposed against amnesty programs for bandits and terrorists in the country, claiming in many states they failed to achieve their purpose. According to him, rather than repent, beneficiaries of such programs see the program as an avenue to regroup

and attack innocent citizens. Lagbaja stated this when the governor of Zamfara state, Dauda Lawal, paid him a visit in Abuja. In discussing the need to come up with workable strategies to address insecurity, Dauda expressed his frustrations over the security situation in his state and pointed out that not a day goes by “without people being killed in one area or local government or the other”. Solomon Odeniyi, [The Punch News \(13<sup>th</sup> July\)](#) reports.

Chief of army staff Taoreed Lagbaja announced that the Nigerian army has put measures in place to end the perennial crisis bedeviling Plateau state. He said the security challenge in Plateau was largely due to the farmers-herders crisis and had been limited to three local governments of Riyom, Jos South and Barkin Ladi. According to him, the recent crisis in Mangu was a cause of concern for the army and president Bola Tinubu. He further assured to undertake interventions that are required to bring lasting peace to the state. [Premium Times News \(13<sup>th</sup> July\)](#) reports.

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