

Nigeria Press Review

10.02. – 17.02.2023

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.

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Inflation Rate Rises to 21.82% in January, President Buhari Signs Business Facilitation Bill 2022 (Omnibus Bill) into Law, National Economic Council Approves Nigeria Agenda 2050

According to a recent National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) report, Nigeria's inflation rate resumed its uptrend in January 2023, hitting a record high of 21.82%. This represents a 0.47% increase compared to the 21.34% recorded in the previous month. In addition, the food inflation surged to 24.32% in January from 23.75% recorded in December 2022. Notably, the highest increases were recorded in prices of gas, liquid fuel, passenger transport by air, vehicles spare parts, and lubricants for Personal transport equipment, solid fuel etc. Year-on-year inflation measured by consumer price index was found to be highest in Bauchi (24.7%), Ondo (24.54%) and Anambra (24.51%) states, while Jigawa (19.09%), Borno (19.62%) and Sokoto (19.90%) states saw the lowest inflation rates across the country. Samuel Oyekanmi and Emmanuel Anwanaodung, [Naira Metrics News \(February 16th\)](#) reports.

President Muhammadu Buhari has signed the Business Facilitation Bill 2022 (also known as the Omnibus Bill) into law as part of the government's efforts to create an enabling environment for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) in Nigeria, secretary of the Presidential Enabling Business Environment Council (PEBEC), Jumoke Oduwole, disclosed. The Business Facilitation Act, 2023 is a legislative intervention by the PEBEC which amends 21 business-related laws, removing bureaucratic constraints to doing business in Nigeria. The new law also codifies the administration's first executive order on transparency and efficiency in public service delivery to strengthen ease of doing business reforms across the country. The Business Facilitation Act, 2023 consolidates the last seven years of PEBEC-led reforms. It demonstrates the federal government's sustained commitment towards making Nigeria a progressively more accessible place to start and grow a business. Gbemi Famiru, [The Business Day News \(February 14th\)](#) reports.

The National Economic Council (NEC) endorsed the Nigeria Agenda 2050, a plan aimed at increasing real gross domestic product growth by 7%, creating 165 million new jobs and reducing the number of people living in poverty to 2.1 million in 2050, from the 133 million people estimated in 2022. This comes 29 months after president Muhammadu Buhari launched the National Steering

Committee to prepare the Medium-Term National Development Plan 2021 - 2025 and Nigeria Agenda 2050. The council approved the agenda after its emergency session and the first meeting in 2023 by vice president Yemi Osinbajo after the Ministry of Finance, Budget and National Planning presented it to state governors and other members of NEC. The Minister of State for Budget and National Planning, Prince Clem Agba, said the federal government had taken unprecedented steps in ensuring the operationalization of the plan, especially with the inauguration of the steering committee of the national development plan. Stephen Angbulu, [The Punch News \(February 14th\)](#) reports.

Defence HQ Debunks Coup Rumors, Violence Spreads in States, 3 Killed over Naira Scarcity, Supreme Court Adjourns Suit Against New Naira Policy, President Buhari Goes Against Supreme Court Injunction, Federal High Court Dismisses Suit Seeking to Stop General Election, INEC Says Elections Will Not Hold in 240 Polling Units, IPOB Says it will not Enforce its Sit-at-Home During Elections, Kaduna State Governor Insist Military Take Over Impending

The Defence Headquarters has dismissed coup reports as "malicious propaganda" through the Acting director of defence information, Brig.-Gen. Tukur Gusau. He added that the armed forces of Nigeria were dismayed that even politically exposed persons had denigrated themselves into joining such destabilizing allegations. He said those who shared the report claimed that some military officers met with a presidential candidate to disrupt the general elections and set the country on fire. According to him, the purveyors of the propaganda also indicated that a so-called Thursday meeting was plotting a coup d'état to establish unconstitutional order. Gusau said the military high command would ensure that appropriate law enforcement agencies invited those who fabricated and spread the unfounded report to substantiate their claims. [Premium Times News \(February 12th\)](#) reports.

The growing anger over the cash crisis resulting from the Central Bank of Nigeria currency redesign policy boiled over on Wednesday as protesting customers set on fire banks and destroyed automated teller machines (ATMs) in Edo and Delta states. The violence, which paralyzed social and economic activities in the two states, also claimed three lives, with many others injured during the riot. The protests equally spread to Oyo, Ondo, Be-

nue and Kwara states as residents vented their anger over the scarcity of cash, which had made life unbearable for many Nigerians. Soldiers and police officers were quickly dispatched to the crisis zones and the custodial center to prevent a jailbreak. Also, members of the Edo state security network and vigilantes paraded the street, dismantling the roadblocks set up by the protesters in different parts of the city. On Wednesday in Abuja, angry cash depositors prevented movement in and out of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN). The customers prevented staff and visitors from accessing the building in anger over the long process of depositing the old Naira notes. Angered by the development, the customers were said to have blocked the entrance to the apex bank's office for hours. Stephen Angbulu, et al., [The Punch News \(February 16th\)](#) reports.

The supreme court has adjourned the suit filed by some state governments to challenge the February 10 deadline set by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) to end the use of old Naira notes. A seven-member court panel adjourned the case on Wednesday until February 22, only three days before the general elections. The adjournment shattered the hopes of many Nigerians who were anticipating a definite pronouncement of the court to address the federal government's refusal to comply with its earlier order suspending the February 10 deadline. Nigerians are facing an unprecedented cash crunch a week before general elections on February 25. The crisis has plunged many citizens and businesses into hardships, with many finding it difficult to meet their basic daily needs. Ameh Ejekwonyilo, [The Premium Times \(February 15th\)](#) reports.

A week after the supreme court ordered the federal government to allow the continued use of old N 200, N 500 and N 1.000 notes, president Muhammadu Buhari has countered that order. In a national broadcast on Thursday morning, Buhari admitted "difficulties" that the new currency policy is causing Nigerians but only approved the continued use of old N 200 notes as a legal tender across Nigeria. According to him, the old N 200 would be legal tender alongside the new N 200 notes, adding that the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) would continue to collect the old N 500 and N 1.000 notes still in circulation. To further ease the supply pressures particularly affecting citizens, he approved the CBN to release the old N 200 bank notes back into circulation for 60 days from February 10, to April 10, when the old N 200 notes cease to be le-

gal tender. Kabir Yusuf, [The Premium Times \(February 16th\)](#) reports. You can find full text of president Buhari's speech [here](#).

A Federal High Court in Abuja has dismissed a suit seeking to stop the forthcoming general elections over the exclusion of eligible Nigerians living abroad. In a judgment, the court held that the existing law in the country did not guarantee the right of Nigerians in the diaspora to vote in any election. Hence, the suit lacked merit. However, it was the duty of those affected by the issue to engage the legislature so that the law is enacted to resolve their issue. The case has revealed that there is a cavity in the existing law concerning the right of Nigerians in the diaspora to vote in elections in Nigeria. [The Vanguard News \(February 15th\)](#) reports.

Chairman of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), Prof. Mahmood Yakubu, at a meeting with leaders of political parties, disclosed that elections would not hold in 240 polling units spread across 28 states and the Federal Capital Territory as units had no registered voters. He explained the reason for this was the wave of insecurity in many parts of the country. Meanwhile, the Inter-Party Advisory Council (IPAC) has counterposed any postponement of the election, saying under no condition should the polls be shifted. Omeiza Ajayi, [The Vanguard News \(February 13th\)](#) reports.

The Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) have condemned the constant attacks on facilities of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in some parts of the south-east, especially within Anambra and Imo states. The pro-Biafran group also denied directing any sit-at-home in the south-east during the election period, urging residents to disregard the rumoured order. IPOB media and publicity secretary Emma Powerful claimed that those attacking INEC facilities were primarily funded and sponsored by unscrupulous politicians to demonize IPOB and the affiliated Eastern Security Network (ESN). According to her, "IPOB urged our people not to pay attention to any fake information linking IPOB to the criminal activities of infiltrators and collaborators". Ikenna Obianeri, [The Punch News \(February 13th\)](#) reports.

In his official state broadcast on Thursday, Governor Nasir El-Rufai of Kaduna state accused the governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), Godwin Emefiele, of having an ulterior motive be-

hind the current monetary policy. El-Rufai alleged that Emeziele and his supporters within the presidency plan to make life difficult for Nigerians, undermine the works of the government and see to it that the forthcoming elections do not hold. According to El-Rufai, the final goal is to see the military take over Nigeria even as they would be made to step in to stop the current chaotic state of Nigeria. He said all efforts to modify the implementation of the policy to avoid what was assumed to be unintended consequences were unsuccessful, adding that he chose to speak out first as one person that has been particularly close to the president, believing that his actions were motivated by innocence and mindful of his legacy. Emeziele said he had no regrets for doing his duty in this regard, stressing that one day, the president will appreciate what he and his fellow governors are being insulted for today. Soonest Nathaniel, [The Channels News \(February 17th\)](#) reports.

Insecurity: Surge in Election Violence Ahead of Polls, Police Deploys 400.000 Personnel for Elections, Says Post-Election Violence will be Met with Minimum Force, NSCDC Reports Killings of 2.295 Teachers and Violent Attack on 1.500 School, Launches Emergency Crisis Response Center

As the general elections draw close, election-related violence has faced significant spikes. During weekend campaign rallies, shooters attacked a security team of a vice-presidential candidate, killing three police officers. At another rally, supporters were attacked with machetes, injuring several and damaging campaign vehicles. Similarly, unidentified shooters ambushed and killed three security team members for another vice presidential. However, Kolawole Oluwadare, deputy director at the Socio-Economic Rights Accountability Project (SERAP), says authorities have hesitated to address the problem. The rights group petitioned the International Criminal Court (ICC) to investigate election-related violence and hold the Nigerian perpetrators accountable. The election comes amid growing frustrations among citizens, caused in part by shortages of fuel and the newly designed currency. Timothy Obiezu, [Voice of America \(February 13th\)](#) reports.

The Inspector General of Police (IGP), Usman Alkali Baba, said over 400.000 security personnel would be deployed to conduct the general elections

across the country smoothly. According to the IGP, out of this number the police would provide over 300.000 personnel, while the rest would be sourced from complementary security agencies in the country. On specific plans to stop those who may disrupt the elections as well as deter vote buyers, Baba disclosed that unique technical intelligence assets and a particular intelligence unit of the police, working with other security agencies and the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), are in place to track and apprehend those who may plan to disrupt the polls and intimidate vote buyers. Juliana Taiwo-Obalonye, [The Sun News \(February 17th\)](#) reports.

The Inspector-General of Police (IGP), Usman Alkali Baba, has said it will use minimal force to address possible election violence that may trail the announcement of results. According to the IGP, the force's election plan extends long after the announcement of results. Therefore, he said, adequate plans are on the ground to identify, isolate and arrest individuals and groups engaged in post-election violence, adding that the police force's efforts would be augmented by 93.495 additional personnel from other (security) agencies. Stephen Angbulu, [The Punch News \(February 16th\)](#) reports.

The Commandant General Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), Ahmed Audi, has lamented that violent attacks on schools resulted in the killing of about 2.295 teachers and displacement of 19.000 others in Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa states between 2009 and 2018. He was speaking at the launch ceremony of the National School Security and Emergency Response Centre in Abuja, where he revealed that an estimated 1.500 schools had been destroyed since 2014, with over 1.280 casualties among teachers and students. Flagger off the centre, Minister of State for Budget and National Planning, Prince Clem Agba, said the federal government would ensure the prompt release of funds for the financing of the safe schools initiative to ensure that children can go to school without fear of kidnappings or abductions for ransom. The national school security and emergency centre is the first of its kind in the country and is an initiative under the recently launched female squad of the NSCDC, which was set up specially to provide maximum security to schools and curb schools kidnappings. Gift Habib, [The Punch News \(February 13th\)](#) and Tina Abeku, [The Guardian News \(February 13th\)](#) report.



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