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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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Obasanjo and Presidency Disagree over State of Unity of the Nation

The former President of Nigeria, Olusegun Obasanjo, has said that “Nigeria is slowly becoming a failed, divided state, and the poverty capital of the world”. Speaking at a consultative dialogue attended by various socio-cultural groups including Afenifere, Middle Belt Forum, Northern Elders Forum, Ohanaeze Ndi Igbo and Pan Niger Delta Forum, Obasanjo faulted the current government over the management of the country. He addressed several issues including cultural diversity and Nigeria’s Constitution. Queen Esther Iroanusi, [All Africa News \(12th September\)](#) details.

Reacting to this, the Presidency has criticized Obasanjo over his comment. In a statement issued to the press, the presidential spokesman, Garba Shehu, stated that Obasanjo “attempts to divide the nation while President Muhammadu Buhari continues to promote nation building and the unity of Nigeria”. He debunked the allegation of poor management describing Obasanjo as “divider-in-chief”. He outlined the achievements of the Buhari led administration and commended the efforts of the All Progressives Congress (APC) led National Assembly. [Premium Times \(14th September\)](#) writes. On the same note, the APC has criticised Obasanjo for his statement and made reference to the challenges encountered by the Obasanjo led administration which it failed to handle. The Deputy National Spokesperson of the APC, Yekini Nabena, said that Obasanjo lacks the moral justifications to lament about the country’s growing political and social decadence since his administration also contributed greatly to the problem. He reiterated the achievements of the President Buhari administration. Samson Adenekan, [Premium Times \(13th September\)](#) reports.

Meanwhile, Nobel laureate, Wole Soyinka has asked President Muhammadu Buhari to change his style of governance as citizens may no longer have faith in his administration. Soyinka, who made the assertion in a press statement, referred to Obasanjo’s warnings on the obvious division among groups in the country. [Ben Ezeamalu, Premium Times \(15th September\)](#) writes. Socio-cultural groups that were present at Soyinka’s briefing criticized the presidency for its reaction to the comments by Obasanjo, saying that they have no regrets or apologies to offer for attending the dialogue session. The groups in a statement by

Yinka Odumakin (Afenifere), Hakeem Baba-Ahmed (Northern Elders Forum), Guy Ikoku (Ohanaeze), Senator Bassey Henshaw (Pan Niger Delta Forum), and. Isuwa Dogo (Middle Belt Forum), defended their presence at the meeting stating that they cannot control how Obasanjo responds to the situation in the country. Friday Olorokor, [Punch News \(15th September\)](#) details.

Petrol / Electricity Hike Controversy: NLC Threatens with Strike Action, FG Affirms Price Hike

The Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) has threatened to embark on a nationwide strike if the federal government fails to reverse the recent removal of fuel subsidy and hike in electricity tariff. The President of the NLC, Ayuba Wabba, disclosed this at the end of a meeting of the NLC’s Central Working Committee (CWC). He stated that citizens are dissatisfied with the increase especially at a time when countries are faced with the Covid-19 pandemic. He added that the committee will also mobilise its members, civil societies and other social partners to try to resist these policies as it has driven many Nigerians into poverty. Azeezat Adedigba, [Premium Times \(17th September\)](#) reports.

The hard stance of the NLC is due to the adjournment of the meeting between the federal government and the labour unions and civil society organisations (CSOs) which ended without an agreement. In the meeting, the Deputy President of NLC, Amechi Asugwuni, stated that the federal government had no agenda at the meeting and did not provide alternative means for the hardship the masses are experiencing. On the same note, the President of the Trade Union Congress (TUC), Quadri Olaleye, called for a reversal of the increase. He said that the TUC had already issued a 7 day ultimatum to the federal government to act on their demands. Azeezat Adedigba writes in [Premium Times \(15th September\)](#).

Meanwhile, the federal government has reaffirmed its stance on the removal of subsidy. Speaking at a meeting between a government delegation and labour leaders over the recent increase in the price of petrol, the Minister of State for Petroleum, Timipre Silva, reiterated that the federal government can no longer afford to subsidise petrol. He stated that the petroleum sector has not been fully deregulated and if done, citizens would be paying about N183 per litre as

against the N160 per litre for petrol currently. Silva added that importers, mainly the NNPC and its subsidiaries, were still buying dollars from the government at about N391 as against the market price of N450. He said the federal government loses N1bn daily to fuel subsidy. Azeezat Adedigba, [Premium Times \(16th September\)](#) explains.

UK and US to Sanction Election Offenders, IGP Deploys Officers for Edo State Election

As part of plans to sanction perpetrators of violence and other election related offences in the forthcoming governorship elections in Edo and Ondo States, the United Kingdom (UK) has said it will take action against election offenders including “restrictions on their eligibility to travel to the UK, restrictions on access to UK-based assets, or prosecution under international law just as it did after the 2019 elections”. This was disclosed by the British High Commission (BHC) in Nigeria via its Twitter handle. Speaking further on the development, the British High Commissioner to Nigeria, Catriona Laing, said she has held meetings with the leaders of the All Progressives Congress (APC) and the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) on upcoming governorship elections in Edo State, on the need for violence free elections, and that the UK welcomed the signing of a peace accord by the governorship candidates in the state. Adelani Adepegba, [Punch News \(15th September\)](#) details. The action of the British High Commission comes 24 hours after the spokesperson for the Department of State of the United States (US), Morgan Ortagus, disclosed that the US imposed visa restrictions on politicians who masterminded violence and rigging of the governorship elections in Kogi and Bayelsa States and contributed to same in the run-up to the September and October 2020 Edo and Ondo states. [Sahara Reporters \(14th September\)](#) details.

In the same vein, the former Senate President, Bukola Saraki, has asked that the UK and the European Union (EU) place visa ban on election riggers in Nigeria. Saraki stated this at an event organised by the Centre for Advancement of Civil Liberties to mark this year's International Day of Democracy. He emphasized that such restrictions should act as precautionary measures for election offenders and should not be restricted to politicians alone but security officers, electoral officers as well as judicial officers. [The Cable News](#)

[\(15th September\)](#) writes. On the same note, a former Deputy National Publicity Secretary of the APC, Timi Frank, and the candidate of the Social Democratic Party (SDP) in the 2019 Kogi State governorship election, Natasha Akpoti, have welcomed the US visa ban on identified election riggers at the governorship polls in Kogi and Bayelsa States in November 2019. Both expressed concern about the impediment the two elections had on the nation's democracy, and canvassed for the inclusion of other persons indicted during and after the polls including the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) officials, security agents and judges on the ban list. Deji Elumoye, [This Day News \(15th September\)](#) reports.

Similarly, the PDP has applauded the US for imposing visa ban on Nigerian politicians accused of electoral fraud. Disclosing this, the spokesman for the PDP, Kola Ologbondiyan, urged the US Department of State to include family members and assets of the politicians affected by the ban. The PDP also urged others including the EU, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Saudi Arabia (SA), to also join in imposing similar sanctions on electoral violators in Nigeria who are bent on destroying the nation's democracy. [Pulse News \(16th September\)](#) details.

Still on the forthcoming governorship election in Edo State scheduled for 19 September, the Inspector General of Police (IGP), Mohammed Adamu, has begun the deployment of officers for the election. He deployed Adeleye Olusola Oyabade, Deputy Inspector General (DIG) of Police in charge of Research and Planning, to see to the general security arrangement. Oyabade will be assisted by an Assistant Inspector-General of Police (AIG), Karma Hosea Hassan, AIG in charge of Federal Operations at the Force Headquarters Abuja, and eight Commissioners of Police (CPs). According to a statement issued by the Force Public Relations Officer, Frank Mba, the Police is committed to ensuring hitch free elections in Edo State. It listed other senior police officers involved in election monitoring and evaluation. In addition, 450 officers were deployed from the Enugu State Police Command. Godsgift Onyedinefu, [Global Sentinel News \(12th September\)](#) and Anayo Okoli, [Vanguard News \(15th September\)](#) detail.

SERAP Sues NASS Leadership over Unpublished Corruption Probes

In a recent report, the Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP) has dragged the Senate President, Ahmad Lawan, and the Speaker of House of Representatives, Femi Gbajabamila to court over failure to publish completed public hearings and corruption probes by the National Assembly since 1999, and failure to disclose the number of probes that have resulted in any indictment of suspects, and to name such suspects. SERAP is asking the Federal High Court, Abuja, to order Lawan and Gbajabamila to make public the reports, send them to the appropriate agencies, and sponsor a resolution that would absolve lawmakers from directly getting involved in the execution of projects by MDAs. [Premium Times \(13th September\)](#) details.

Kaduna State House of Assembly Passes Law for Castration of Rapists, Outcry over Human Rights Violations

The Kaduna State House of Assembly has amended the Kaduna State Penal Code No.5 of 2017. The law which originally read "21 years of imprisonment for rape of an adult and life imprisonment in the case of a child" has been revised and presently, dictates "surgical castration and bilateral salpingectomy for male and female convicts of child rape, and death". Prior to this, the Kaduna State Governor, Nasir El-Rufai, had earlier called for "surgical castration" in addition to the life imprisonment or 21 years imprisonment for convicted rapists. El-Rufai has signed the amended penal code into law. [EN24 News \(14th September\)](#), [This Day News \(11th September\)](#) and [Premium Times \(16th September\)](#) report.

Meanwhile, Femi Falana, the lawyer of the Kano State Musician, Sharif Yahaya, has dragged the Kano State government and federal government before the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights in Banjul, Gambia, over mistrust and unfair hearing of the case. Yahaya was sentenced to death by hanging over a song he circulated via WhatsApp which is considered a blasphemy against the Prophet Mohammed. Abdul Seye, [Daily Post \(14th September\)](#) details.

On another note, Peter Hawkins, UNICEF Representative in Nigeria, has criticized the decision by an Islamic court in Kano to sentence 13-year-old boy to 10 years in prison. The boy was convicted because of unflattering remarks about God. Hawkins said: "It also negates all core underlying principles of child rights and child justice that Nigeria

and by implication Kano State has signed on to". [BBC \(16th September\)](#) reports.

Again on another note, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has criticized the constant human rights violations by security officers in the Northeast, despite efforts to improve Civil-Military relations in the region. The Executive Secretary of the Commission, Tony Ojukwu, reiterated the need for cooperation between security agencies and civilians. Represented by the Deputy Director Investigations, Itheme Richmond, at a 2-day training of troops of Sector 2 of the Operation Lafiya Dole, he stressed on the importance of respect for human rights and added that cooperation between civilians and security agencies would reduce the casualties in the ongoing crisis. Daily Post, [Shehu Usman, The Daily Post \(14th September\)](#) writes.

Insecurity: Killings of Civilians in the Northeast, Attack on Abuja-Kaduna Train, Senate President Calls for Constitutional Roles for Monarchs, Nigeria Commences Community Policing

The Coalition of Northern Groups has stated that Boko Haram and bandits continue to rampage in the Northeast and Northwest. At a press briefing in Abuja, the spokesperson of the coalition, Abdul-Azeez Suleiman, insisted that the Federal Government should finally go more courageous against the criminals and their sponsors. Idowu Isamotu, [Daily Trust \(17th September\)](#), reports. In the past days, Boko Haram and ISWAP killed and injured several villagers and kidnapped many in Borno State. [Vanguard \(16th of September\)](#) and [Legit \(17th September\)](#) report.

Meanwhile, the Kaduna State Police Command has debunked the rumoured attack on a Kaduna-Abuja bound train by bandits as an act carried out by hoodlums. According to a statement by the Command Public Relations Officer, ASP Mohammed Jalige, miscreants threw stones at the moving train around Rijana Village, close to Kaduna though the train arrived safely. Also clarifying the attack, the Nigerian Railway Corporation (NRC) has denied reports of alleged bandit attacks on the Abuja-Kaduna train KA4 between Asham and Kubwa. NRC's Managing Director, Fidat Okhiria, who made the denial in a statement said the reports were false and that there are always hoodlums who usually throw heavy stones at the moving train along Abuja-Kaduna

route. [Premium Times \(15th September\)](#) and [Guardian News \(15th September\)](#) write.

On another note, the Senate President, Ahmed Lawan has called for the inclusion of constitutional roles for traditional rulers in the Nigerian Constitution. Lawan who stated this during a delegation visit from the Argungu Emirate to the National Assembly, emphasized on the importance of the traditional rulers in addressing the security challenges in the country. [Punch News \(17th September\)](#) details.

On another note, John Campbell in [Council and Foreign Relations \(15th September\)](#), examines the beginning of the community policing initiative in Nigeria. He states that the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) has set aside N13bn for the initiative

and is employing the use of locally trained constables to bring security closer to the people. He analyses the conditions of the Nigeria Police to that of the British and the United States. He spoke of some regions that have begun the initiative and added that there is still work to be done since issues like ethnicity and religious favoritism tend to surface in locally-based law enforcement units.

In new report, President Buhari has signed the Nigeria Police Bill 2020 into law. The Special Adviser to the President on Media and Publicity disclosed this in a statement that the bill will improve the organizational structure of the Police force. Olamide Francis, [Daily Times \(17th September\)](#).

Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e. V.

Dr. Vladimir Kreck, Resident Representative
Vera Ali, Project Assistant / Editor Press Review

Nigeria Office

www.kas.de/nigeria

www.facebook.com/kas.nigeria

vladimir.kreck@kas.de / vera.ali@kas.de



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