

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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Inflation Hits 14.23% in October as Oil Market and Non-Oil Sectors Input drops by 60%, FG Seeks to Improve Lending Market

Following the hike in food prices and other consumption, inflation rose to 14.23% in October as against 13.71% recorded in September. This was revealed by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) in its consumer price index report. According to the report, the October figures showed an increase in 14 months and the highest recorded since March 2018. Also, on a month-on-month basis, the headline index increased by 1.54% in October 2020, this is 0.06% rate higher than the rate recorded in September 2020 (1.48%). Other areas that recorded an increase include, transport by air, hospital and medical services, passenger transport by road, pharmaceutical products, motor cars, vehicle spare parts among others. Samuel Oyekanmi, [Nairametrics \(16th November\)](#) and Okechukwu Nnodim, [Punch News \(16th November\)](#) write.

Meanwhile, the Minister of State for Petroleum Resources, Timipre Sylva, has disclosed a 60% decline in the earning of oil and non-oil sectors, throwing up new challenges for the nation's economy. Sylva stated this after a meeting with President Buhari. The drop comes amidst low oil prices and low revenue receipts from the Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS). Sylva noted the hardship in the country. He also reiterated that the country can no longer afford subsidy, however, the government is committed to uplifting the people. [Premium Times \(17th November\)](#) reports.

On an other note, Nigeria has passed a law that would establish a new resolution fund to support failing or distressed lenders allowing commercial banks to help pay for it. The Banks and Other Financial Institutions Act 2020 which was signed by President Muhammadu Buhari last week is in response to development in the financial sector. The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) will invest N10bn while the Nigerian Deposit Insurance Corporation (NDIC) will contribute N4bn. The new law provides more power for the CBN in managing crisis. Paul Carsens reports in [Reuters \(16th November\)](#).

Meanwhile, Marc-Antoine Pérouse de Montclos in the [African Report \(19th November\)](#) examined Nigeria's Petroleum Industry Bill (PIB). The PIB has continued to linger due to several disparities that has been cited over years. The PIB was first

initiated in 2007. It is presumed that the deferred bill may have marred investments that could have helped maintained output levels despite the crash in oil prices among others. Montclos stated that the declining national competition may threaten Nigeria's position as new oil fields are discovered in East Africa. He noted that the country's oil tax is at the highest rates in the world. He mentioned that the 2020 bill further maintains this principle. He also cited that the PIB seeks to privatize the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC). However, the PIB may not be proficient enough in addressing major problems hindering the competitions of the oil industry. Montclos also stated that the PIB may have little impact to improve the relations of locals in the oil producing areas. He cited that crude oil theft is mostly committed by gangs who don't live in the communities. He added that the PIB places the burden on host communities and projects that protest may ensue. He concluded that the PIB "will fall far short of solving the crisis in the Niger Delta".

In new reports, the 2020 Ibrahim Index of African Governance (IIAG) has ranked Nigeria 34 out of the continent's 54 countries. The ranking was based on security, rule of law, participation, rights and inclusion, and foundations for economic human development. The Chairman of Mo Ibrahim Foundation, Mo Ibrahim stated that "pre-existing weakness and challenges in African governance" uncovered by the 2020 IAAG were aggravated by the Covid-19 pandemic. Nume Ekeghe, [All African News \(17th November\)](#) writes.

FEC Approves 2020 Finance Bill, Senate Quizzes FIRS Over Unremitted N1.4 Billion Tax and VAT Deductions

Following wide speculations that the federal government plans to increase taxation, the federal government has debunked the rumour stating that it has no plan to increase the taxation burden on citizens. This comes as the federal government approves the 2020 Finance Bill. The Minister of Finance, Budget and National Planning, Zainab Ahmed made the disclosure via a tweet, after the Federal Executive Council (FEC) meeting, presided over by President Muhammadu Buhari. She added that the bill will "ease the tax burden on some categories of businesses, especially the small and medium businesses". Chike Olisah, [Nairametrics News \(18th November\)](#) explains. Bassey Udo in

[Premium Times \(19th November\)](#) gives more details on the bill. The Chairman, Drafting Subcommittee and member of Fiscal Policy Reforms Committee, Ajibola Olomola, had earlier revealed the federal government's intent to exempt small businesses from the payment of Tertiary Education Tax (TET), collected by the Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS). He added that the new Finance Bill is proposed to introduce an amendment to the Tertiary Education Tax Act. Chike Olisah reports in [Nairametrics News \(16th November\)](#).

In developing news, the Senate has issued two queries to the FIRS over "failure to remit N1.4 billion withholding tax and Value Added Tax (VAT) deducted from 33 Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) in 2015". This was revealed by the Committee on Public Accounts and confirmed by the FIRS Chairman, Mamman Nami. This contradicts the provision of Financial Regulation 234 (III), which "stipulates that officers who fail to provide for remit VAT and WHT due on vatable supplies and services shall be sanctioned under the applicable VAT Act No. 102 of 1993 which may include fine and/or imprisonment". The Senate is yet to decide on the issue. Deji Elumoye, [This Day News \(18th November\)](#) explains.

ASUU Crisis Lingers as Strike Period Reaches 8 Months, Buhari Seeks Assistance from Private Sector to Finance Universities

Following the continuous disagreement between the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) and the federal government over the Integrated Personnel and Payroll Information System (IPPIS) for salary payment among other demands, there are speculations that the federal government may adopt any other developed platform by ASUU over IPPIS. Disclosing this, the spokesman for the Ministry of Labour and Employment, Charles Akpan, added that there are conditions that would guide the adoption of any platform. Friday Olorok, [Punch News \(16th November\)](#) writes.

The strike which began in March has lasted for eight months. The discord which led to the strike is the introduction of IPPIS and the demand that all workers must be registered under the system. Refusing IPPIS, ASUU developed the University Transparency and Accountability Solution (UTAS), which is currently undergoing test-run by the National Information Technology Development

Agency (NITDA). ASUU as well as other unions asked to register under IPPIS, cited challenges of delay and shortchanging of salaries, unpaid allowance, irregularities among others. However, recent reports indicate that ASUU will meet with the federal government for another round of negotiation. In addition, the federal government has agreed to pay N30bn earned academic allowance and N20bn for the revitalisation of the education sector and the arrears of salaries to the university teachers. [Sahara Reporters \(19th November\)](#) explains. Meanwhile, an official of ASUU has reiterated that ASUU would not call off the strike and that the strike is not about IPPIS alone, but alleged that the federal government was not being truthful to the public over the issue. Tony Okafor, [Punch News \(18th November\)](#) details.

Still on ASUU strike, President Buhari has called for the support of private sector in financing universities as the responsibility cannot not be handled solely by the federal government. President Buhari who made the call at the 2020 convocation and 72nd foundation day celebration of the University of Ibadan was represented by the Executive Secretary, National Universities Commission, (NUC), Abubakar Rasheed. President Buhari also charged universities to develop programmes that would help his administration in the fight to reduce poverty and improve the health sector. Seun Opejobi, [Daily Post News \(18th November\)](#) explains.

Tension Mounts over the Growing Call for Igbo Presidency in the 2023 Elections, Akeredolu Faults Jegede over an Allegation of Threat to Life

There are mounting tensions over the growing call for political parties to zone the 2023 presidential ticket to the South-East. The rumour that the Governor of Ebonyi State, David Umahi, is defecting from the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) to the All Progressives Congress (APC) over an alleged 2023 presidential ambition that made media rounds last week, has finally been confirmed by Umahi. Debunking his alleged presidential ambition, Umahi stated that he is leaving the PDP because of the "injustice meted to South East by the PDP which includes not zoning the party's 2023 presidential ticket to the zone". Umahi added that the APC is more inclined to the interest of the 5 states in the region. He

further stated that his exit was to “actualise the emergence of a Nigerian of Igbo ethnic stock as the nation’s next chief executive in 2023”. Leo Sobechi et al, [Guardian News \(18th November\)](#) explain.

Reacting, the Governor of Rivers State, Nyesom Wike has faulted Umahi over his defection. He alleged that the defection was due to Umahi’s 2023 presidential ambition. This was contained in a statement by the Special Assistant to the Governor on Media, Kelvin Ebiri. Wike also criticized Umahi for allegedly betraying the PDP which gave him the governorship ticket for 2015 and 2019. He added that Umahi’s decision may be too hasty since APC is yet to reveal if they would adopt zoning the 2023 presidential ticket. James Eze writes in [Premium Times \(18th November\)](#).

On the same note, the PDP which stated that Umahi’s defection was due to personal interest added that it would not be coerced into making any hasty decision. The PDP National Working Committee (NWC), dissolved the South-East Zonal Caretaker Committee headed by Umahi’s brother, Austin, and also dissolved its executive committees at the ward, local government and state levels of Ebonyi State. The PDP also reiterated its stance on zoning. The Chairman of the PDP Board of Trustees (BoT), Senator Walid Jubrin, called for dialogue among critical stakeholders in the party to address the growing concerns of the South-East. Chuks Okocha and Benjamin Nworie, [This Day News \(18th November\)](#) reports.

Stakeholders have reacted to the call for zoning. The Ohaneze Ndigbo group has told the APC and the PDP that they would only support any political party that zones the ticket to the zone. Disclosing this, the President of the Ohaneze in Anambra State, and a member of the national caucus of the group, Damian Okeke-Ogene, added that any Igbo that got the 2023 presidential ticket from any political party automatically becomes the Igbo candidate. Also, the Leader of Ohanaeze in Diaspora, Nwachukwu Anakwenze told pressmen that they would organize a rally on December 27 in all the Igbo States to drive home their point of the 2023 presidency. He added that President Muhammadu Buhari has been informed. Nwanosike Onu, [The Nation News \(17th November\)](#) explains.

In developing news, the Governor of Ondo State, Rotimi Akeredolu has criticized Eyitayo Jegede over the allegation that his life is being threaten for challenging the outcome of the past Ondo State gubernatorial election. In a statement through his media aid, Gbenga Akinmoyo, Jegede called for intervention from security agencies. Responding, the spokesperson of Akeredolu’s campaign organisation, Richard Olabode Olatunde, said that the allegation is “another lame attempt to stir unpopular discussion around an exercise that has been concluded by the good people of Ondo State”. Dayo Johnson, [Vanguard News \(17th November\)](#) writes.

Meanwhile, Yusuph Olaniyonu in [This Day \(13th November\)](#) analysed the role and influence of political parties in democracy. He cited that the manifestos and constitutions of various political parties provides a platform that somehow, contributes to national development. He noted that the competing parties create options for government, the people and society. Yusuph also analysed the #EndSARS protest. He stated that political parties who could have played a role on the issue including the PDP and APC were silent. He said that the parties “simply failed as platforms for contestation of ideas”. He compared the events of the Ondo and Edo States gubernatorial election where the parties were not only seen but also heard, and the events of the protest where they were silent which also influenced the protest slogan “Soro Soke” meaning let your voice be heard, loud and clear. He added that the political parties are just “mere power grabbing machine”. He noted that the parties are drifting away from their major agenda and role as an alternative source of idea for national development and stressed on the need for an alternative political platform so that the next election would not be “business as usual”.

#EndSARS Protest: Judicial Panel Begins Probe of the Lekki Toll Gate Incident, CNN Reveals New Findings, UK Parliament to Debate on Sanctions against Nigeria

Following the controversy surrounding the Lekki Toll Gate incident during the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS), protest last month, the Lagos State judicial panel has begun sitting to probe the events of the #EndSARS protest and the controversial Lekki Toll Gate incident. The Nigeria Army (NA) has appeared before the panel to address the allegation of soldiers shooting at

unarmed protesters at the Lekki Toll Gate. According to Ahmed Taiwo, Commander of the 81 Division, Military Intelligence Brigade, Victoria Island, Lagos, the NA stated that the officers fired blank ammunition at the protesters. Taiwo who gave account of the incident, presented a footage of the soldiers shooting in the air with protesters chanting songs. He also cited disparities in communication between the Lagos State government and the NA. [Guardian News \(14th November\)](#) explains.

Meanwhile, the federal government has begun a clampdown on promoters of the protest. The CBN had last week issued a directive to commercial banks authorizing the freeze of accounts belonging to promoters of the #EndSARS protest alleging a "suspected terrorism financing". In addition, some media houses were fined over an alleged "exaggerated reporting of police abuses including broadcasting graphic footage of soldiers" among others. Emmanuel Akinwotu, [The Guardian \(13th November\)](#) details. Reacting, citizens are calling for a boycott of Access Bank for freezing accounts linked to the #EndSARS protest. It is believed that Access Bank allegedly acted while the order is being challenged in court. However, Access Bank has stated that the accounts frozen would be resolved as soon as possible. Cletus Ukong, [Premium Times \(15th November\)](#) explains.

In new reports, Stephanie Busari et al. in [CNN News \(18th November\)](#) shed new light into the Lekki Toll Gate incident. Interviews conducted provides eyewitnesses account of the incident. CNN stated that pictures and video footages acquired from protesters were verified using time stamps and other data. According to the report by CNN, eyewitnesses accounts establishes that the killing at the Lekki Toll Gate was a massacre. Multiple people were killed and dozens wounded. The findings contradict the version reported by the government. The governor of Lagos had earlier acknowledged the footage of soldiers shooting at peaceful protesters. On the same note, the Nigerian Army, refuted the report of soldiers firing at the protesters. NA stated that the soldiers fired blank weapons in the air and not live ammunition. The Army also said that it was governor of Lagos State, Babajide Sanwo-Olu who called them, contrary to Sanwo-Olu's statement that "he does not have the authority to call in the army". Another contradicting report is the evidence of bullet casings confirmed to be live rounds by former and current Nigerian military

officials. Also, the Balkan Investigative Reporting Network confirmed that the bullets were live rounds purchased from Serbia.

Still on the CNN's report, eyewitnesses also details that after the soldiers left, officers of the Nigeria Police and the dissolved SARS unit came for another round. CNN is yet to independently verify the information. Also, several eyewitnesses alleged that they were offered money to recount their testimonies. According to tCNN, some of them fled the country, while some are in hiding due to fear.

Reacting to the report, the Minister of Information, Lai Mohammed, faulted CNN's account of the incident. Mohammed described the report as "fake news and misinformation". He added that CNN should be sanctioned for the report. However, CNN has insisted that its report was truthful, and an investigation was carried out to that effect. Angela Deewan, [CNN News \(19th October\)](#) explains. Also, a former aide to ex-President Goodluck Jonathan, Rene Omokri has said that the report vindicated the protesters. He stated that the report proves a "massacre" and added that the next step is to ensure President Buhari and the Chief of Army Staff, General Buratai, face the International Criminal Court (ICC). Fikayo Olowogba, [Daily Post News \(18th November\)](#) writes.

In developing news, the UK parliament has set November 23 to debate on sanctions against the Nigerian government following the Lekki Toll Gate incident. The development was revealed via an email to one of the individuals who signed the petition asking the UK government to sanction those responsible for the killing of unarmed EndSARS protesters. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs said it is yet to be informed on the development. Chinelo Obogo and Aidoghie Paulinus, [Daily Sun News \(19th November\)](#) detail.

Meanwhile, President Buhari has stated that he will ensure that the #EndSARS protest does not happen again. This was disclosed by the Minister of Police Affairs, Muhammad Dingyadi, at the end of the National Security Meeting chaired by President Buhari. Dingyadi expressed concerns over the rise in criminality across the country particularly the North-West and North-East zones. He stated that the federal government remains committed to addressing the issue. Johnbosco Agbarakwu, [Vanguard News \(17th November\)](#) reports.

Insecurity Rises, EU Supports MNJTF with Communication Systems, US Seeks to Combat Radicalisation

There is security unrest in major cities of the nation following the withdrawal of police officers from the metropolis due to the escalated situation of the #EndSARS protest. Reports reveal citizens living in fear in Lagos, Edo, Delta, and Kwara states due to a rise in criminality and less policing. Emma Nnadozie et al. [All Africa News \(16th November\)](#) report.

On another note, the Senate has expressed concerns over the Army's involvement in internal security operations. This was disclosed during the oversight functions of the Senate Committee on Army in Kaduna State. The chairman of the committee, Senator Mohammed Ali Ndume, noted that the Army is overstretched, providing internal security in 34 states of the country. This is coming following the rise in insecurity across states. The General Officer Commanding (GOC), General Mohammed while speaking on several insecurity reports added that there are ongoing operations and plans to fish out bandits operating along Kaduna-Abuja road this Christmas. Dayo Johnson et al, [Vanguard News \(17th November\)](#) explains.

Meanwhile, the European Union (EU) has donated Command, Control, Communication and Information Systems (C3IS) equipment to the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) to enhance

its operational efficiency. This was contained in a statement by the Chief of Military Public Information of the MNJTF, Col. Muhammad Dole. Dole stated that the donation was in fulfillment of a pledge made to provide additional support to their operations. The C3IS is expected to deliver swift strategic and operational communication capabilities within the MNJTF area of operation. Kinsely Nwezeh, [This Day News \(17th November\)](#) writes.

Also, Nigeria and the United States (US) have called for increased measures in "counter radicalisation, recruitment of gullible individuals, and concerted global efforts to defeat ISIS". Terrorists have begun to exploit driving factors including economic imbalance and marginalisation, among other local grievances, to penetrate the local population for radicalisation and recruitment. In a virtual meeting for the Coordinators of the National Counter-Terrorism of the two countries. Nigeria was commended for the non-kinetic approach in addressing drivers of violent extremism. The meeting was attended by the National Security Adviser (ONSA), and was also attended by delegates from the 82-member global coalition drawn from Africa, America, Asia, Europe, and the Middle East. Others include the Africa Union (AU), European Union (EU), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and G5 Sahel, which were also represented. Segun Olaniyi, [Guardian News \(15th November\)](#) writes.

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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