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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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SERAP Sues NASS, Buhari over Electricity and Fuel Hike, FG Set to Implement Measures for the Electricity Sector

The Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP), and 302 citizens have filed a lawsuit against President Muhammadu Buhari, Vice-President Yemi Osinbajo, Senate President, Ahmad Lawan, Speaker of House of Representatives, Femi Gbajabiamila, and the Revenue Mobilization, Allocation and Fiscal Commission (RMAFC). SERAP is asking the court to “declare illegal, unconstitutional and unfair the recent hike in electricity tariff and fuel price because top level public officers cannot continue to receive the same salaries and allowances and spend public money to finance a life of luxury for themselves while asking poor Nigerians to make sacrifices”. According to SERAP, the hike in electricity tariff and fuel price as the country battles the novel Corona Virus is against public interest. They called for a review of salaries and allowances of public officials among others. [Vanguard News \(18th October\)](#) reports.

Meanwhile, the federal government has revealed plans to inject N198.27bn on various capital projects in the power sector across Nigeria in 2021. This was contained in the 2021 Appropriation Bill presented to the National Assembly by President Buhari 2 weeks ago. Abiola Odutola, [Nairametrics \(18th October\)](#) explains. On another note, the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), has introduced a framework for the financial National Mass Metering Programme (NMMP) that will cover 10 million households. There are speculations that the electricity hike would generate bank credit inflows. According to the CBN, the framework will support Distribution Companies (DISCOs) and local meter manufacturers among others. [Vanguard News \(20th October\)](#) writes.

On the same note, the Meter Assets Finance and Management Company (MAPCO) has said that it would raise N480bn to assist in the operations of the Distribution Companies (DISCOs) and also, help in the metering programme. Speaking on this, the Chief Executive Officer of the New Hampshire Capital, Onion Omonforma, stated that the contribution of the MAPCO would help to end the estimated billing policy. Chike Olisah detail in [Nairametrics \(19th October\)](#).

Senate Reveal Plans for the Petroleum Industry Bill, Minister Reiterates the Importance of the Water Resources Bill, Governor Ortom Kicks

The Senate has stated that it has given 3 committees in the Senate the responsibility to “make required legislative input into the Petroleum Industry Bill (PIB)”. The mandate was given to the Petroleum Downstream, Petroleum Upstream and Gas. The PIB which seeks to improve the regulatory framework of the Petroleum Industry among others, has passed the second reading. The Senate Leader, Yahaya Abdullahi gave further insights on the bill and the Senate President, Ahmed Lawan charged the Senate Committees saddled with the responsibility of making the input to “make more legislative inputs and be thorough in their work”. Deji Elumoye, [This Day News \(21st October\)](#) details.

Meanwhile, the Minister of State for Petroleum Resources, Timipre Sylva, had said that the provisions of the PIB also propose the privatization of the Nigerian National Petroleum Company (NNPC). Speaking on this, a Professor of Petroleum Economics, Wumi Iledare stated that the “new national oil company in the PIB seemed more of a rebranding of the existing one”. [Guardian News \(22nd October\)](#) reports.

On another note, the Minister of Water Resources, Sulaiman Adamu, has stated that the Water Resources Bill (WRB), “will boost irrigation farming system and enhance food security in the country”. [Guardian News \(22nd October\)](#) explains. Still on the WRB, the Governor of Benue State, Samuel Ortom has faulted the WRB and threatened to lead a protest march against the WRB despite the backlash that trailed the bill. Ortom who described the bill as “evil” called on the federal government to explain to citizens why it plans to implement the WRB which was rejected by the people. Peter Duru, [Vanguard News \(21st October\)](#) explains.

Accounts Frozen by CBN to be Investigated by Reps as CBN Reports of about 2,000 Fraud Related Complaints in 6 Months, FG Sets to Improve Local Content Bill

The House of Representatives has said that it would probe the allegation that “the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), has flagged over 5,000 private and corporate accounts in Deposit Money Banks”. This is coming following a motion moved at a plenary sitting in the House. The House directed the CBN, to review all frozen accounts which violated the 1999 and the section 608 of BOFIA 2004. In addition, the house also asked the Committee on Banking and Currency to commence investigation into the issue. Leki Baiyewu, [Punch News \(21st October\)](#) writes.

On another note, the CBN has stated that about 2,051 fraud related complaints were submitted between January and June 2020. Disclosing this at the workshop for Finance Correspondents Association of Nigeria (FICAN), Haruna Mustapha from the CBN while calling for a thorough screening process for staff, added that most fraudulent activities were allegedly executed by the employees. [Guardian News \(21st October\)](#) explains.

Meanwhile, the federal government has revealed that it would no longer award contracts above N5bn to foreign firms operating in the country. According to the Minister of State, Works and Housing, Abubakar Aliyu, this would help support local firms and strengthen the local content laws. Aliyu stated this at the public hearing organized by the National Assembly Joint Committee on local content. Speaking on this, the Chairman of the Committee, Senator Teslim Folarin added that the new policy would affect firms like the Julius Berger Plc. Folarin mentioned some recommendations for the Local Content Bill and other bills which would contribute to the development of the oil and gas sector. Sunday Aborisade, [Punch News \(21st October\)](#) explains.

On the oil and gas sector, the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) has revealed a decline of 2.16% in the volume of oil deposits between 2018 and 2019. This was contained in the NNPC Annual Statistical Bulletin. It however recorded an increase in the natural gas reserve. Chineme Okafor, [This Day News \(21st October\)](#) explains..

PDP Faults APC for Onochie's Nomination, APC Suspends Members over Refusal to Adhere to the National Executive Committees Directive

Following President Muhammadu Buhari's nomination of his aide Lauretta Onochie as an official of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) has criticized the All Progressives Congress (APC), for justifying the nomination alleging the APC as the mastermind in several "constitutional violations, abuse of human rights and impunity bedeviling Nigeria in the last five years". This was disclosed in a statement by the PDP National Publicity Secretary, Kola Ologbondiyan. Ologbondiyan added that the nomination violates the 1999 constitution. He added that the APC is allegedly committed to causing disunity in the country and called on the APC to recess the leadership of the party. Chuks Okocha, [This Day News \(19th October\)](#) writes.

Meanwhile, the Ebonyi State House of Assembly (ESHA), has given the PDP, a 7 day ultimatum to zone its 2023 presidential ticket to the South-East. Disclosing this, the speaker of the ESHA, Francis Nwifuru also cautioned the PDP against removing its National Chairman, Prince Uche Secondus from office. Nwifuru called on the National Executive Committee (NEC) of the PDP, to act swiftly as the INEC has announced the date of the presidential election. Chijoke Agwu, [Daily Sun News \(20th October\)](#) explains. Nwifuru also gave recommendations for selection as the presidential candidate for the election. James Eze, [Premium Times \(19th October\)](#) details.

On another note, the APC has suspended some members of its Enugu State chapter for flouting the directive of the National Executive Committee (NEC) which ordered party members to withdraw all litigations against the party. Contained in a letter signed by the APC Head of Legal Service, Dare Okepade, the suspension was within the provision of the party constitution. Adedyo Akinwale, [All Africa News \(20th October\)](#) reports.

Insecurity: FG to Intensify Efforts in Combating Security Crisis, End SARS Nationwide Protest Continues as Reports Reveal Gruesome Killings

Following the prevalent security situation in the country and across West Africa, the federal government has expressed commitment to intensify its fight against insurgency, cybercrime and other forms of criminality. The spokesperson of the Nigerian Army (NA), Sagir Musa stated that the operation named "Crocodile smile" set to launch from October 20 – December 31 "will target all areas plagued by insecurity, including cyber warfare exercises designed to identify, track, and counter negative propaganda in the social media and across cyberspace". Xinhua, [CGNTN Africa News \(18th October\)](#) reports. There were initial speculations that the operation is targeted at the ongoing Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) protest. Musa also clarified that the operation is not connected to the protest. Chike Olisah, [Nairametrics \(19th October\)](#) writes.

Still on the protest, reports have revealed that the #EndSARS protesters are committed to sustaining the ongoing protests across states in the nation. Several strategic locations have been blocked in Lagos, Abuja among others causing major disruptions in the country. Reports also show casualties recorded in several locations across the country. In addition, several inmates of the Oko correctional facility in Benin, Edo state were freed. Security officers were deployed to

control the situation. Tony Osauzo et al, [Daily Sun News \(20th October\)](#), and Magnus Eze et al, [Daily Sun News \(20th October\)](#) detail. There are speculations that the hijacking of the protests which led to the casualties recorded were done by miscreants, allegedly sponsored by politicians. The minister of Information Lai Mohammed, has cautioned protesters to cease all protest activities. He reiterated that the federal government has attended to the demands by the protesters and are still implementing them. Kingsely Nwezeh et al, [This Day News \(19th October\)](#) explains.

On the same note, the Senate President Ahmed Lawan, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Femi Gbajabiamila urged protesters to stop the protest as the federal government has accepted their demands. Lawan and Gbajabiamila who stated this after a meeting with President Muhammadu Buhari assured protesters that the legislature would also ensure their concerns are addressed. They called for patience so that the concerns can be dealt with. Olalekan Adetayo, [Punch News \(19th October\)](#) writes. On another note, the Minister of Defence, Bashir Magashi has cautioned protesters against "breaching national security". In a statement issued by the spokesman of the ministry, Mohammed Abdulkadri, Magashi expressed commitment in supporting the President Buhari's administration towards upholding national security. Adejumo Kabir, [Premium Times \(19th October\)](#) reports.

Meanwhile, President Buhari has stated that "it is the right of the youths to protest and make certain demands from their leaders ". This was disclosed after a meeting between President Buhari and the Minister of Youths and Sports Development, Sunday Dare. President Buhari mentioned that the peaceful protest is a fundamental right of citizens. He expressed commitment in ensuring that the proposed reforms for the Nigeria Police Force are implemented. Johnbosco Agbarachukwu, [Vanguard News \(19th October\)](#) reports.

In new reports, an online radio called "soro soke" has been launched by the protesters. The radio station would also serve as a platform to report missing persons among others. [Channels News \(18th October\)](#) details. Also the Police Service Commission (PSC), has recommended 37 persons for dismissal from service. According to the spokesman of the PSC, the officers would also be investigated. Abiola Odutola, [Nairametrics News \(16th October\)](#) explains.

In developing news, reports coming has revealed the brutal killings of protesters in what has been described as the "Lekki Massacre". Amnesty International also stated that they received the video circulating on the media exposing uniformed men shooting

sporadically at the protesters gathered at the Lekki toll gate. [Euro News \(21st October\)](#) writes.

Reports of casualties recorded are yet to be verified. Reacting to this, alleged angry protesters were said to have lashed out setting fire to both private and public properties. There are reports of security unrest in several locations in Lagos State. [Rfi News \(22nd October\)](#) explains. The protest which began weeks ago had been peaceful. Speculations also reveal that the Lekki toll gate had allegedly lost N23m due to the gridlock at the gate. Prior to the shooting, the Lagos State Governor, Babajide Sanwo-Olu declared a 24 hours curfew on grounds of infiltration of the movements by mobs. Eyewitness accounts disclose that the lights at the gate were turned off just before the shooting. Also, citizens have questioned the involvement of former Lagos State Governor, Bola Ahmed Tinubu in the shooting. However, Tinubu has debunked this claim. On the same note, the Nigerian Army (NA), has debunked the allegation that the uniformed men who shot at the protesters are officers of the NA. this is coming on the backdrop of the information released earlier by the NA on the commencement of the Operation Crocodile Smile. The Lagos State government ordered a full scale investigation into the issue. They called for calm amid the tension. [Xinhua Net News \(21st October\)](#) details. Nicolas Norbook in [The African Report \(21st October\)](#) further made reference to the South Africa massacre of 1960 which was a significant event that turned the tide of democracy in the country. He noted that the #EndSARS protest may have electoral consequences. He also examined the statement of a United States (US), presidential election candidate, Joe Biden on the situation and the possibilities opened to Nigeria if he emerges as the winner.

Meanwhile, protesters are persistent as they have sustained the demonstrations despite the killings. [Evening Express News \(21st October\)](#) reports. John Campbell in the [Council of Foreign Relations \(21st October\)](#) also examined the situation in the country. He cited some persons who lent their voice to the movement. He analysed the Lekki toll gate killings, accessing the general situation in the country and the impact on the President Buhari's administration. On the same note, Chimamanda Adichie in the [New York Times \(21st October\)](#) analysed the activities of SARS over the years which led to the #EndSARS protest. She mentioned some of the killings that occurred across the country. She looked at the position of the government on the issue and cited speculations of the situation becoming "chaotic" under President Buhari's administration.

Also, fumulola Agala in the [Modern Diplomacy News \(21st October\)](#) examined the protest from another angle. He likened it to the #BlackLivesMatter movement that gained both international and local attention months back. He analysed the Nigerian leadership system and that of other Africa countries, and some reports of human right abuse. On another note, criticisms have trailed the inaction of President Buhari over the killings. Lamenting on the killings, Wole Soyinka called for the immediate withdrawal of soldiers deployed to the protest location across states. He also urged the Nigerian Army to apologize to citizens over the situation. Similarly, former president Olusegun Obasanjo faulted President Buhari on the killings and called for the situation to be addressed. However, the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA), has stated that legal action be taken against the federal government. [Punch News \(22nd October\)](#) writes.

On another note, [The African Report \(22nd October\)](#) examined the recent violent situation in the SARS protest and the efforts of the federal government in addressing the situation stating that the “Government at

all levels has failed Nigerians”. He gave brief insight into the SARS unit and their activities. It also examined the Nigerian society from the historical angle. It looked at the 2020 budget and concluded by faulting the governance of the country. Meanwhile President Buhari has addressed the nation on the situation. He condemned the killings and expressed sympathy over the killings. Chiamaka Okafor, [Premium Times \(23rd October\)](#) and [Punch News \(22nd October\)](#) detail.

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