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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 COVID-19 and the situation in Nigeria.

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### **Covid-19: NPC Raises Concerns over Increase in Child Marriages and Birth Rate; PTF Refutes Claims of Hydroxychloroquine Cure**

The National Population Commission (NPC) has revealed that over 80% of Nigerians, mostly women, are negatively affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. Speaking at an event, Stephen Tsemende, representing the NPC Federal Commissioner for Benue State stated that the pandemic has recorded not only an increase in gender-based violence, but it is also likely that even more girls will drop out of school as a result of the prolonged closure of schools. Peter Duru, [Vanguard News \(29<sup>th</sup> July\)](#). On the same note, [Punch News \(29<sup>th</sup> July\)](#) reports that the NPC has raised serious concerns about the the situation of teenage girls in Nigeria. As schools remain closed and girls continue to drop out, the number of child marriages and the fertility rate are likely to increase. A 2018 demographic survey by the NPC exposed that in some of the poorest parts of Nigeria the fertility rate is significantly higher than the nationwide average of 5.3 births per woman: “Katsina State – one of the poorest in the country – has the highest at 7.3 [...] Bauchi and Jigawa [...] 7.2 and 7.1 respectively.” The survey has also revealed “that 44 per cent of teenage girls with no education have begun childbearing, while only one per cent of teenage girls with more than a secondary school education have given birth”. This trend will continue to worsen under Covid-19 pandemic conditions and will result in more poverty, violence and unemployment.

Meanwhile, a Nigerian trained United States medical doctor, Stella Immanuel, claims she has treated over 350 Covid-19 patients with Hydroxychloroquine. This is against the backdrop of the suspension of the use of Hydroxychloroquine for the trial treatment of Covid-19 patients by the World Health Organisation (WHO). Taiwo Adebulu of [The Cable News \(28<sup>th</sup> July\)](#) details. Reacting to this, the Presidential Task Force on Covid-19 (PTF) has cautioned citizens to avoid self-medication and to wear masks as a precautionary measure in controlling the virus. Ebinoluwa Olafusi, [The Cable News \(29<sup>th</sup> July\)](#) reports. Supporting the PTF's position, the guild of medical doctors has refuted the claims by Immanuel stating that it has not been scientifically proven. Yusuf Akinpelu of [Premium Times \(29<sup>th</sup> July\)](#) writes.

### **Akpabio Reveals Alleged Beneficiaries of NDDC Contracts Amid Corruption Probe, AfDB Panel Clears Adesina**

Following the decision by the House of Representatives to sue the Minister for Niger Delta Affairs, Godswill Akpabio, over failure to publish the names of the members of the National Assembly (NASS) who allegedly were awarded contracts by the NDDC, Akpabio has sent the names of the alleged beneficiaries of the contracts which include lawmakers, prominent persons, past and present officials among others. Names have been leaked by the [International Centre for Investigative Reporting \(27<sup>th</sup> July\)](#) and the [Daily Sun \(24<sup>th</sup> July\)](#).

Reacting to this, Senator Matthew Urhoghide, has denied Akpabio's allegations calling it a “mischievous lie”, Jude Egbas of [Pulseng News \(29<sup>th</sup> July\)](#) writes. On the same note, former Senator, Samuel Anyanwu, has demanded that Akpabio presents evidence indicating that he received any contract from the NDDC, Dyepekazah Shibayan, [The Cable News \(29<sup>th</sup> July\)](#) reports. Furthermore, the Spokesman for the House of Representatives has called on Akpabio to go public with the documents to prove the claim that 60% of the contracts were awarded to lawmakers. Eric James Ochigbo, [Daily Sun \(29<sup>th</sup> July\)](#) explains.

Meanwhile, the Minister of Information, Lai Mohammed, has restated the commitment of the federal government to continue its anti-corruption war. Addressing the recent corruption cases, Mohammed added that government has recovered over N800bn in looted funds. Kunle Sanni, [Premium Times \(28<sup>th</sup> July\)](#) reports. Responding to this, the People's Democratic Party (PDP) has criticized the All Progressives Congress (APC) led government alleging that it is twisting facts in the NDDC probe. Soni Daniel et al, [Vanguard News \(29<sup>th</sup> July\)](#) and Ndubuisi Orji, [Daily Sun \(30<sup>th</sup> July\)](#) explain.

In recent news, the President of the African Development Bank (AfDB), Femi Adesina, has been cleared by the internal investigative panel of all 16 allegations of corruption and favoritism among others that were leveled against him. [All African News \(28<sup>th</sup> July\)](#) details. Following the development, President Muhammadu Buhari has congratulated Adesina on his clearance. Olalekan Adetayo of [Punch News \(28<sup>th</sup> July\)](#) writes.

### Ex-House-Speaker Dogara Returns to APC; PDP Accuses APC of Edo Political Violence

Former Speaker of the House of Representatives, Yakubu Dogara, has surprisingly defected from the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) to the All Progressives Congress (APC). Nasir Ayitogo, [Premium Times \(24<sup>th</sup> July\)](#) reports. In a letter to the chairman of the PDP in Bauchi State, Dogara accused the Bauchi State Governor, Bala Mohammed, of allegedly abandoning his campaign promises made to the people, embarking on tribal favouritism, and of misappropriation of funds among others. Charly Agwam, [Vanguard News \(26<sup>th</sup> July\)](#) reports. Responding to this, Mohammed has debunked the allegations leveled against him. Segun Awofadeji writes in [This Day News \(28<sup>th</sup> July\)](#).

Moreover, the PDP has alleged that Dogara's defection stems from his 2023 vice-presidency ambition as a running mate to the former governor of Lagos State and APC stalwart, Bola Ahmed Tinubu. Friday Okeregbe, [Channels News \(27<sup>th</sup> July\)](#) writes. Similarly, an article by Tofe Ayeni of [The African Report \(27<sup>th</sup> July\)](#) looks at the possibility of Tinubu running for the 2023 presidency. Responding to this, the chairman of the APC National Caretaker Committee, Mai Mala Buni, has debunked the rumour of the Tinubu/Dogara 2023 ambition. Godwin Isenyo, [Punch News \(31<sup>st</sup> July\)](#) details. There are, however, indications that the APC may adopt a new zoning strategy for its 2023 presidential race by selecting again a candidate from the Northeast, Leo Sobechi of [The Guardian News \(29<sup>th</sup> July\)](#) and [This Day \(30<sup>th</sup> July\)](#) detail.

Meanwhile, the PDP has accused the APC of complicity in the violence which erupted around the Palace of the Oba of Benin in Benin City, Edo State, last Saturday. PDP's national Vice-Chairman, South-South, Dan Orbih, speaking at a press briefing in Benin City described the incident as an attempt by the opposition to eliminate leaders of his party, including PDP governors who were expected to be with Governor Godwin Obaseki. Peter David, [Punch News \(27<sup>th</sup> July\)](#) writes. On another note, the Publicity Secretary of the Edo State chapter of the PDP, Chris Nehikhare, has urged the immediate past national chairman of the APC, Adams Oshiomhole, to account for N42bn security votes received during his tenure as Edo State governor. Oshiomhole has however denied receiving the said amount. Usman A. Bello, [Daily Trust \(28<sup>th</sup> July\)](#) writes.

### Outrage over Proposed 6% Stamp Duty Charge by FIRS and NIPOST Tariff Hike

The directives by the Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS) issued to property owners to charge 6% stamp duty on tenancy and lease agreements, has caused uproar in the media as citizens have criticised the action of the FIRS and called on the federal government to suspend the policy. Sunday Micheal et al write in [Daily Trust \(28<sup>th</sup> July\)](#).

On the same note, the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) has condemned the policy while calling for a reversal by the federal government saying that it would worsen the situation faced by workers who are mainly tenants. Soji-Eze Fagbemi, [Nigerian Tribune \(28<sup>th</sup> July\)](#) reports. The FIRS has clarified that the duty charge which is 6% of the total cost of all tenancy and lease is to be borne by the tenant, and paid directly to the bank and not the property owner. Gbenga Akinfewa reports in [Guardian News \(30<sup>th</sup> July\)](#). Also, the FIRS added that the stamp duty "payable on rent or lease agreement for a period below seven years is 0.78 percent". Bassey Udo, [Premium Times \(26<sup>th</sup> July\)](#) details.

Meanwhile, the Minister of Communications and Digital Economy, Isa Pantami, has ordered the Nigerian Postal Services (NIPOST) to suspend the new tariff on registration of courier services in the country following the outcry from citizens. [Vanguard News \(25<sup>th</sup> July\)](#) details. This is coming as 7,700 citizens signed a petition against the policy. Eniola Akinkuotu, [Punch News \(25<sup>th</sup> July\)](#) explains. Reacting to this, the Association of Nigeria Courier Operators (ANCO) has urged operators and citizens to remain patient as it dialogues with the government over the situation. [Vanguard News \(27<sup>th</sup> July\)](#) details.

### Insecurity: Gun-Men Flout Curfew Order in Southern Kaduna, Attack Communities

As the security situation in the southern part of Kaduna State continues to worsen, the Inspector General of Police, Mohammed Adamu, has ordered the strict enforcement of the curfew imposed by the Kaduna State government. This is due to the recent killings and violence in the region. Barely 24 hours into the curfew, gunmen launched a coordinated attack in 3 communities in southern Kaduna. Adelani Adepegba, et al write in [Punch News \(26<sup>th</sup> July\)](#). The President of the Southern Kaduna Peoples Union (SOKAPU),

Jonathan Asake, has faulted the efforts of the Kaduna State Governor, Nasir El-Rufai, towards the reoccurring violent activities in the state. [Sahara Reporters, \(28<sup>th</sup> July\)](#) explains. On the same note, members of the House of Representatives, have bemoaned El-Rufai for allegedly disregarding the warnings by the SOKAPU hinting that residents in the area may engage militias to defend themselves. Leke Baiyewu, [Punch News \(30<sup>th</sup> July\)](#) details.

### **As UN Report Indicates Immense Human Rights Abuse among Refugees and Migrants in Africa, Nigeria and Canada Set to Combat Smuggling of Migrants**

A new report by the [United Nations High Commission for Refugees, \(29<sup>th</sup> July\)](#) reveals that in Africa thousands are experiencing extreme human

rights abuse and other forms of exploitation during flight and migration. The report extensively speaks of the inhumane conditions being faced by migrants, perpetrated by smugglers, traffickers, militias, and in many cases state officials.

Meanwhile, the federal government is strengthening its commitment towards border management and protection to reduce the rate of illegal migration. With support from Canada and organizations including the International Organization for Migration (IOM), ARK, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Nigeria has launched 3 new projects to improve the overall performance and capabilities of the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) and the Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS). CNW Group, [Yahoo News \(29<sup>th</sup> July\)](#) explains.

### **Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e. V.**

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

Nigeria Office

[www.kas.de/nigeria](http://www.kas.de/nigeria)

[www.facebook.com/kas.nigeria](https://www.facebook.com/kas.nigeria)

[vladimir.kreck@kas.de](mailto:vladimir.kreck@kas.de) / [vera.ali@kas.de](mailto:vera.ali@kas.de)



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