

## Nigeria Press Review

7.8. – 14.8.2020

---

### 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.

#### Content

Covid-19: World Bank Approves \$114.28m Aid Grant to Nigeria

China Debt Controversy Continues

DG of APC Governors Forum Alleges Plot to Return Oshiomhole as Party Chairman

Outrage as NBC slams N5m Fine on Radio Station for Ex-CBN Deputy Governors Speech, DSS Investigates Claims

Kano Singer Sentenced to Death by Sharia Court for Blasphemy

Insecurity: President Buhari, Governors, Security Chiefs Meet on the Rising Insecurity in the Country, CISLAC Pushes for Accountability of Security Votes

Benue State Governor Advocates Licensing of AK-47 to Private Individuals for Self Defence, Ondo State Governor Inaugurates State Community Policing Network

### **Covid-19: World Bank Approves \$114.28m Aid Grant to Nigeria**

The World Bank has approved a \$114.28m financial aid grant to Nigeria. Victor Uzoho of [Guardian News \(11<sup>th</sup> August\)](#) writes that the aid is to help the country “prevent, detect, and respond to the threat posed by the Covid-19 with specific focus on state-level responses”. Through the Covid-19 Preparedness and Response Project (CoPREP), the federal government would issue grants to the 36 states, and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), to control the spread of the Coronavirus in the country. The aid would enhance the ability of states to adopt the Covid-19 response strategies in line with the federal government’s directive. Reacting to this, the Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP) in a letter to the President of the World Bank, David Malpass, has asked for transparency and accountability from the government in the disbursement of the funds. [Vanguard News \(9<sup>th</sup> August\)](#) details.

### **China Debt Controversy Continues**

Amid the controversy over Nigeria-China debt profile, a report has revealed that Nigeria secured \$5.57bn loan agreements with China in 8 years. According to Gboyega Akinsanmi of [This Day News \(9<sup>th</sup> August\)](#), a document from the Debt Management Office (DMO) showed the value of the loan agreements obtained from the Export-Import Bank of China between December 10, 2010, and May 29, 2018. Reacting to the loan burden, Transparency International has berated the federal government for reckless borrowing and wastage of public funds and resources by the ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs).

Concerns are also mounting over the non-consideration of the country’s and its citizens’ interest in the signing of loan agreements with China. This Day journalist Yemi Adebowale for instance points to the structure of the agreements that give China the right to decide the amount of the loan, what projects they will be used for, and that such projects can only be executed by Chinese firms. A situation which he says takes away Nigeria’s ability to make choices, [All Africa News \(8<sup>th</sup> August\)](#).

Reacting further to the loan burden, an article by Mathias Okwe of the [Guardian News \(12<sup>th</sup> August\)](#), titled “debt burden suffocating Nigeria’s economic growth” points to the choking effect of

the total debt which has been further worsened by the currency devaluation by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN). Okwe further says that “it would take the country at least a minimum of three years of its current yearly budget size of N10tn to offset the debt burden, and without payment of salaries and undertaking projects of any sort”.

### **DG of APC Governors Forum Alleges Plot to Return Oshiomhole as Party Chairman**

The Director-General, Progressive Governors Forum (PGF), Salihu Lukman, has said there is a plot to ensure the return of Adams Oshiomhole as the national chairman of the All Progressives Congress (APC). Lukman made this disclosure in a letter to the APC Caretaker Committee, noting that the plot is aimed at destabilizing the Governor Mai Mala Buni-led Caretaker/Convention Working Committee from achieving the goal ahead of the party’s national convention billed to hold before the end of the year. According to Lukman “everything is being done to ensure that the internal politics of the party is manipulated to create a situation whereby Oshiomhole is forcefully made a contender for the position of the national chairman at the extraordinary APC national convention”. Adamu Abuh, [Guardian News \(13<sup>th</sup> August\)](#) explains.

In an earlier statement within the week, Lukman had asked the APC Caretaker/Convention Working Committee to set up a constitution review committee and present proposals for amendment to the party’s extraordinary national convention ahead of the 2023 general elections. Lukman’s statement titled, “The Future of Progressive Politics in Nigeria”, warned those who have ambition for the Presidency to avoid hijacking the structure of the ruling political grouping before the poll. Adamu Abuh, [Guardian News \(10 August\)](#) details.

### **Outrage as NBC slams N5m Fine on Radio Station for Ex-CBN Deputy Governors Speech, DSS Investigates Claims**

As controversies raged over the increase of fine for hate speech from N500,000 to N5m by the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC), the Commission has slammed a fine of N5m on a Lagos based radio station, Nigeria Info 99.3FM, for airing what the NBC considers hate speech made by the Ex-Deputy Governor of the Central Bank of

Nigeria (CBN), Obadiah Mailafia. According to the NBC, “The station provided its platform for the guest, Dr. Mailafia, to promote unverifiable and inciting views that could encourage or incite to crime and lead to public disorder”, an action it said breached the 6<sup>th</sup> amendment of the Nigeria Broadcasting Code. Denni Ezeri, [Guardian News \(13<sup>th</sup> August\)](#) and Alfred Olufemi, [Premium Times \(14<sup>th</sup> August\)](#) report.

Announcing the review of the fine last week, the Minister of Information, Lai Mohammed, said that “the new fine was imposed to deter desperate people from airing broadcast content containing hate speech”. Reacting to this, NGOs and international organizations like Amnesty International queried what is qualified as hate speech, and warn that the new sanction would infringe on free speech. Yusuf Akinpelu, [Premium Times \(12<sup>th</sup> August\)](#) details. The fine imposed on Nigeria Info 99.3FM has raised new concerns that government may use the Nigeria Broadcasting Code to limit the space of free speech, Alfred Olufemi in [Premium Times \(14<sup>th</sup> August\)](#) reports.

The Ex-Deputy Governor of the CBN had alleged in an interview aired on Nigeria Info 99.3FM that “one of the Northern governors is the commander of Boko Haram group in Nigeria.” Eniola Akinkuotu, [Punch News \(11<sup>th</sup> August\)](#) details. After the interview, Mailafia was invited by the Department of State Services (DSS) over the comment, where he had to respond to questions. Wale Odunsi, [Daily Post \(12<sup>th</sup> August\)](#) explains. Also the Northern Governors Forum (NGF) has demanded investigations be carried out into Mailafia’s allegation. Kunle Sanni, [Premium Times \(13<sup>th</sup> August\)](#) writes. Later this week, the DSS dismissed the Mailafia’s claim as fake news, [Vanguard News \(14<sup>th</sup> August\)](#) reports.

### **Kano Singer Sentenced to Death by Sharia Court for Blasphemy**

An upper Sharia court in Kano state has sentenced a singer, Yahaya Sharif-Aminu, to death by hanging for blasphemy against Prophet Mohammed. The court had affirmed that Sharif-Aminu had released a song circulated via WhatsApp in March which is considered blasphemous. The ruling has attracted media attention worldwide. [BBC News \(10<sup>th</sup> August\)](#), [Deutsche Welle \(11<sup>th</sup> August\)](#) among others report.

Meanwhile, human rights groups and activists have condemned the verdict, describing the penalty as “anti-poor and wondered how many corrupt politicians had been convicted by Sharia Courts in the country”. [Punch News \(12<sup>th</sup> August\)](#) and [Guardian News \(13<sup>th</sup> August\)](#) write.

### **Insecurity: President Buhari, Governors, Security Chiefs Meet on the Rising Insecurity in the Country, CISLAC Pushes for Accountability of Security Votes**

Following the deteriorating security situation in the country especially in the North-East zone, the North-East Governors Forum has asked President Buhari and the service chiefs in a security council meeting to address the fundamental cause of the security situation in the zone. Johnbsco Agbakwuru, [Vanguard News \(10<sup>th</sup> August\)](#) details. Demanding the provision of state of the art equipment for the Nigeria Police, the North-East Governors stated that it would “bridge the manpower gap in the military as a way of routing insurgents who are waging acute war against the region”. Omololu Ogunmade, [This Day News \(11<sup>th</sup> August\)](#) reports.

In a second meeting this week the Nigeria Governors Forum (NGF) has demanded financial support from President Buhari to further assist in resolving the rising insecurity in their states. Kunle Sanni of [Premium Times \(11<sup>th</sup> August\)](#) writes. At the meeting, President Buhari announced the arrival of military weapons and aircraft from Jordan, China, and the United States which would help in the war against insurgency. He asked for patience, since personnel must be first trained to use the equipment properly, [Premium Times \(11<sup>th</sup> August\)](#) and Omololu Ogunmade et al, [This Day News \(12<sup>th</sup> August\)](#) detail.

Meanwhile, the Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre (CISLAC) has called for accountability in security votes. Lamenting on the poor use of security votes by state governors, the Executive Director of CISLAC, Auwal Rafsanjani, stated that the yearly security votes often unaudited and unaccounted for exceed the budgets of the Police, Army, Airforce, and Navy combined. He also described the security votes as “official corruption, which must be reviewed” and demanded that the amount should be “channeled directly to funding security agencies”, Saxone Akhaine, [Guardian News \(12<sup>th</sup> August\)](#) and Abdul Aodu, [Blueprint Newspaper \(11<sup>th</sup> August\)](#) explain.

### **Benue State Governor Advocates Licensing of AK-47 to Private Individuals for Self Defence, Ondo State Governor Inaugurates State Community Policing Network**

The governor of Benue State, Samuel Ortom has urged the federal government to grant licenses to responsible citizens to carry sophisticated weapons such as AK47 to deter criminals from attacking innocent and helpless Nigerians. Ortom who said this yesterday in an interview with newsmen in Makurdi, said most criminals carry more sophisticated weapons than those possessed by security men. John Shiaondo [Blueprint Newspaper \(12<sup>th</sup> August\)](#) explains

Meanwhile, the governor of Ondo State, Rotimi Akeredolu, has inaugurated officers of the Ondo State Security Network Agency, code-named Operation Amotekun. Akeredolu stated that the

Amotekun was designed to provide additional support to the existing security framework in the state. He added that the current security challenges in the country have overwhelmed the security agencies, hence the need for the state's intervention. [The Cable News \(11<sup>th</sup> August\)](#) details. On the same note, Ademola Orunbon of [Punch News \(12<sup>th</sup> August\)](#), in an article titled "why community policing is imperative" has called for the defined modalities for establishing community policing with 3 levels of policing at federal, state and local levels. Ademola also called for the setup of effective structures to oversee their activities and monitor misconduct, especially preventing abuse by governors of states who may want to misuse or abuse their control over the police command, rather than for common good of the citizens.

### **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)



The text of this publication is published under a Creative Commons license: "Creative Commons Attribution- Share Alike 4.0 international" (CC BY-SA 4.0), <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/legalcode>