

NIGERIA THIS WEEK

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Centre for Democracy & Development
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POLITICS

ELECTIONS: EDO AND ONDO



Ahead of the governorship election in Ondo state, eleven (11) governorship aspirants of the All Progressive Congress (APC) have rejected the indirect mode of a primary election. They petitioned the party's Caretaker/Extra-Ordinary National Convention Planning Committee (CEONCPC), rejecting the planned indirect mode of primary election slated on July 20.

The aspirants said, having traversed the length and breadth of Ondo State and interfaced with party members as aspirants, they can confidently inform that overwhelming majority of our party members prefer direct primary for the nomination of the party's candidate for the 2020 governorship election.

The letter which contained other reasons why the candidates felt the indirect primary was not an option was submitted by Chief Olusola Oke, one of the aspirants, on behalf of others at the national chairman's office. Only the incumbent Governor Oluwarotimi Akeredolu who is seeking a second term, did not append his signature. It was gathered that the aspirants were reacting to the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) indicating that the indirect mode of the primary election had been approved for the primary.

APC STAKEHOLDERS PLAN FUNDING FOR EDO AND ONDO POLLS

The All Progressives Congress (APC) held a meeting on Tuesday 14th July 2020 under the guidance of the Progressives Governors Forum to discuss how the party will raise funds for the governorship elections in Edo and Ondo states amidst the economic and financial challenges facing the country. It was gathered that the governors and other leaders of the APC also came up with other strategies to ensure the party's victory at the two governorship polls.



While acknowledging the constitutional right of political parties to generate funds for political campaigns in Nigeria, it is imperative that the electoral umpire, INEC, provide oversight to ensure their (parties) compliance to the law. Section 221 of the constitution provides that “No association, other than a political party, shall canvass for votes for any candidate at any election or contribute to the funds of any political party or to the election expenses of any candidate at an election. However, political parties and their candidates, in many elections, have flagrantly violated Section 91 of the 2010 Electoral Act (as amended) which stipulates election expenses thresholds.



SUPREME COURT AFFIRMS DOUYE DIRI PRIMARIES

The Supreme Court has dismissed an appeal filed by Timi Alaibe, the PDP governorship aspirant. Mr Alaibe was challenging the emergence of Douye Diri as the winner of the party’s governorship primary election in Bayelsa. On 14th July 2020, the Supreme Court five-man panel led by Justice Rhodes-Vivour questioned the competence of the appeal, insisting that it was a pre-primary election issue, which is an internal affair of the PDP.

The apex court justices drew the attention of lawyer to the petitioner, to the effect that the grouse of the appellant centred on the process that produced delegates for the primary election and not the primary election itself. Quoting part of the processes filed by Alaibe, the panel held that he never claimed to have won the primary election and as such his matter was a pre-primary election issue that the court cannot delve into. Alaibe had presented a suit against the PDP, Douye Diri and INEC at the Federal High Court and Court of Appeal which was dismissed for lacking merit.

ANAMBRA ZONING CRISIS

The crisis in Anambra state politics revolves around the 2013 bargain made by former Governor Peter Obi that Anambra North Senatorial District should produce his successor. The bargain was successful and led to the emergence of the current governor, Willie Obiano. Ahead of the 2021 election, politicians from Anambra South have been insisting their zone produce the next governor of the State. Nevertheless, Anambra South is not united as a controversy spurred after politicians from Nnewi and old Aguata Union accused a former Special Assistant to former President Goodluck Jonathan, Akachukwu Nwamkpo, of a secret plot to have the governorship micro zoned to Ihiala area where he hails from.



Furthermore, the dynamics in the State shows that Governor Obiano wants to produce a successor and the opposition People’s Democratic Party (PDP) strength and spread could jeopardise his succession plan. The people of Anambra should be given a chance to elect leaders of their choice. They should not be constrained in terms of the zoning. Sources gathered that All Progressive Grand Alliance (APGA)

and Governor Obiano are covertly working through the state council of traditional rulers to decree the zoning arrangement and tie the hands of political parties into it.

CONFLICT

TROOPS ELIMINATE 46 BANDITS IN KATSINA – DHQ



On Monday, July 6th, a Special Army Troop eliminated 46 bandits in an encounter at Yar Gamji town in the Batsari LGA of Katsina State. Major General John Enenche in a statement said the incident occurred after a distress call from the community. The troops responding to the distress call, engaged the criminals, killing 46, while others escaped with gunshot wounds. The troops have since dominated the area with aggressive patrols.

The vicious cycle of conflict between nomads and farmers has now become a rather ugly trend in northern Nigeria. Bandits attacks and kidnappings in Katsina State has left a trail of deaths and displacement. Since January 2020, at least 42 attacks have been carried out by bandits in various local government areas of Katsina state, resulting in 544 deaths. Both state and federal governments have made efforts to contain banditry in the state. Special military operations were launched in the zones to combat banditry and other forms of crime. However, they failed to yield the desired results as killings persisted.

NIGERIAN ARMY FACES MORAL CRISIS AS 356 SOLDIERS EXIT OVER “LOSS OF INTEREST”

Not less than three hundred fifty-six (356) soldiers have reportedly exited the Nigerian Army because of a loss of interest due to poor leadership within the Army, while 24 others are exiting to take traditional titles. The Chief of Army Staff, Tukur Buratai, has approved the voluntary discharge of all the 380 soldiers who are to proceed on terminal leave on December 20th and disengage on January 3rd next year

following the Nigerian Army Administrative Policy and Procedure 27 Paragraphs 3 and 4.

Many of the soldiers are among the troops engaged in the decade-long war against Boko Haram in the Northeast, while others are from various other formations across the country. The Army, alongside the airforce, is combatting the spiralling armed violence from rural banditry and farmer-herdsmen conflict in the Northwest and Northcentral. In these areas, the intensifying insecurity appears to have gone beyond the law enforcement capacities of the police.

The atrocities of Boko Haram and rural bandit have severe implications on the economic, social and psychological lives of the people of the Northeast and Northcentral where their activities are concentrated. Since 2009 when Boko Haram began its insurgency, the activities of the sect have continued relentlessly despite the effort of the government to curtail the heinous crimes. Boko Haram has killed over 10,000 people, using kidnapping and raping of women as weapons of war. The implications of the insurgency fall on the ordinary Nigerians as commercial activities in the Northeast have reduced. Banks, markets, and shops are not regularly open due to the fear of the attack from Boko Haram.

BANDITRY LEFT US WITH 500 WIDOWS, 1,600 ORPHANS –KATSINA TRADITIONAL LEADER

The incessant armed violence in different communities in Northern Nigeria has had a negative implication on human capital development. In Batsari District of Katsina State, for example, its district head, Alhaji Muhammad Mu'azu, noted in a statement released on July 12th that armed conflicts have resulted in the death of 300 men and women. Armed violence has widowed no fewer than 500 women and over 1,600 children orphaned.

Bandits attacks and kidnappings have been on the rise in Katsina State in recent times, leaving many deaths and displacement behind in its trail. In the last year, at least ten (10) attacks have been carried out in the district, resulting in 105 deaths.

In 2019, bandits killed 2,067 people in 7 states in the North West and North Central. Both state and federal governments made efforts to contain banditry in the affected states. Special military operations were launched in the zones to combat banditry and other forms of crime. However, they failed to yield the desired results as killings persisted. Zamfara and Katsina State governments engaged bandits in dialogue. While a significant result was recorded in Zamfara State following the dialogue, it failed to have a significant impact in Katsina State. For the insurgency to come to an end, the government needs to be proactive rather than reactive.

NEMA BEGINS DISTRIBUTION OF RELIEF MATERIALS TO 5,000 VICTIMS OF ADAMAWA COMMUNAL CONFLICT

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that in May 2020, a communal conflict erupted in Tingno, Tito and Wadugu villages in Lamurde local government area leading to the loss of many lives and the destruction of over 270 houses and other properties. Following directives from President Muhammadu Buhari, The National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) on July 11th, begun distributing relief materials to the 5,000 survivors of the conflict.



In a statement, the representative of the agency's operations officer, Mr Muhammed while urging the beneficial communities to use the relief materials to improve their livelihoods noted that no meaningful development could take place when communities cannot live in peace with another. Richard Anjelo, the village head of Tingno, thanking the President for the intervention attributed the causes for the recent conflict to a lack of parental upbringing and drug addiction. Mr Anjelo expressed the communities desperate need for a security outpost, citing that the population of the community was over 60,000 with only four police officers in charge of the seven villages.

ECONOMY

ABCON HAS URGED THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO SUSPEND TAX HIKE

The Association of Bureaux De Change Operators of Nigeria called on the Federal Government to suspend all increases in taxation and tariffs until the economy recovers from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The association made the call in its quarterly economic review report for the second quarter of the year on July 13, 2020. Over the years, Nigeria tax system has faced many challenges such as bad administration and complex nature of tax laws. These challenges have constantly contributed to poverty within the country.



President Muhammadu Buhari signed the 2019 finance bill into law in January 2020 aimed at reforming Nigeria's tax laws to align with global best practices and increasing Government revenue. One of its major highlights that triggered criticism was a 50% increase in the Value Added Tax (VAT) rate applicable on supply of goods and services in Nigeria, from 5% to 7.5%. Implementation for the increase commenced on February 1, 2020. This led to a major increase in prices of items and has largely affected the purchasing power of Nigerians.

PRESIDENT BUHARI HAS SIGNED A REVISED 2020 BUDGET INTO LAW

President Muhammadu Buhari has signed into law the revised N10.8 trillion 2020 budget because of the effect of COVID-19 on the nation's economy. From a fiscal point of view, the 2020 budget of the Federal Government was based on the \$57 per barrel benchmark, which was later revised to \$25 per barrel, leading to major losses for the nation. The Federal Executive Council (FEC) had on May 13, approved a revised budget of 10.5 trillion. However, the two chambers of the National Assembly increased the budget



to N10.8 trillion on June 11, 2020.

The President also directed the release of at least 50% of the approved 2020-revised capital expenditure to Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs). The revised sum is a difference of N71.5 billion compared to the previously approved budget. Falling crude prices, in addition to weak export demand, would significantly add pressure on government's finances. This means that the revenue projections in the revised 2020 budget may be unmet, thereby constraining government's ability to meet its obligations.

DELAY IN PIB PASSAGE CREATES UNCERTAINTY IN NIGERIA'S OIL AND GAS SECTOR

The long delay in the passage of the Petroleum Industry Bill (PIB) into law has created lingering uncertainty in the oil and gas sector. This was disclosed by The Women in Energy Network (WEIN) on June 13, 2020. The Minister of State for Petroleum Resource, Chief Timipre Sylva, mentioned that the PIB, currently with the Executive, has not yet been sent to the National Assembly for approval and the delay has cost the country huge sums in revenue due to lost investments.

The existing oil and gas sector regulatory framework is ineffective because of too many overlaps in responsibilities and accountability leading to racketeering and oil theft schemes. The PIB seeks to make the oil and gas sector more transparent and commercially viable as well as combine the functions of revenue generation and environmental protection. It remains the oldest bill in the National Assembly since 1999. The best and latest effort made so far in the passage of the bill has been that of the 8th National Assembly. The assembly broke it down into four different components, one of which was passed by the Nigerian Senate in May 2017, and the House of Representatives in January 2018, but was subsequently rejected by the President. The expedient passage and purposeful implementation of the PIB is critical to addressing loopholes in the management and governance of the sector.

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT HAS BEGUN ITS SPW INITIATIVE

The Special Public Works (SPW) programme is part of the federal government's intervention programmes and fiscal stimulus measures to help cushion the negative impact of COVID-19 in the country. It is a 3-month paid initiative aimed at engaging young unemployed Nigerians. It will result in the employment of 774,000 Nigerians (1,000 people per LGA), and each beneficiary will be paid N20,000 monthly to carry out public works. The Federal Government has formally started the programme and approved for its extension to all 36 States & FCT, from October to December 2020.



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The Special Public Works Programme of the Federal Government has kicked off nationwide. The State Selection Committees have been inaugurated and have commenced work. Find the names and contact details of members of your State's Committee here: specialpublicworks.gov.ng/site/#NigeriaSPW

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The programme was approved despite opposition from the National Assembly on July 14, 2020. While the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) will implement the programme, the Federal Ministry of Labour and Employment will coordinate it. The initiative is an important strategy for poverty alleviation through the promotion of productive employment. It would minimize income and consumption shortfalls among certain



segments of the population in this time of crisis; however, the limited time frame is a major issue. The aftermath may be a relapse of poverty as it is a short-term initiative. Subsequently, the government should seek more sustainable initiatives with long-term impact.

CORRUPTION

NDDC CRISIS AND ITS FIRECE BRICKBATS

The Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) wallows in allegations of corruption over the past few years, and this has led to a probe by the House of Representatives Committee on NCDC. The House of Representatives is probing the NCDC on N40 Billion irregular expenditure as well as N82.5 Billion allegedly spent between January and May 2020.

Also, the House committee interrogated the acting Managing Director of the NDDC, Prof. Kemebradiumo Pondei but this led to a deadlock between both parties as the acting MD walked out on the panel, having accused the Chairman of the committee, Rep. Olubunmi Tunji-Ojo of corrupt practices. This led to a warrant being issued for his arrest.

With the immense level of corruption eating into the crust of the NDDC, there is a need for transparency in and adequate scrutiny of the businesses of the Commission. The National Assembly committee on NCDC should take actions to resolve an allegation of corruption by guaranteeing fair hearing and forensic audit of the financial transactions.

EX-NBET MD INDICTED BY THE AUDITOR GENERAL

The former Managing Director of the Nigerian Bulk Electricity Trading (NBET), Marilyn Amobi, has been indicted by the Office of Auditor General of the Federation for contract fraud, financial mismanagement, etc. The indictment is contained in the Auditor General's special report of June 2020 on audit monitoring and evaluation of NBET's capital projects and programmes between June 2007 and June 2018. This report was submitted to the National Assembly. In the June Special report, the Auditor General noted that NBET awarded three contracts for the same work/project in different amounts, in different award letters and within short intervals to Julius Berger Nigeria Plc. The first contract was awarded on November 24, 2017, valued at N180.9m. The second was awarded on December 21, 2017, valued at N195.745m while the third valued at N136.386m. These amount to N517M for the three contracts.

The report's findings are one that shows there has been gross misconduct in the NBET. The indictment is one amongst too many revelations of the OAuG's audit reports in recent time, accusing the leadership of the Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) of mismanaging, misappropriating, and siphoning of public funds. While the uptake of the key findings of audit reports by the NASS is laudable, efforts should be directed to empowering the OAuG to adequately performs its auditing responsibilities. The former NBET boss should be thoroughly investigated, allow fair hearing, and, if guilty, should face the wrath of the law.



HOUSE OF REPS PROBE NIGERIAN EMBASSY IN ISRAEL

The House of Representatives Committee on Public Accounts probed the Nigerian Embassy in Israel on the withdrawal of \$1,046,258.99 to pay utility bills in 2014. The Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee, Hon. Wole Oke made known this during the review of the audit queries issued by the Office of the Auditor General of the Federation against the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Auditor-General, Anthony Ayine, further interrogated the alleged illegal withdrawal of \$858,704 & \$187,554 internally generated revenue by the Nigerian embassy in Israel as regards to visa and administrative charges from 2013-2015. The Permanent Secretary, who refuted the allegation, claimed that these monies were paid directly into the Federal Government Independent Revenue Account and maintained with a bank in Israel.

IHEDIOHA ACCUSED OF N70 BILLION FRAUD BY WHISTLE BLOWER



The Imo State House of Assembly has received a petition from a whistleblower revealing how over N70 billion was misappropriated under the former governor, Emeka Ihedioha's administration. The Speaker of the house, Chiji Collins, said that he has received the petition and that, once the house resumes, there is going to be a look into it. The whistleblower broke down his claims which include 2019 fiscal receipts brought forward from governor Rochas Okorocha's tenure amounted to N48.5 billion. Federal Account Allocation Committee in addition to special allocations which, he said, is N54.319 billion, excluding N13.04 billion Value Added Tax and N14.385 billion (IGR).

The whistleblower policy is one that should be encouraged but has faced several blocks in the past. Although, as at present there is no legislation in the National Assembly backing the Whistle Blowing policy in Nigeria. If a person wants to whistle-blow, protection for the identification of whistleblowers can be found in the EFCC Act and ICPC Act. However, if the identity is for any reason compromised, there is no system in place which offer protection. For the whistleblowers to be fully encouraged to expose wrongdoings, a protective mechanism must be put in place in the form of witness protection.

CASES OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

GROUP ASKS FOR LAWYER ARRESTED BY DSS FOR CRITICIZING ABIA GOVERNOR TO BE RELEASED.

Human rights groups have demanded the release of a lawyer, Emperor Ogbonna who was allegedly re-arrested in court premises in Abia State by the Department of State Services. The groups urged the DSS to release the lawyer. According to the group, the unlawful detention of Emperor Ogbonna, who was re-arrested by the DSS on the 28th of April, 2020, is an abuse of his fundamental human right and contravene the principle of the rule of law.

HUMANIST GROUP LEADER HELD INCOMMUNICADO

The Nigerian police arrested and detained Mubarak Bala, president of the Nigerian Humanist Association, in April 2020 on the ground that he insulted the Prophet Muhammad. He was arrested in Kaduna and transferred to Kano state. Till date, his location details are unknown and access to his family and lawyers have been denied. UNHRC has stated that the act in principle violates freedom of expression.

WIKE AND FG DRAGGED TO ECOWAS COURT OVER RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN RIVERS

Governor, Nyesom Wike, and the Federal government have been taken to the ECOWAS Court of Justice in Abuja over alleged human rights abuses. The petitioners accused Wike of using executive orders 1 and 6, 2020 as instruments to violate and abuse the people of Rivers state, including carrying out mass detention, mistreatment, forced evictions, and imposing control on daily life.



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The Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD) was established in the United Kingdom in 1997 as an independent, not-for-profit, research training, advocacy and capacity building organisation

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