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News

Sen. Araraume Rejects President Tinubu's new NNPC Board appointment, Insists He Remains Chairman

Senator Ifeanyi Araraume, who was reinstated by the Federal High Court as the Chairman of the Nigerian National Petroleum Company (NNPC) Limited, in April, has faulted President Bola Tinubu's purported fresh appointment of board and management of the NNPC. Senator Araraume, who described the said fresh appointment made by Tinubu on November 27, as "illegal, wrongful, null and void and of no legal consequence," demanded immediate reversal of the appointment as he insisted that he still remained the valid chairman of the company.

Araraume's reaction was contained in a public notice dated November 30, 2023, titled "Public Notice: Caveat Emptor - Purported Appointment of New Chairman of NNPC Limited" and signed by his lawyer, Ogwu J. Onoja (SAN). The notice read, "Our attention has been drawn to the news of the appointment of new members of NNPC Limited

Board including a new Non-Executive Chairman by the President on the 27th November, 2023, in utter violation of the judgment and order of the Federal High Court, Abuja dated 18th April, 2023 in Suit No: FHC/ABJ/CS/1621/2022 - Between Senator Ifeanyi Godwin Araraume v. The President, Federal Republic of Nigeria, NNPC Ltd and Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) wherein the court restrained the President from removing the name of Senator Ifeanyi Godwin Araraume from the Corporate Affairs Commission as a Non-Executive Director of NNPC Ltd and that he be allowed to continue to function as the Chairman of the Board of NNPC Ltd. "This judgment remains valid and subsisting until this moment without being set aside. "We state that the purported appointment amounts to a flagrant disobedience of court order and brazen disregard of the

judgment of a court of competent jurisdiction. We are appalled and shocked that the President could brazenly disobey the court judgment by purporting to appoint a New Board and Management Team for NNPC Ltd instead of giving implementation to the said judgment of the Federal High Court delivered by Justice Inyang Ekwo on the 18th of April, 2023. "It is shocking that rather than obey the valid and extant judgment of the court, the President has taken the laws into his hands to overrule the courts and usurp the jurisdiction of the Court of Appeal before who, the President has filed an appeal which is pending, by taking steps to undermine the judgment by such illegal appointments. "This singular act of Mr. President unfortunately denotes a wanton disregard for rule of law and a direct affront on the Judiciary. "With the said judgment still valid and subsisting, it is clear as crystal even to the common man

that the appointment of the new Board and Management of the NNPC Ltd by the President on the 27th November, 2023, is illegal, wrongful, null and void and of no legal consequence. "By this Notice, the general public is therefore warned to beware of those illegal appointments in their own interest. "The public is urged to avoid having any dealings whatsoever with the new Board and Management of the NNPC Ltd as anyone who goes ahead to do any business or transactions with them will be doing so at his or her own peril. "We hereby call

on Mr President, who is a huge beneficiary of judicial pronouncements and rule of law, to reverse his decision and allow the flow of the rule of law. "Mr President should have known that respect for rule of law is equally a strong factor in the attraction of Foreign Direct Investment (FOI), which he has been traveling all over the world to promote." Recall that a Federal High Court sitting in Abuja had in April reinstated Araraume as non-Executive Chairman of the NNPC, after it voided his sack and set aside his removal on January 17, 2023

by former President Muhammadu Buhari. The Court voided Araraume's removal on the ground that the action of the former President was arbitrary, unlawful and illegal. Justice Inyang Ekwo in his judgment in a suit filed by Araraume awarded N5 billion against Buhari and NNPC to be paid to Araraume as damages for the wrongful sack and disruption of his appointment. The judge also ordered that Araraume be immediately reinstated to office as non-executive Chairman of the NNPC.

Sam Ezeanyika, a professor of political economy at Imo State University. Such seminars and workshops are part of NAEMPON's commitment to advancing professional proficiency among members numbering over 180 from the 16 Radio and 3 Television stations in Imo State. The inauguration of Abia State Chapter of the Association in February this year and the end of year party slated for Sunday 10th December, 2023 will be followed by the inauguration of Anambra and Ebonyi State Chapters in February 2024. Meanwhile, arrangements have been concluded by the Jerry Osuji-led administration to reward some outstanding members of the Association, Fm Stations and Station Managers for their invaluable contributions to the Association in the passing year. The unique event will form the high point of NAEMPON'S End of the Year Party slated to hold in Owerri next Sunday.

NARTPON changes name to NAEMPON

...Rewards outstanding Presenters on 10th

The National Association of Radio and Television Presenters of Nigeria (NARTPON) has upgraded to National Association of Electronic Media Presenters of Nigeria (NAEMPON). The transformation was officially communicated during a meeting between the Imo State Chairman of the parent body, Trade Union Congress (TUC), Comr. Engr. Great Uche Ibe and a delegation of NAEMPON led by its President, Presenter Jerry Osuji; Publicity Secretary and Chairman of Chapter Formation and Inauguration Committee, Comr. Salvator Amadi and Financial Secretary, Princess Vivien Uchechi Unegbu on Tuesday 28th November, 2023. The development followed discussions on the need for distinction between the Association and Radio, Television and Theatre Arts Workers Union of Nigeria (RATTAWU). In a brief speech, NAEMPON President,

Presenter Jerry Osuji, after making clarifications, thanked Ibe for his cooperation so far since the formation of the Association nearly 3 years ago. On his part, Comrade Ibe commended the leadership and members of NAEMPON for making their presence felt in the broadcast industry and urged them to continue to be shining role models. In his vote of thanks, NAEMPON Publicity Secretary, Comr. Salvator Amadi expressed appreciation on behalf of the Association as he lauded Ibe's leadership of TUC in the state. It would be recalled that the Association which celebrated its first anniversary on 7th October, 2022 at Rento Hotel and Suites Owerri with seminar lectures delivered by high profile professionals in the Media and Security sectors, marked its second anniversary on October 20th, 2023 with a seminar lecture titled "Ethical Reportage During Elections" delivered by Prof.

Sam Ezeanyika, a professor of political economy at Imo State University. Such seminars and workshops are part of NAEMPON's commitment to advancing professional proficiency among members numbering over 180 from the 16 Radio and 3 Television stations in Imo State. The inauguration of Abia State Chapter of the Association in February this year and the end of year party slated for Sunday 10th December, 2023 will be followed by the inauguration of Anambra and Ebonyi State Chapters in February 2024. Meanwhile, arrangements have been concluded by the Jerry Osuji-led administration to reward some outstanding members of the Association, Fm Stations and Station Managers for their invaluable contributions to the Association in the passing year. The unique event will form the high point of NAEMPON'S End of the Year Party slated to hold in Owerri next Sunday.

Nigeria, Germany sign agreement to accelerate Siemens Power Project

Nigeria and Germany on Friday signed the Presidential Power Initiative agreement to improve electricity supply in Africa's most populous nation. This was disclosed in a statement by the Special Adviser to the President, Ajuri Ngelale, saying the signing was presided over by President Bola Tinubu and the German Chancellor Olaf Scholz in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, while the Managing Director of the Federal Government of Nigeria Power Company, Kenny Anuwe, signed on Nigeria's behalf, the Managing Director (Africa), Siemens AG, Nadja Haakansson, signed for Germany. "Speaking after the signing ceremony in Dubai, Managing Director of the FGN Power Company, Mr. Kenny Anuwe

highlighted Siemens Energy's effective delivery of crucial equipment worth over 63 million Euros to the country since the project commenced," the statement read. "This includes 10 units of 132/33KV mobile substations; 3 units of 75/100MVA transformers, and 7 units of 60/66MVA transformers, currently being installed by FGN Power Company at various sites across Nigeria. "The project will also focus on identified load demand centres with a particular emphasis on economic and industrial hubs nationwide; execution of new 330kV and 132/33KV substations in target load centres with economic priority, in addition to thousands of kilometres of overhead transmission lines to connect new substations with existing ones." The presidential

spokesman said since assuming office, Tinubu has consistently advocated the accelerated realization and expansion of the PPI, saying the project has been a major focal point in three rounds of bilateral discussions at several meetings between the President and the German Chancellor, in New Delhi, Abuja, and Berlin. According to Ngelale, the agreement will see to the end-to-end modernization and expansion of Nigeria's electric power transmission grid with the full supply, delivery, and installation of Siemens-manufactured equipment a timeline of 18 to 24 months. He emphasised that agreement will ensure project sustainability and maintenance with full technology transfer and training for Nigerian engineers at the Transmission Company of Nigeria (TCN).

National Assembly Passes 2024 Appropriation Bill for Second Reading

Nigeria's Senate and the House of Representatives passed for second reading, the 2024 Appropriation Bill laid before the two chambers of the National Assembly by President Bola Tinubu on Wednesday. The Deputy Senate President, Jibrin Barau, who presided over the plenary, said the lawmakers would reconvene on December 12. He said the Committee on Appropriation, chaired by Senator Solomon Adeola, would begin work immediately by drawing a timetable for other panels to interact with agencies under their supervision. Barau, said the Senate would receive the report of the appropriation panel on December 19.

By the arrangement, the consideration of the appropriation panel report may be considered and passed same day and the Senate likely to be adjourned for the Christmas and New Year break immediately.

In their various contributions during the debate on the general principles of the budget, the lawmakers stressed the need to ensure adequate provision for the security, health, education and infrastructure were duly provided for in the N27.5 trillion budget size. The former President of the Senate in the 9th National Assembly, Senator Ahmad Lawan, and other lawmakers, said attention should be focused on insecurity and power.

Lawan, said the power sector should be properly handled in the budget by providing data support for power. He said, "The last National Assembly passed the Power Sector Reform Bill at its twilight and it was assented to by former President Muhammadu Buhari. "The power sector reform would give us the necessary energy we need through a public-private participation to make power available for our economy to provide growth and

development." Ruling on the submissions of the lawmakers during the debate, Barau said all the aspects spoken on by his colleagues had been adequately taken care of by the 2024 appropriation bill.

Barau emphasised the importance of the power sector, saying without power, other sectors would not perform optimally.

He urged all the chairmen of committees to factor in all issues raised by the senators in their various reports to the committee on Appropriation. Meanwhile before it adjourned plenary, the Senate passed the N61, 553, 778, 259.93 billion FCT 2023 supplementary budget after endorsing the joint report of the Senate committee on FCT and the House of Representatives Committee. Also on Friday, the House of Representatives passed the N27.5 trillion appropriation bill 2024 for second reading. The House at a special sitting presided over by the Speaker,

CBN to Freeze Bank Accounts without BVN, NIN from March 2024

The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) on Friday said it has become mandatory for all Tier-1 bank accounts and wallets for individuals to have either the Bank Verification Number (BVN) or National Identity Number (NIN) or both.

Owing to this, the central bank warned that effective March 1, 2024, all funded accounts or wallets without BVN or NIN shall be placed on "Post No Debit or Credit" and no further transactions permitted. It said BVN or NIN attached to and/or associated with all accounts or wallets must be electronically revalidated by January 31, 2024. The apex bank, stated this in a circular dated December 1, 2023, and addressed to all commercial, merchant, non-interest and payment service banks; as well as Other Financial Institutions (OFIs), and mobile money operators, which was signed jointly by the CBN Director, Payments System Management Department, Chibuzo Efobi and Director, Financial Policy and Regulation Department, Haruna Mustafa. The apex bank noted that henceforth, all existing customer

accounts or wallets for individuals with validated BVN shall be profiled in the NIBSS Industry Customer Account Database (ICAD) immediately and within 24 hours of opening accounts/wallets. The circular highlighted key amendment to Section 1.5.3 of the Regulatory Framework for Bank Verification Number (BVN) Operations and Watch-List for the Nigerian Banking Industry (The Guidelines). The central bank said the development was part of its effort in promoting financial system stability by strengthening the Know Your Customer (KYC) procedures in financial institutions under its purview. Among other requirements, the CBN said it remained mandatory for Tiers 2 and 3 accounts and wallets for Individual accounts to have BVN and NIN. It stated that the process for account opening shall commence by electronically retrieving BVN or NIN related information from the NIBSS' BVN or NIMC's NIN databases and for same to become the primary information for onboarding of new customers. The CBN also ordered for the immediate

implementation of the new policy, stressing that no new Tier-1 accounts and wallets should be opened without BVN or NIN.

Also, for all existing Tier1 accounts/wallets without BVN or NIN, the central bank said effectively, any unfunded account/wallet shall be placed on "Post No Debit or Credit" until the new process is satisfied. The CBN added that to ensure uniform and full compliance with the new processes, the Executive Compliance Officers, Chief Compliance Officers or Heads of the Compliance Functions had been advised to acquaint themselves with Guidance Notes which becomes applicable to all institutions regulated by the CBN. The bank said a comprehensive BVN and NIN audit shall be conducted, adding that where breaches were identified, appropriate sanctions would be applied. The CBN further advised all financial institutions under its regulatory purview to apply strict compliance on restrictions on Tier1 accounts/wallets as they relate to limits on transaction values and cumulative balances.

Hon. Tajudeen Abbas, also assured that the budget would be passed before the year runs out. The bill was referred to the House Committee on Appropriation by the Speaker for further legislative action. The House would on December 4, organise a citizens' budget

townhall on the budget presentation and appropriation process to harness public inputs and opinion. The House has also resolved to suspend plenary for two weeks to make way for budget defence by Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) before relevant House

committee. Also, a joint sitting of relevant Committees of Senate and the House to examine the economic feasibility, allocation and utilisation of funds and sustainability of proposed fiscal policies is scheduled to hold on December 5, 2023.

News

Former US President Trump Calls Incumbent Biden "the destroyer of American democracy."

Former US President Donald Trump on Saturday attempted to turn the tables on his likely rival in the November 2024 presidential election, President Joe Biden, arguing that the incumbent is "the destroyer of American democracy." Trump's allegations about Biden, a Democrat, echo the ones that Biden has been making for years against his predecessor. As Trump has dominated the Republican presidential primary and talked about targeting his rivals and the news media if he wins the White House again, Biden has stepped up his own warnings, contending Trump is "determined to destroy American democracy." On Saturday, Trump made his most explicit argument to date on why voters should instead see his rival as the bigger democratic threat. Trump repeated his longstanding contention that the four criminal indictments against him show Biden is

misusing the federal justice system against his rival. "He's been weaponizing government against his political opponents like a Third World political tyrant," Trump said to a crowd in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. "Biden and his radical left allies like to pose as standing up as allies of democracy," Trump continued, arguing: "Joe Biden is not the defender of American democracy, Joe Biden is the destroyer of American democracy." Ammar Moussa, a Biden campaign spokesman, responded: "Donald Trump's America in 2025 is one where the government is his personal weapon to lock up his political enemies. You don't have to take our word for it — Trump has admitted it himself." Trump has long promised to prosecute Biden in retaliation should he return to the White House. On Saturday, though, the former president extended his arguments about Biden's threat to democracy to lawsuits filed by

two liberal organizations seeking to rule him ineligible for office under a rarely used Civil War-era constitutional provision that prohibits those who "engaged in insurrection" from returning to office. All of the suits to date have failed. Biden has no involvement in them, but Democratic donors who back him also help fund the liberal groups filing the claims. That's led Trump to blame them on the president, whom he contended had "defaced the Constitution" in trying to block him. And the former president, who has a long history of speaking warmly about authoritarian leaders and sometimes echoing their rhetoric, seemed aware of criticisms against him. "Americans don't like fascists," Trump said. He praised Chinese President Xi Jinping and China's criminal justice system for swiftly executing drug dealers, and boasted that North Korean President Kim Jong. UN likes him. But Trump noted he was

often attacked for these relationships and tried to defend them. "It's good to have a good relationship with people who have nuclear weapons," he said. Throughout the speech, Trump repeated his arguments the 2020 presidential election that he lost was "stolen" and that U.S. elections in general are "rigged." There is no evidence that the 2020 election was stolen. Dozens of lawsuits were dismissed by courts and government and independent

reviews have not found enough alleged fraud to throw the outcome into question. Trump supporters would attack the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021, to try to stop the certification of Trump's loss to Biden. On Saturday, Trump continued his practice of referring to some of those arrested in connection with the riot as "political prisoners." Earlier in the day, at a rally in Ankeny, Iowa, Trump returned to allegations of Democratic election fraud, one

of his favorite themes on the campaign trail. He told the crowd to "guard the vote" in 2024, and focused on diverse cities he has often denigrated as examples of places where fraud would happen. "You should go into Detroit and you should go into Philadelphia and you should go into some of these places, Atlanta, and you should go into some of these places and we've got to watch those votes when they come in," Trump told his supporters.



President Tinubu with delegates at COP28 in Dubai, UAE

International Disability Day: Abia Governor Otti Parleys with Persons with Disability (PWD)

Abia State Governor, Dr. Alex Otti, OFR, says his administration will continue to consider the interest of persons with disabilities in all of its programmes and policies. Governor Otti stated this in his goodwill message on Sunday as Abia, indeed Nigeria, joins the rest of the world to celebrate the International Disability Day. "Today's commemoration provides another opportunity for us to reflect on the contributions of Abians with disabilities to the socio-economic development of our State. "I would like to reiterate our commitment towards the

promotion of inclusive and accessible Abia State, that provides for the well-being of persons with disabilities. This we shall do through the implementation of the Abia State Disability Law. "As a government, we are also committed to increased awareness of gains to be derived from the integration of persons with disabilities in every aspect of political, social, economic, and cultural life. "Therefore, we say no to all forms of discrimination, stigma, and isolation of Abians by reason of disability," the Governor said in a statement by

his Special Assistant on Persons with Disabilities, Mr. David Anyaele. The theme of the 2023 International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD) is: "United in action to rescue and achieve the SDGs for, with and by persons with disabilities". Governor Otti, while wishing Abians happy celebrations, said that his administration was determined to demonstrate to the world that in restoring the glory of Abia and making her truly number one State in Nigeria, and God's Own State, no one would be left behind by reason of disability.

Group advocates introduction of Songai farm system to support Soludo's seedling policy

Uchenna Ezeadigwe, Awka

The Solution Promoters' Forum have thrown weight behind the seedling policy of the Governor Chukwuma Soludo-led administration. The Group which is committed to engendering good governance and shaping governance, explores ways to aid government achieve tangible results that will benefit the citizens on a sustainable basis. Recall that since inception, the present government has distributed over one million palm and coconut

seedlings, among other agricultural policies. To support this initiative and to further give impetus to the policy, the group is advocating introduction of Songai farming to the state, a holistic sustainable approach to farming that integrates crop cultivation, fish farming, and animal husbandry. The Songai farm system involves using natural inputs such as organic fertilizer, compost, and livestock manure to boost soil fertility and increase crop yields. It also incorporates the use of

renewable energy sources such as solar power and biogas to power irrigation systems and livestock feed mills. The group proposes that if the Songai farming is institutionalised in the state, its main objectives of generating income, proving food security and creating employment opportunities for local communities while promoting sustainable agricultural practices that protect the environment, will be achieved. The visionary founder and director of Songhai Centre, Prof. Fr. Godfrey

AFA/Female journalists advocate for implementation of 35 percent affirmative action by Imo state Government.

By Grace Ofurum

Imo state government has been urged to start the implementation of the National Gender policy of 35 percent affirmative action. Speaking at a one day media roundtable with female journalists organized by Alliance for Africa for female journalists in Imo. The program Manager of AFA, Ms. Blessing Duru emphasized in her presentation on the need to advocate for more appointive and elective positions for female politicians. While exraying the current state of gender bias and the impacts in the state, she noted that gender disparity still exist in the current administration in the state where the Imo state House of Assembly lack a female lawmaker representing any constituency.

She disclosed that it's imperative for women to be involved in the decision making as it pertains to issues that borders on women. She stated that the Affirmative action is a way of creating gender equality and social inclusion. According to her, there is also the need to encourage women to participate in politics so they can promote women oriented Programmes and projects. She noted that the National gender policy addresses systematic barriers, acknowledges historical imbalance and ensures women equal participation in decision making roles. According to the program manager, "insufficient representation of women in political decision making process hinders the development of politics that address the specific

needs and concerns of women". Also, "Gender disparities perpetrate social norms and stereotypes, reinforce traditional gender roles, which can hinder social progress and limit the opportunities available to individuals based on their gender". The participants drawn from different media houses in the state identified the challenges and the opportunities of the 35 percent affirmative action and stressed the need for the implementation of the politics. Most of the journalists noted that giving women equal opportunity in politics has numerous benefits and they all promised to take an action plan towards creating awareness and sensitization of the policy through their various mediums.

Conduct LG Council elections within 6 Six Months or face Legal Action –ADC to Gov. Uzodimma

The African Democratic Congress (ADC) has called the Imo State Governor Uzodimma to conduct Local Government Council Elections in the next six months or face legal and political actions. The National Vice Chairman South East of the Party, Comrade Chilos Godsent, had expressed in a press release handed to Newsecho express worries over what he termed, deliberate political underdevelopment, leadership suppression and drain orchestrated on the Imo State Youths by Senator Hope Uzodimma and his predecessors. The Press Release read in parts "The ADC therefore call on Senator Hope Uzodimma and the All Progressive Congress (APC) led Government of Imo State to

properly Fund and mandate the Imo State Independent Electoral Commission (ISIEC) to Conduct Local Government Council Elections before the end of June 2024. The ADC has also blast Senator Hope Uzodimma, the Governor of Imo State for openly and shamelessly lying and deceiving the teeming Youths of Imo State with the promises of securing overseas employments for Imo State Youths and sending Four thousand Imo State Youths to Canada and Europe to resume work. The ADC therefore enjoin the Senator Hope Uzodimma to look inward in other to harness the indigenous talents and potentials of our Youths. Furthermore, ADC charged Senator Hope Uzodimma to create the enabling environment to encourage investors to come in and invest in Imo State. It is a

big shame for the APC led Government of Imo State that some investors in the State are threatening to close down their businesses and relocate them to another State because of political witch hunting and the growing Insecurity in the State. Finally, we wish to State that if by the end of January 2024 the Imo State Independent Electoral Commission (ISIEC) fails to announce and publish the timetable for the Imo State Local Government Council Elections in Imo State, the African Democratic Congress ADC will have no other options that to take every necessary Legal and Political Action to declare this looting conduit wire called Transition Government illegal, and ask the Federal Ministry of Finance to stop releasing Local Government Allocation for Imo State.

NAEMPON eulogises Bertram Uzodinma over Doctoral award

The executive and members of the newly renamed National Association of Electronic Media Presenters of Nigeria (NAEMPON) have commended Evangelist Bertram Uzodinma, MD/CEO, Fratelo Properties Ltd, Owerri, Imo State on his deserved award of Doctoral Fellowship of the Institute of Business Administration and Knowledge Management. According to an appreciation letter signed by the Presenters' Association and signed by the Union's President and Publicity Secretary; Comr. Jerry

Osuji (President) and Comr. Salvador Amadi (Publicity Secretary), it reads in parts:- "In the course of our developmental transformation from AIR-TP to NARTPON and now National Association of Electronic Media Presenters of Nigeria (NAEMPON), your exceptional selfless support which propelled us to enviable heights within a short period of two years, you proved beyond all reasonable doubts, that you indeed, possess superior business and knowledge management savvy. We are therefore

not surprised at the latest feather that landed on your cap on Saturday 2nd December, 2023 which is on record as your 2nd Doctoral certification. For this and certainly more to come, the Members and Leadership of NAEMPON say a big CONGRATULATIONS to you, our Double Doctor PATRON!! As we mark the end of the year with our Christmas Party on Sunday 10th December, 2023, we wish you and your family Compliments of the Yuletide Season."

Nzamujo, who was a guest speaker at the Forum's annual Congress, with the theme "Zero Poverty, Zero Hunger Initiatives in Songhai Agriculture: Aligning with Governor

Soludo's Agricultural Policies said if eventually domesticated in Anambra State, Songhai Centres will be established within the three senatorial zones of the State which will

potentially serve as hubs of agricultural innovation, providing needed training and resources to farmers, with particular reference to unemployed graduates.

Editorial

COP28: Triple renewable energy endorsement and Nigeria's green economy initiative

The president of the ongoing 28th meeting of the United Nations Conference of the Parties (COP28), Sultan Al-Jaber, on Saturday, said 117 countries have endorsed a commitment to triple the world's renewable energy capacity by 2030.

The COP28 president made the remark while speaking at the World Climate Action Summit at the ongoing COP28 in Dubai, the United Arab Emirate, on Saturday.

He said the countries will "work together" to bring global renewable energy generation capacity to at least 11,000 gigawatts by the end of the decade.

Mr Al Jaber also noted that the countries are committed to work together in order to collectively double the global average annual rate of energy efficiency improvements to more than four percent per year.

However, the commitments are non-binding yet.

"But I do need more, and I'm kindly requesting all parties to come on board as soon as possible please. This can and will help transition the world away from unabated coal," the COP28 president said.

He also said: "The world will break down if we don't fix the energies we use today. The world will break down if we don't mitigate the emissions on a gigaton scale. And the world can potentially break down if we don't rapidly transition to zero-carbon alternatives."

Renewable energy is energy produced from sources like the sun and wind that are naturally replenished and do not run out. It can be used for electricity generation, space and water heating and cooling, and transportation.

Transitioning to clean and affordable energy has been one of the pivotal points of this year's COP conversation. World leaders at COP have been calling for the need to upscale energy transition efforts and sustainable climate financing for vulnerable countries.

Reacting to the development, Global Renewables Alliance described the pledge by the 117 countries as a "historic milestone" in the drive to limit global temperature rise to 1.5°C.

However, the group said it would require transformational action in every region of the world to deliver the fundamental shift in the global energy system that is needed.

"Governments must immediately focus on agreeing unambiguous language in the negotiated outcome text of COP28 and establish a forum for holding governments accountable, which will deliver the market signals to unlock investment," the group said.

It said action and accountability must be the next steps if the pledge is to deliver on its high ambitions. "117 countries committing to tripling global renewables by 2030 is a huge achievement at COP28. This pledge signals the start of a new energy paradigm and a once in a generation opportunity to transition to a clean, secure and just energy system," Bruce Douglas, CEO of Global Renewables Alliance, said.

He emphasised that countries now need to turn the ambition into action and hold policy makers accountable to deliver on their commitments.

"To get there, we need the tripling to be reflected in updated NDCs, with increased national targets and rapid implementation across the key enablers," he said.

Meanwhile, President Bola Tinubu, on Saturday in Dubai, United Arab Emirate, UAE, said Nigeria is taking a significant step towards a sustainable and eco-friendly future, which will inspire nations

worldwide.

The President spoke at a high-level meeting with stakeholders and investors on the Nigeria Carbon Market and Electric Buses Rollout Programme on the margins of the COP28 climate summit.

President Tinubu explained that the strategic initiative is aimed at significantly reducing Nigeria's carbon footprint and modernizing the country's transportation systems.

He said the initiative, which has seen to the deployment of a fleet of 100 electric buses, was part of a larger effort to position Nigeria and Africa as the pioneering frontier of green manufacturing and industrialization with a focus on natural gas as a transition fuel alongside other renewable energy sources. To spearhead this transformative plan, the President announced the appointment of the Executive Chairman of the Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS), Mr. Zacch Adedeji, and the Director-General of the National Council on Climate Change (NCCC), Mr. Dahiru Salisu, to co-chair the Nigeria Carbon Market Activation Plan.

President Bola Tinubu further promised on Saturday that Nigeria will rollout 100 electric buses in a step towards a sustainable and eco-friendly future.

The "pioneering initiative" is to "significantly" reduce Nigeria's carbon footprint and modernise the country's transportation systems," Tinubu said in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, on the margins of the COP28 climate summit.

"This initiative stands as a testament to our dedication to environmental stewardship as clearly exemplified through our collaboration with the Africa Carbon Market Initiative. Our visionary plan is a strategic guidepost, directing Nigeria towards becoming an investment-friendly destination for carbon market investments," presidential spokesman Ajuri Ngelale quoted his principal as saying.

"We recognize the imperative of fostering an environment that not only attracts investment but also upholds standardized and sustainable industrial practices. As a manifestation of our forward-thinking approach, we are actively looking to implement robust, enabling policies and frameworks that will serve as the catalyst for the burgeoning growth of the carbon market within our national borders."

President Tinubu also appointed the Executive Chairman of the Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS) Zacch Adedeji and the Director-General of the National Council on Climate Change (NCCC) Dahiru Salisu to co-chair the Nigeria Carbon Market Activation Plan.

While the move is part of efforts to position Nigeria and Africa as the pioneering frontier of green manufacturing and industrialization, Tinubu is urging other countries on the continent to follow suit.

"As we unveil our initiatives, I challenge other nations to emulate our strides in mapping out their sustainable futures with a clear understanding that Africa is a beacon of innovative solutions to climate-related challenges," he said.

Tinubu said Nigeria's "plans for a greener and cleaner economy can serve as an inspirational narrative for nations worldwide".

"Our comprehensive approach, rooted in visionary leadership and pragmatic action supported by our technical partners, is poised to become a blueprint for countries aspiring to also develop and catalyze their markets for sustainable growth," the president added.

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Opinion

Who Will Tell CJN Ariwoola He Doesn't Deserve Nigerians' Trust And Confidence?

By Chidi Anselm Odinkalu

Nigeria's Supreme Court held a special session on 27 November 2023 to formally usher in a new legal year. It provide an occasion for a retrospective on the performance of Nigeria's judiciary by its leaders in a season of unprecedented levels of public angst over the political weaponization of judges and a set piece moment to compare notes on the dysfunctions that afflict the judicial system. The outcome was interesting to the point of anti-climactic. At that occasion, the Chief Justice of Nigeria (CJN), Olukayode Ariwoola, also administered the oath on 57 new entrants into the coven of Senior Advocates of Nigeria (SAN). One of the new SANs was born in 1981. Two years later, in 1983, his dad, a lawyer, began proceedings against Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) Ltd, a multi-national in the hydrocarbons sector, in Warri. At the time, Warri was part of Bendel State, created by the military a mere seven years earlier in 1976. After 14 years, the High Court delivered judgment in 1997. By this time, Bendel State had ceased to exist. In its place, the military had on 27 August 1991 created two successors in Delta and Edo States and what used to be the High Court of Bendel State sitting in Warri (Division) had become the Warri Division of the High Court of Delta State. The Court of Appeal dismissed SPDC's appeal in 2000. The company then proceeded up to the Supreme Court which took 15 years to reach a judgment in 2015, 32 years after the case began. By this time, the boy who was two years old when the case began had become a man and a lawyer, even accompanying his dad to the proceedings at the Supreme Court.

Ebun Sofunde, the Senior Advocate who related this story addressed the special session on behalf of the Body of Senior Advocates of Nigeria (BOSAN). He also told the story of another case filed by Lagos State against the National Sports Lottery (NSL), which began on 5 February 2005. A little over 18 years later, on 31 March 2023, the Supreme Court decided the appeal on the jurisdictional objection of the NSL to the original proceedings and remitted the substantive case back to the High Court of Lagos State for trial. Naturally, Mr. Sofunde wondered aloud about the fate of ordinary litigants if a powerful state like Lagos has no sensible pathway to a timely exit from the courts.

Mr. Sofunde is characteristically parsimonious with words and is not given to hyperbole or oratorical flourish. So, when he says – as he did in his address to the Supreme Court – that public confidence in the judicial system “is at an all-time low... to a point where it may no longer be redeemable”, you would think that those with responsibility to run the legal and judicial systems of the country would pay



Ariwoola

heed. He also told warned the Supreme Court, rather charitably, that its judgments were becoming mostly “perfunctory.”

The Attorney-General of the Federation, Lateef Fagbemi, a prince and a Senior Advocate, chose to take the Fifth Amendment. Treating the occasion mostly as a social call, he congratulated the new SANs; told them how elevated and special they had suddenly become; warned them to avoid speaking to the media and wished everyone “good health in body, spirit, and soul.” If he had continued, he may even have found time to tell the new SANs that they have become a new species that have no need for urinals or toilets!

We digress though because everyone waited to listen to the CJN. Born on 22 August 1954, Olukayode Ariwoola will retire from office when he turns 70 in August 2024. As he acknowledged in his address, this was his last opportunity to report as the leader of the judicial system. It was also opportunity to begin framing his legacy in the public imagination. He grappled valiantly with the former task but appeared to have missed the memo on the latter. In particular, his address needlessly concatenated contradictions, defensiveness, and avoidance. It read like an ode to an institution incapable of introspection or too immersed in impunity to understand the vice in arrogance.

The CJN claimed that the Nigerian judiciary had “fared well in the outgone legal year” and is now “more deserving of public trust and confidence than ever before.” But he immediately followed this up with the promise that “we are poised to reposition it (the judiciary) for effective justice delivery”, which begs the question why anyone would want to reposition an institution that is faring so well as to be deserving of public trust and confidence.

In a rallying cry to judges everywhere in Nigeria, the CJN invited them to “never be overwhelmed by the actions or loud voices of the mob or crowd.” The paragraph before

this contained the telling admission that “the true touch-stone for measuring the success of a judicial institution is the degree of confidence reposed in it by the public”, even going as far as warning judges that they “are definitely going to work more assiduously and tirelessly to make our country earn for itself the fullest respect and confidence of both the citizens and the international community.”

The CJN, it seemed, could not quite make up his mind about the state or public standing of the institution he leads. Even worse, his use of the word “mob” in the address was a piece of inspired own goal because it appeared to fit much better as a description of an organized crime ring, which is what a mention of the judiciary reminds many people in Nigeria of these days. Evidence in support of this perception lay in the numbers he reeled out. First, the CJN delivered a report on judicial vacancies, congratulating himself for appointing nine new Justices of Appeal in September and 23 new judges of the Federal High Court in October 2023. He failed to disclose that among the new appointments, one of the 23 new judges was his own son (appointed with the most scandalously scanty credentials) or that among the new Justices one was his nephew and another was the son-in-law of the President of the Court of Appeal. He also had “the cherry (sic) news”, that soon the Supreme Court will recruit 10 more Justices to bring it up to the full complement of 22. If he brings to that process the kind of blinkers that ruled the filling of the vacancies in the Federal High Court and the Court of Appeal, then most people have a right to be worried.

Departing from judicial vacancies, the CJN proceeded to report that from 12 September

2022 to 11 July, 2023, his Supreme Court registered 1,271 motions and appeals out of which it “heard 388 political appeals, 215 criminal appeals and 464 civil appeals.” At a similar occasion only two years ago, Ariwoola's predecessor, Tanko Muhammad, reported that the court's portfolio of 269 appeals disposed of included 139 civil appeals, 102 criminal appeals, and 28 “political cases”. So, two years ago, “political cases” were 10.67% of the appeals heard by the Supreme Court. According to CJN Ariwoola's report, the same court in the past year “delivered a total number of 251 judgments, of which 125 were political appeals, 81 were civil appeals, and 45 were criminal appeals.” In just two years, the output of the court had fallen by 6.69% and political cases have risen from 10.67% to 50% (49.8% to be exact). Meanwhile, in the law faculties, professors still teach students that there is a “Political Questions Doctrine” which is a rule for denial rather than acceptance of cases.

These numbers dramatize the extent to which the Supreme Court has become captured by politicians and explain the crisis of lack of exit from courts that Ebun Sofunde complained bitterly about. It is little wonder that the only people who can dispense any form of kindness towards the CJN and his “mob” of exponents in the jurisprudence of the Italian Job are exclusively politicians. The misfortune is that rather than see an opportunity, this CJN can only see enemies. Who will tell the Chief Justice? Chidi Anselm Odinkalu is a lawyer and a teacher, Odinkalu can be reached at chidi.odinkalu@tufts.edu

We digress though because everyone waited to listen to the CJN. Born on 22 August 1954, Olukayode Ariwoola will retire from office when he turns 70 in August 2024. ↘

News

Allegations against DSS DG capable of causing disaffection among secret services –Civil group

A coalition of civil organization led by the Nation Building Imperatives (NBI) has cautioned against the dangers of politicizing and belittling the nation's security apparatuses, warning that such would not bode well with the efforts to bind the country together and ensure internal and external security. The warning followed an allegation made by an X user, @jacksonpbn, who accused Bichi, among other things, of being corrupt. @jacksonpbn had claimed that the Director General of the security agency, Yusuf Bichi, stole a subsidy grant intended for staff members. DAILY POST reported that the Department of State Services (DSS), had since dismissed it as being untrue. The Director of Public Relations and Strategic Communications of the DSS, Peter Afunanya, in a statement made available to journalists on Saturday said the "goodbye allowance" which the DG was accused of granting himself does not exist. The NBI has, however, described it as wild and unfounded allegations against the Director General of the DSS and advised against impugning the integrity of the nation's secret service in exchange for political profits. In a statement signed by the National Coordinator of the

group, Dagogo Henshaw, and Public Affairs Officer, Danjuma Mwantok, NBI observed that there were efforts to create some form of tension and disaffection among the various secret service agencies, notably the Department of State Services (DSS), the Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA) and the National Intelligence Agency (NIA) and cautioned that if the current war being waged against the agencies is allowed to stand, the entire security architecture of the country would significantly diminish under the eroding influence of political carpetbaggers who do not have the interest of the nation at heart. Referencing the media activities of a Nigerian Twitter (now known as X) user, Jackson Ude, whose recent activities suggest a clear intention to tarnish the image of the officers and men of the DSS, the group advised Nigerians to work towards the preservation of the reputation of the DSS as secret police in the overall interest of the country. On the allegations that Bichi has refused to implement a certain 40 percent salary increment for officers and men of the Service, the group dismissed the claim as spurious and unfounded, wondering how the DG of the establishment could prevent the implementation of a welfare package that was already

approved. "We view this allegation as mischievous and unfounded because the DG of DSS can't prevent the implementation of welfare packages for his staff when he was not the person who made the approval in the first place. "It is a known fact that the salaries and welfare packages of all federal civil servants, including the military and paramilitary services are approved and coordinated by the Nigeria Salaries and Wages Commission. Given this established structure, it is not even possible for the DG to interfere in the process, how much more preventing it? Assuming that it was even the call of the DG to either implement or stall approved welfare packages for staff, the question that should be asked is, what personal profits are due to the DG for stalling the welfare of his workers," the group queried. Continuing, the statement said: "The facts about the salaries and welfare of the staff of the Department of State Services and the other military and paramilitary services are in the open and can be verified by any person whose sincere motive is to find the truth. A simple scan of the media space will be enough to reveal that there is no 40 percent salary increase anywhere to implement. We

know this because in a story published by a national daily, the Honourable Minister of Interior, Olubunmi Tunji-Ojo, said he has been in talks with the Nigeria Salaries and Wages Commission to regularise the salaries of paramilitary officers to be on a par with the personnel of the Nigeria Police Force. What this simply means is that Messrs. Ude's allegation is a work of fiction and probably designed to create internal unrest in the force and project the leadership of DSS in bad light before the President of Nigeria, Bola Ahmed Tinubu." On the allegation that Bichi's wife was working with Folashade Tinubu-Ojo, Mr. President's daughter, to extend the tenure of the DS DG, the group dismissed the allegation as

a part of what was inherited from the 2023 elections politicking. "While not holding brief for either the DSS DG's wife or Mrs. Tinubu-Ojo, we can boldly state that the allegation is a clear extension of the 2023 electioneering campaign during which all manner of allegations were levelled against Mr. President and a number of his family members. As the nation's number one secret service officer, the DSS DG has access to Mr. President and does not need his wife to lobby for anything he wants," the group said. "It is important to observe that shortly after he took over the reins of government, President Bola Tinubu changed the Service Chiefs, but in his wisdom, retained the heads of two of the secret service agencies, the NIA

and the DSS. This suggests that the President may have assigned certain important roles to the heads of these agencies for which reason they are still in office. The President knows what he is doing. Trying to instigate operatives handling national security secrets will not augur well for Nigeria's national security. "There are a lot of wild and unfounded allegations in the statement by Jackson Ude and responding to all of them might be a waste of precious time. But we must not fail to respond to the one made against the person and office of the Adegboyega Fasasi, said to be the Chief Security Officer to President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, who was accused of handling all postings in the DSS instead of the Directorate of Security Enforcement."

Senate to FG: Stop Allocation of States Running LGs with Caretaker Committees

Nigeria's Senate urged the federal government to withhold statutory allocation to Local Government (LG) councils whose chief executives and councilors were not democratically elected. This was just as the abridged version of the fiscal document released by the Senate on Friday, revealed that the Ministry of Defence got the lion share of N1.27 trillion from the 2024 appropriation bill. A copy of the fiscal document was made available to THISDAY in Abuja by the Chairman, Senate Committee on Appropriation, Senator, Solomon Adeola. The resolution of the red chamber to withhold statutory allocation to LGs whose CEOs were not democratically elected, was sequel to a motion by the Senate Minority Leader, who is representing Benue South Senatorial District, Senator Abba Moro. Moro's motion was titled, "Urgent need to halt the erosion of democracy: The dissolution of elected Councils in Benue State." The lawmakers in their various contributions, adjusted the scope of the motion by extending the sanctions to other states in the country that had put in place, unelected council executives. They condemned the arbitrary dissolution of democratically elected local government councils in Benue and other states in Nigeria. The lawmakers urged the governor of Benue State to adhere to his oath of office by obeying the rule of law

and defend the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. They also sought to review the governors' dissolution of the elected councils and constitution of caretaker committees. They specifically advised Governor Hyacinth Alia, a suspended Catholic priest, to reinstate the elected council executive forthwith. Moro, had in his motion noted that placing caretaker committees to replace elected councilors was an aberration and alien to the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended). He said Section (1) of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended) guarantees a system of local government by democratically elected councils. He argued that the constitutional responsibility of every state was to ensure the existence of local government councils by law. Moro, however said he was aware that there were subsisting court rulings that had prevented the Governor, the House of Assembly, their agents and privies from tampering with the tenure of the elected councils. He said, "The Senate is aware that neither the Governor nor the Government of Benue State has appealed the judgments and it is against the grain of the rule of law." In his contribution, Senator Adams Oshiomhole, APC, Edo North, said the Supreme Court had pronounced that state governors do not have power to dissolve elected local government officials.

He said he resisted pressure to dissolve elected officials of the local government when he was a governor. He, however said no fewer than 16 state governors in Nigeria are currently running their respective councils with caretaker committees. In his contribution, the Chief Whip of the Senate, Senator Ali Ndume, (APC, Borno South) described as misnomer, a situation whereby 16 states in the country run their local governments through the caretaker system. He emphasised that the best the Senate could do was to prevail on the Ministry of Finance, using its oversight powers to stop the release of funds to local government areas operating caretaker committee. He urged the Senate to prevail on the Minister of Finance not to release funds to any unelected local government officials. Senator Abdulfatai Buhari (Oyo North) said the Electoral Act should be amended to empower the Independent National Electoral Commission to conduct local government elections. Buhari's suggestion was however amended by the Senate President, Godswill Akpabio, who presided over the plenary. Akpabio, frowned at the establishment of multiple federal agencies but advocated the creation of the National Electoral Commission for Local Governments so that governors would no longer have overlapping influence on council polls.



President Tinubu exchanges a handshake with UN Secretary General, Antonio Guterres at COP28

Ripples over Tinubu's N13.8bn, 2024 Budget expenditure plan on Ex-presidents, VPs, Others

The Federal Government has earmarked a total of N13,805,814,220 for the upkeep of former presidents, vice-presidents, heads of state, Chiefs of General Staff, retired heads of service, permanent secretaries, as well as retired heads of government agencies and parastatals in the 2024 fiscal year. The beneficiaries include former Presidents Olusegun Obasanjo, Goodluck Jonathan and Muhammadu Buhari, as well as ex-vice-presidents Atiku Abubakar, Namadi Sambo and Prof Yemi Osinbajo. Also expected to benefit from the windfall are ex-military Heads of State, General Yakubu Gowon and General Abdusalam Abubakar, as well as a former dictator and self-styled military President, General Ibrahim Babangida, and a former Chief of General Staff, Commodore Ebitu Ukiwe (Rtd.). Also, N1tn was provisioned for the public

government Ministries, Departments and Agencies (including arrears of promotion and salary increases, and payment of severance benefits and minimum wage-related adjustments). A breakdown shows that the entitlements of former presidents/heads of states and vice-presidents/chiefs of general staff will cost N2.3bn, while N10.5bn is proposed as benefits for retired heads of service, permanent secretaries and professors. The payment of severance benefits to retired heads of government agencies and parastatals is proposed to cost N1bn. Other allocations include N65bn for the Presidential Amnesty Programme for the reintegration of transformed ex-militants; N1bn for the Office of the Presidential Adviser on Energy; and N108bn for unnamed special projects.

The government is also proposing the sum of N40bn to

offset electricity debts owed power distribution companies by all MDAs. The item listed as 'Settlement of MDAs' electricity debts', was contained in the sectoral allocation details released by the Chairman, Senate Committee on Appropriations, Solomon Adeola. According to Adeola, the details of the budget have been released to allay the fears of lawmakers and Nigerians.

He noted that the details had been circulated to allow lawmakers to study and see the allocations to various sectors. The Executive Director, Association of Nigerian Electricity Distributors, Sunday Oduntan, in January 2022 revealed that all the Federal Government MDAs and the military owed the electricity distribution companies at least N90bn. He said though discussions were ongoing as regards settlement, the debt had continued to pile up over the

years since the power sector was privatised in November 2013. He said, "All MDAs' debt is more than N90bn and the military is part of that. We came on board in 2013 and since then, how much has been paid by the MDAs? "There was a time when a former minister of power said they (the government) had concluded arrangements on how to settle the debt, but as I speak with you, the bills are still unpaid. Since privatisation, there have been issues around the MDAs' debt." Though the government budgeted N27bn in 2022 and N40bn in 2023 for the settlement of the debt, it is unclear if it made payments to the Discos. The ministries of Works, Finance, Education and

Defence and others got lion's shares of the N8.7tn capital component of the N27.5tn 2024 budget as contained in sectoral allocation details. In the proposed budget, the Ministry of Works is allocated N521.3bn, followed by the Ministry of Finance with N519.9bn, while N308.2bn is earmarked for the Ministry of Defence. Similarly, the Federal Ministry of Health and Social Welfare is to get N304.4bn, while the Education ministry has an allocation of N265.4bn. Others are Ministry of Power, N264.2bn, government-owned enterprises, N820.9bn; Tertiary Education Trust Fund, N665bn; Housing and Urban Development ministry, N96.9bn; Water

Resources ministry, N87.7bn; and Police Affairs ministry, N69bn. The National Assembly under statutory transfers gets N198bn; the Niger Delta Development Commission, N324.8bn; Universal Basic Education Board, N251.4bn; National Judicial Council, N165bn; North East Development Commission, N126bn; and Basic Health Care Provision Fund, N125.7bn. Under capital supplementation, zonal intervention, otherwise called constituency projects for federal lawmakers, gets N100bn; special projects, N108bn; contingency (capital), N200bn; aid and grants funded projects, N685.6bn; and National Social Investment Programme Agency,

News Extra

Reject Wike's N15bn budget for VP's new residence, SERAP tells Senate

Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP) has urged the Senate President, Mr Godswill Akpabio to use his leadership position "to promptly reject the plan by the Minister of the FCT, Nysom Wike to spend N15 billion for the construction of 'a befitting residence' for the Vice President, Mr Kashim Shettima."

SERAP urged him to "assert Senate's authority and constitutional oversight roles to reject the N2.8 billion on publicity for the FCTA and other proposed wasteful and unnecessary spending that may be contained in the 2023 supplementary budget and the 2024 budget proposed by President Bola Tinubu."

In the letter dated 2 December 2023 and signed by SERAP Deputy Director Kolawole Oluwadare, the organisation said: "The plan to spend N15 billion on 'a befitting residence' for the vice president is a fundamental breach of the Nigerian Constitution and the country's international anticorruption and human rights obligations."

SERAP said: "The Senate has the constitutional duties to ensure that Mr Wike's proposed spending is entirely consistent and compatible with constitutional provisions including his oath of office. All public officials remain subject to the rule of law."

SERAP also said, "The National Assembly including the Senate has a constitutional responsibility to address the country's debt crisis, including by rejecting wasteful and unnecessary spending to satisfy the personal comfort and lifestyles of public officials."

The letter, read in part: "The National Assembly cannot continue to fail to fulfil its oversight function. The Senate must assert and demonstrate its independence by checking and rejecting all wasteful and unnecessary spending by the executive."

"It would be a grave violation of the public trust and constitutional oath of office for the Senate to approve the plan to spend N15 billion on 'a befitting residence' for the vice president at a time when the Federal Government is set to spend 30% (that is, N8.25 trillion) of the country's 2024 budget of N27.5 trillion on debt service costs."

"The Federal Government also plans to borrow N7.8 trillion to fund the 2024 budget. Nigeria's public debt stood at 87.4 trillion naira as of June with 38% owed to external creditors including multilateral and commercial lenders."

"Should the Senate and its leadership fail to stop wasteful and unnecessary spending and rein in government borrowing, SERAP would consider appropriate legal action to compel the National Assembly including the Senate to discharge its constitutional oversight roles in the public interest."

"SERAP urges you to refer to the Economic and Financial Crimes



Akpabio



Wike

Commission (EFCC) and Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) the allegations of corruption in the spending of the previously approved N7 billion for the construction of a new residence for the vice president."

"The 'construction' was reportedly abandoned but the whereabouts of the N7 billion remain unknown."

"The Senate has the constitutional competence and legitimacy to compel compliance with the Nigerian Constitution and the country's international obligations."

"The Senate ought to assert its authority and vigorously exercise its constitutional oversight roles to check the apparently wasteful and unnecessary spending by Mr Wike especially given the growing debt crisis and the indiscriminate borrowing by the government."

"It is a travesty and a fundamental breach of the lawmakers' fiduciary duties for the National Assembly to allow the executive to use national budget as a tool to satisfy the comfort and lifestyle of public officials."

"Nigerians have a right to honest and faithful performance by their public officials including lawmakers, as public officials owe a fiduciary duty to the general citizenry."

"Cutting the N15 billion on 'a befitting residence' from the FTCA budget would be entirely consistent with your constitutional oath of office, and the letter and spirit of the Nigerian Constitution, as it would promote efficient, honest, and legal spending of public money." "According to our information, the Minister of the FCT, Nysom Wike and the Federal Capital Territory Administration (FCTA) plan to spend N15 billion for the construction of 'a befitting residence' for the Vice-President, Mr Kashim Shettima."

"The plan is contained in the N67 billion FCT supplementary budget which President Bola Tinubu had on Tuesday transmitted to the National Assembly for approval."

"SERAP notes that Mr Wike proposed plan to spend N15 billion on a new residence for the vice president despite the recent allocation of N2.5 billion for the renovation of the current residence of

the VP in the federal government's supplementary budget already passed by the National Assembly and signed by President Tinubu."

"The House of Representatives has reportedly approved the plan to spend N15 billion on 'a befitting residence' for the vice president."

"The National Assembly has also approved another N3 billion for the renovation of the vice president's residence in Lagos State. Mr Wike also plans to spend N2.8 billion on publicity for the FCTA."

"The proposed plan to spend 15 billion on 'a befitting residence' for the vice president is different from the N100 billion for the FCT contained in the federal government supplementary budget."

"SERAP notes that the Federal Government has also budgeted N8 billion on the two official residences of President Tinubu in Abuja and Lagos."

"On top of the planned spending of N15 billion on 'a befitting residence' for the vice president, billions of naira

'The Senate has the constitutional competence and legitimacy to compel compliance with the Nigerian Constitution and the country's international obligations.'

Foreign

Israel-Hamas War: Remember Who Started It

By Dele Sobowale

Wisdom in people consists in the anticipation of consequences" – Norman Cousins, 1915-1990.

Approximately five years

ago, Lagos Island was in the vice grip of gang wars brought about by disputes over control of various sectors of our Island by unemployed and often violent youths. Several attempts were made by elders to bring about peace without success. Jaw-Jaw inevitably turned to War-War with the first blow delivered by one individual. At one of the meetings, a young and self-assured brawler, impatient with the slow pace of reaching agreements, turned on a speaker from the other side.

Asking the other to "shut up", brawler did not wait for a reaction before pushing the speaker violently and kicking his victim – who fell down awkwardly. It was the greatest and last mistake brawler made in his life. Speaker was a retired Army officer, combatant and well-trained in martial arts, up to Black Belt. Within seconds, the attacker was flat on his face and his back bone was being broken with well-practised stumps — before people waded in to stop what would have been murder in retaliation for a push and kick.

One of our oldest residents, now late, arrived just as the prostrate brawler was being rescued by others and immediately launched a verbal attack on the officer for his wickedness against a "defenceless" person. Baba, as we called him, still insisted that the response was excessive even if the first blow was struck by the vanquished brawler. Baba was a lone voice at that meeting which broke up immediately. The brawler himself delivered the final verdict from his bed a few weeks before he passed on: "I would not have done what I did if somebody had told me that the man is a soldier". In other words, he did not anticipate the consequences of what he was going to do. To him, he deserved the punishment.

GAZA, OCTOBER 6, 2023 AND AFTER

"Some act first and think later; and they think more of excuses than consequences. Some think neither before nor after. The whole of life should be spent thinking about the right course to follow" – Professor John Kenneth Galbraith, 1908-2006, Nobel Prize Winning Economist.

I participated in a seminar by Galbraith, then-America's most influential Economist and Public Speaker, in late 1967. Before then, I had read every book he published. In 1967, the US-Vietnam War was most intense and the American society was violently divided. College campuses were in turmoil, students drafted were refusing to serve their country in a manner unprecedented in US history. Economic repercussions of

the war were among the most hotly debated issues at the time. I was interested because Nigeria's Civil War, 1967-1970, had just broken out.

Finding out the economic impacts of war in any country was not a luxury; but a matter of necessity. All my loved ones, especially my mum, were in Nigeria; I wanted to have an idea of what they might be going through. Galbraith, who was an Economic Adviser to American Presidents, during World War II, painted such horrors of wars, complete with slide shows to reveal to us what Hiroshima and Nagasaki – two Japanese cities, on which nuclear bombs were dropped – looked like the day before and after they were devastated by bombs.

It was clear to me on that day that anybody making plans to start a war should go into historical archives and conduct research into how places looked before and after the last war was fought there. The lesson was clear. The greatest two days destruction in human history occurred because on December 7, 1941, Japan launched a surprise attack on US naval fleet stationed at Pearl Harbor; and declared war on America.

The final consequences of that decision, by the Japanese military command, was not felt until August 6 and 9, 1945 on Hiroshima and Nagasaki respectfully – killing and maiming over two million Japanese, men, women, children and hospital staff indiscriminately. Those pictures and those slides will remain indelible in my mind even if I live for a thousand years. It was not surprising to me – when in 1970 Nigerian children suffering with kwashiorkor appeared in American newspapers; side by side with Vietnam's kids burning from American napalm attack. I learnt afresh that war is hell and it is pointless heaping blames on soldiers; who are engaged to kill for their countries and not to die for her. I have also gone to great lengths to bring to our attention that real war starts when one party strikes the first blow. I was only one of few bloody civilians at Galbraith's seminar. Most of the participants were young officers or those thinking of embarking on a military career or diplomacy. Galbraith emphasised the reason why the

aggressor must calculate all the possible outcomes of unleashing the first volley of violence – including the "unthinkable".

That brings me to October 6, 2023 – the day before the Hamas attack on Israel. There should be very little difficulty in obtaining an aerial photograph of the entire Gaza. On that day, there would have been no part of Gaza in ruins; no hospitals, schools and shopping malls were flattened, there were water and power supplies everywhere; drugs were easily available. Granted, all the alleged injustices were present; but no mass annihilation took place.

October 7, 2023, just one day, changed everything. Hamas military authorities successfully invaded in a pre-dawn raid, shattering Israel's presumed iron dome impregnable security. Hundreds of Israeli residents, women and children – not just citizens – were killed, kidnapped and held hostage. That was the first blow; and the interrogation starts from there.

"In whatever situation you find yourself, determine first, what is your objective" – Field Marshal Foch, 1851-1929.

It was very clear that a great deal of meticulous planning must have gone into the adventure for it to achieve its spectacular success. Israeli and American security units, MOSSAD and CIA, as well as Western allies, were all caught "pants down" literally. Hubris also has its consequences. But, we come to that later. The impossible occurred where least expected. However, till today, no Hamas leader has bothered to explain to the whole world what their objectives were when embarking on this conflict which started costing about 1,400 lives in Israel and 200-plus taken as hostages – virtually all women, children, old people and the most vulnerable in any society. They kept strictly away from soldiers and armed security operatives.

Even without being told, we can safely discard one goal. They were not going to confront the Israeli army; because that honourable confrontation would have amounted to mass suicide for the Hamas attackers. That dispensed with, we can then ask what their intentions were in staging the raid and gathering as many hostages as they could safely run away with. Did they expect to use the hostages to force Israel to the negotiation table? Were they expecting Israelis to start

migrating in fear of further attacks by Hamas? Did it ever cross their minds that Israel will not retaliate as long as they hold the hostages?

The possible objectives are too numerous for me to contemplate – not being Hamas or a military strategist. However, it is now beyond reasonable doubt that the devastation of Gaza, in an Israeli retaliatory series of strikes, which has resulted in over 16,000 lives, was perhaps the last thing they expected. Unless, killing their own people by the thousands and destroying homes, schools, hospitals and life-supporting infrastructures was part of their plans, then Hamas leaders have committed a great blunder which will eventually lead to more losses of lives and properties.

All the Palestinian, as well as other lives lost and properties devastated must be charged. They struck the first blow on October 7, for whatever reasons known to them without fully taking account of the consequences. Their people and the whole world now have to deal with a monumental human catastrophe brought about by a handful of hatred-driven and misguided individuals, holding the fate of Palestinians in their hands. Carnage will certainly continue after the hostage swap; the war, unlike the Russia-Ukraine conflict, has spread to the whole world.

There is hardly a nation or group of people who have not taken sides. Surprisingly, the United States, hitherto regarded as safe for Jews, and other Western European nations, considered sympathetic to Israelis, now exhibit traces of anti-Semitism. Despite the truth we know, that Hamas started the ball rolling on October 7, those crying about genocide in Gaza have deliberately refused to acknowledge that there was no devastation of Gaza before then.

Just as America has never apologised for over-reacting in 1945, nobody should hope to pressurise Israel to stop fighting until it is safe for Israel. But, however and whenever it ends, remember who started it this time....

To be continued



Commentary

Nigeria's Gale of Demolitions: The Missing Point

Nyesom Wike, governor of Rivers State (2015-2023) left no one in doubt that he had enormous capacity for project development. No other governor in the history of Nigeria ever evolved his type of schedule for the daily commissioning of projects for several months without stop. His penchant for saying things as they are, no matter who is hurt, may have earned him several political enemies but no one disputes his well-deserved award of 'Mr Project' first bestowed on him by former vice president Yemi Osinbajo.

It was against this backdrop that his appointment as Minister of the Federal Capital Territory FCT by president Bola Tinubu provoked great expectations of Abuja almost immediately wearing a new look along with consequential collateral damage of demolitions of buildings erected on illegally acquired land or without approved building plans.

Wike lived up to expectation as his first move revealed his determination to eliminate every distortion to the Abuja master plan and make the city befitting as Nigeria's capital. At his maiden news conference, he confirmed his readiness to tackle all unplanned structures that can compromise urban development. To all those who have contributed to distorting the master plan he said "be you a Minister of anywhere, be you an ambassador, if you know you have developed where you were not supposed to develop, your house must go down. Those who have taken over the green areas to build, sorry, our parks must come back, the green areas must come back." A few weeks later, FCT's Department of Development Control identified thousands of illegal buildings for demolition in no less than 30 locations in the territory.

In fairness to Wike, the policy of demolitions in the FCT was not started by him. Former FCT Minister, Nasir El Rufai had in fact been more identified as the 'demolition man.' During his tenure, Nasir according to Mohammed Alkali, the then general counsel of the Federal Capital Territory Authority destroyed over 75,000 houses and other public property. El Rufai himself found time to explain that he had no regrets for doing what he did notwithstanding his stepping on several toes adding that he took the drastic actions to save Abuja from being turned into a slum by influential persons in the corridors of power. According to the former minister, rich and powerful elements in the military and politics had with the connivance of others cornered choice plots in the city through the back door.

If building demolitions were restricted to the FCT one would have attributed the trend to the special nature of the location as the most developed part of Nigeria with huge infrastructural facilities. But then, demolitions were also taking place in other cities. In Kano State, the new administration of governor Abba Yusuf wasted no time in rolling out bulldozers to begin the



Wike



sanwo

demolition of private buildings, which he had earlier declared during his campaigns, as illegal structures erected during the tenure of his predecessor, Abdullahi Ganduje. Abba had actually anchored his campaign on a promise of mass demolitions if he got elected as he accused the previous administration of splintering public assets, specifically land, and selling them to its cronies.

In Ogun State, many expect demolitions because the government had earlier marked several houses and directed their owners to remove them. According to Ola Oresanya who had served as Commissioner for Environment, the affected houses were built on drainage channels that were obstructing the flow of water. The government had warned that any owner who waited for official demolition would have to refund to government, tax payers' monies incurred in removing the buildings. The Ogun State government has indeed, continued to express concerns over the impact of urban flooding in such parts of the state as Ikenne Local Government Area. Like Ogun, Lagos state which has had a rather large share of demolitions and evictions in Nigeria, insists that structures built on drainage channels would be demolished. Both the owners of demolished buildings and government spend ample time canvassing each other's perspective. Here, the government which has organs of mass communication to propagate its viewpoint has expectedly had the upper hand. The major justification which government officials keep making is that the demolitions are usually done in the public interest. Tokunbo Wahab, the Commissioner for Environment and Water Resources, in Lagos State probably beat everybody to it last Wednesday when he shared a photo of a house built on a canal in the state obstructing the free flow of water. But we caution against over blowing the story because not every demolished building was erected on a canal or some

sort of drainage channel.

Some 5 months ago, a popular newspaper had used one of its editorials to condemn the immediate past administration in Kano state for allegedly carving out plots from the grounds of public schools, hospitals and utilities, and selling or distributing them to government officials and their relatives in the state. Such plots which were reportedly taken out of school football fields, and also in-between classroom blocks, for the construction of shops for commercial activities cannot be justified. It is generally believed that right from the days of the Maroko saga in Lagos state, the motivation for the acquisition of plots and the demolitions of buildings in certain Nigeria cities is obviously not altruistic as government officials would want the public to believe. The constant resort by some Nigerians to illegal acquisition of land or the construction of buildings, without appropriate approvals, is unacceptable. But if the people miss that point, a greater miss is the failure of the government to provide shelter for its citizens as seen in the huge figure of housing deficit in the country. In his 'Hierarchy of Needs', the legendary psychologist, Robert Maslow, had persuasively described shelter as a basic right. Interestingly, the Nigerian government despite Section 43 of our constitution which sees citizens' shelter as a right, is yet to accept it as its duty to the people. Citizens ought to be motivated rather dissuaded from getting sheltered. Indeed, the sanctity of the subject as clothed in the next Section 44 of the same constitution abhors compulsory acquisition without compensation. The real missing point in Nigeria's demolitions is the failure of government to sanction insider abuses. To start with, government at the point of enforcement has a habit of not separating citizens in possession of approvals from those who have none. Once demolition is pronounced by the political head; everyone, the innocent and the guilty suffer same fate. Besides, many approvals which turn out to be phony were the

handiwork of public lands and housing officials serving or retired.

Nothing is known to have been done to them. If government was 'demolishing' such deviants from work the way they send bulldozers to penalize acclaimed wrong owners, building demolitions would have since been drastically reduced. But it is never so; instead such perverse personnel remain at work and more often than not, advance to the highest grade thereby encouraging the growth of such cabals and perpetuating their misconduct.

If other leaders claim not to know, minister Nyesom Wike cannot because he has made public how such officials had attempted to extort funds from him even as governor of Rivers state. It is therefore obvious that no one can really claim ignorance of the existence of the cabals because their methodologies and operational patterns hardly change. Why for instance is it that buildings get demolished several decades after they had been completed and occupied? Where were those who become super active during demolitions when such buildings were at foundation levels? Is it not an open secret that the real meaning of sign X placed on any building to stop further work is for the owners to visit the enforcement officials for settlement?

Some demolitions may no doubt be inevitable. But in such cases, government must proceed and function with a human face. All those involved in the breaches necessitating demolitions which should include government officials should be equally sanctioned. Since we are in a democracy, punitive and 'surprise demolitions' such as midnight actions should be avoided even where court approvals have been secured. Victims should never be given grounds to imagine any form of discrimination. We all desire beautiful cities, just as we all deserve affordable shelter.

Special Report

Police arrest killers of Imo DPO, other criminals

PRESS BRIEFING AND PARADING OF CRIMINAL SUSPECTS AND EXHIBITS BY CP ABOKI DANJUMA, THE COMMISSIONER OF POLICE, IMO STATE POLICE COMMAND, HELD ON SATURDAY, 2ND OF DECEMBER, 2023, AT THE COMMAND'S HEADQUARTERS, OWERRI.

Good afternoon gentlemen of the press, I warmly welcome you to this press briefing and parading of criminal suspects.

Imo State Police Command under my leadership has continued to intensify its effort to provide maximum safety and security for 'Ndi Imo' as the State has been relatively peaceful. However, last week the Command was faced with some security challenges particularly at the Mbaise axis, by IPOB/ESN Terrorists leading to the death of a Traditional ruler in Ezinihitte Mbaise, a party ward chairman, DPO Ahiazu Mbaise and an Inspector of Police.

These prompted me to convene a crucial meeting with Inter-Agency Security chiefs in the State aimed at rolling out collaborative operational strategies that will assist in bringing the assailants to book. I directed the Command's Special Tactical Squad to go all out in synergy with other sister security agencies and hunt down the hoodlums responsible for the attacks.

The unwavering dedication and persistent efforts of the courageous operatives yielded results as I have before you today a total of 25 male Suspects arrested for various criminal cases ranging from IPOB/ESN Terrorism Activities, Armed Robbery, Murder, Stealing/Receiving Stolen Properties, Cultism, and Unlawful Possession of firearms and Ammunition. These are suspects that are evidentially linked to



Benjamin Netanyahu

the respective case against them. While other miscreants were neutralized in a fierce gun battle that ensued between them and the police.

In the course of investigating the aforesaid cases, a total number of 20 Assault Rifles including, 5 AK 47 rifles, 6 Pump Action guns, 9 locally made pistol and one Barrera pistol and a total of 359 rounds of various calibers of ammunition, were recovered from them. Also recovered from these suspects include; six vehicles were recovered, (3) Motorcycles, Charms, IPOB/ESN vest/insignia, Military camouflage, police vests, and other incriminating items.

I will give you insights into some of these cases starting with the **BURSTING OF IPOB/ESN TERRORISTS ALLEGEDLY INVOLVED IN THE KILLING OF DPO AHIAZU MBAISE AND INSPECTOR, RECOVERY OF ARMS**

AND AMMUNITION.

Following the murder of DPO Ahiazu Mbaise and an Inspector of Police on 27/11/2023, at Ahiara junction in Ahiazu Mbaise by disgruntled elements suspected to be members of the proscribed Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) and its armed militia Eastern Security Network (ESN) and the subsequent confessions of suspects arrested at the scene by Police operatives in synergy with the Military, operatives of the Anti-Kidnapping unit on 29/11/2023 stormed the camp of the criminal syndicate at Umuohie in Ngor Okpala LGA of Imo State, dislodged the terrorists, recovered two automatic pump action rifles and six rounds of life cartridges.

The determined operatives continued their operation in search of the fleeing terrorists, storming Igbodo-Etche in Rivers State through a Technical Intelligence Tracking Device wherein a native doctor named Everest Agbaragam 'm', 62 yrs, of Umuoma, Igbodo, Etche

Rivers State AKA Mount Everest was arrested. On searching his shrine one pump action gun loaded with 12 rounds of live cartridges, one big bag containing various denominations of Biafran currencies, one live crocodile, and fetish items were recovered.

On interrogation, he confessed to being a member of IPOB/ESN. He stated that he usually prepares local bulletproof charms popular known as 'Odeshi' for his cohorts before they embark on any operation. He provided useful information to the gallant operatives in storming Umuogwu Forest in Aboh Mbaise LGA on 1/12/23.

The terrorists on sighting the Police, engaged them in a gun battle but were subdued by the combat-ready operatives who professionally maneuvered into vintage position and returned fire. In the ensuing gun duel, some of them were neutralized while others escaped into the tick forest with bullet wounds.

The terrorist camp was dislodged and the following exhibits were recovered; 1. Five (5) AK-47 rifles, 2. Six (6) magazines containing two hundred and twenty (220) live ammunition, 3. Six (6) pump action guns, 4. One hundred and twenty-one (121) rounds of live cartridges, 5. One Revolver, 6. Four (4) locally made pistols, 7. Three Toyota Venza Cars, including the one they used in attacking the DPO, One Toyota Highlander SUV, and IEDs.

An intense manhunt is ongoing to track down other fleeing suspects. They will be arraigned in court upon completion of a comprehensive investigation.

ARREST OF NOTORIOUS ARMED ROBBERY SUSPECTS:

Intelligence-led investigation and data tracking analysis by operatives of the

‘The unwavering dedication and persistent efforts of the courageous operatives yielded results as I have before you today a total of 25 male Suspects arrested for various criminal cases ranging from IPOB/ESN Terrorism Activities, Armed Robbery, Murder, Stealing/Receiving Stolen Properties, Cultism, and Unlawful Possession of firearms and Ammunition. These are suspects that are evidentially linked to the respective case against them. While other miscreants were neutralized in a fierce gun battle that ensued between them and the police.’

Special Report

Police parades suspected killers of Imo DPO...

Continued from pg 10

Squad led to the arrest of two notorious armed robbery suspects namely; Isreal Ikoma, 'm' 40yrs, and Bright Chimezie 'm' 42yrs, involved in a case of stealing one Lexus 330 ES Jeep.

The suspects were nabbed on 28/11/2023 at Rumokoro in Rivers State in possession of the vehicles. They have made confessional statements that will assist the determined Police operatives in arresting other members of their criminal syndicate at large. They will be arraigned in court upon completion of a Comprehensive Investigation.

In a related development, Operatives of the QIT squad in close synergy with Akokwa Vigilantes swiftly responded to an actionable intelligence received from a concerned citizen that IPOB/ESN members were sighted at Orié Akokwa market moving in a motorcycle and tactically mobilized to the scene. On sighting the operative the hoodlums engaged them in a gun duel by were overwhelmed by the stiff resistance and professionalism of the determined operatives, forcing them to flee with various degrees of gunshot injuries. On combing the scene the following items were recovered, 1. Red Qlink Motorcycle, 2. A bag containing 40 pieces of T-shirt, 3. 49 Hand Gloves/face mask, 4. Six Ankle Protector, 5. Four Expanded Rocket Launcher Ammunition, 6. Mopol Uniform, 7. Ammunitions, and 8. Charms.

NEUTRALIZATION OF ARMED ROBBERY SUSPECTS:

An intense follow-up to a distress call received from a concerned citizen that armed robbers numbering about five, operating with unmarked motorcycles were robbing the shop of Ugorji Chimeuecheya 'm' along BSC road Orlu, operatives of Orlu Divisional Headquarters swiftly mobilized to the scene engaged the hoodlums in a fierce gun duel. In the process, one of the hoodlums was neutralized while others escaped with various degrees of gunshot injuries. On searching the suspect and the scene, one unregistered KDH King



Motorcycle, one cut-to-size double barrel gun, and three live cartridges were recovered. The lifeless body of the neutralized hoodlum was recovered and deposited at IMSUTH Mortuary, Orlu. Efforts are on top gear to arrest the fleeing suspects and make them face the full wrath of the law.

ARREST OF TWO SUSPECTED ARMED ROBBER/RECOVERY OF A BARRETT PISTOL

On 25/11/2023 at about 21000hrs, Operatives of Anti-Kidnapping Unit Owerri while on surveillance patrol within Njaba Local Government Area of Imo State, through credible information arrested two suspects namely; Obinna Emenue 35 yrs 'm' of Duruaku and Obinwanne Umuaka in Njaba L.G.A. of Imo State and one Berretta pistol with three rounds of live ammunition were recovered from the suspect. He confessed to being a member of the Armed Robbery gang terrorizing Njaba and Isu Local Government Areas and stated that he was going to meet his gang members for them to embark on Armed Robbery operations that night. The suspects also mentioned his gang members at large. Meanwhile, intense investigation is ongoing for the arrest of his fleeing gang members and the recovery of their arms.

ARREST OF NOTORIOUS ARMED ROBBERY SUSPECT/RECOVERY OF LOCALLY MADE PISTOL

On 5/10/2023 at about 2020hrs, Operatives of Anti-Kidnapping Unit, Imo State Command, Owerri while on

routine patrol received a distress call from residents of Aladinma Housing Estate, Owerri about the armed robbery activities that had been recurrence attack within the area. On receipt of the distress call, operatives of the Anti-kidnapping unit swiftly swung into action, and navigated to the area, hoodlums on sighting the operatives took to their heels and one of the armed robbery gang members Chinonso Obieshi was arrested, one locally made pistol, and two lives cartridges was recovered from the hoodlum. The suspect confessed to being among the armed robbery gang terrorizing Aladinma and Owerri Municipal Council. Meanwhile, the investigation is ongoing to arrest the fleeing suspects.

ATTEMPTED MURDER / UNLAWFUL POSSESSION OF FIREARM PISTOL

On 19/11/2023 at about 0730hrs, the family of Nnadi, Amaechi, and Nwadike in Umuayalu, Egbu in Owerri North Local Government Area of Imo State were having a meeting to discuss their family problem emanating from ancestral land disputes. In the process, parties in the meeting argued among themselves which escalated and the suspect Ugonna Nnadi disrupted the meeting, harassed and assaulted the family elders which made the situation tense. The suspect Ugonna Nnadi rushed into his house, brought out a Chief Revolver pistol loaded with live ammunition, and fired which caused commotion, tension, and fear.

On receipt of the information, Operatives of the Anti-Kidnapping Unit, swiftly swung into action, gathered intelligence, and arrested the said Ugonna Nnadi. The Chief Revolver pistol with five rounds of live ammunition and one expended shell was recovered from him. The suspect confessed to being a member of the dreaded cult group and stated that he intended to kill the complainant, Chimdi Nnadi. Meanwhile, the investigation is ongoing.

ARREST OF SUSPECTED CULTIST: ARREST OF A NOTORIOUS CRIMINAL;

Acting of credible intelligence that hoodlums who specialized in POS fraud are in operation at Umukoto Umudibia, Nekede. Operatives of Nekede Divisional Headquarters in synergy with the local vigilantes mobilized to the scene. On sighting the police the hoodlums took to their heels but were given a hot chase by the determined operatives during which Ifeanyi Anyasodor 'm', 23yrs AKA Eluigwe was eventually arrested while Dikachi 'm' and other suspects escaped. On searching the suspect, One Baibox, and a suspected stolen POS machine were recovered. On interrogation, he confessed to crime and membership of the Vikings confraternity. Efforts are on top gear to arrest his cohort and bring them to book.

To this end, I appreciate the officers and men of this Command and other sister security agencies for their display of gallantry and professionalism in achieving this operational feat. I thank the good people of Imo State for their unalloyed support and cooperation with the Police and other sister security agencies

Finally, I want to especially appreciate His Excellency, the Executive Governor of Imo State, Distinguished Senator Hope Uzodinma for his continuous support to the Police in the fight against all forms of violent crime in the State.

Thanks and God bless you!





Happy Birthday

THE PERFECTIONIST

Engr Charles Ugwu @ 81

Great men and women are usually rare particularly now, the age of digitalization. Engr Charles C. Ugwu is ranked among the great men and women who have distinguished themselves in various fields of life.

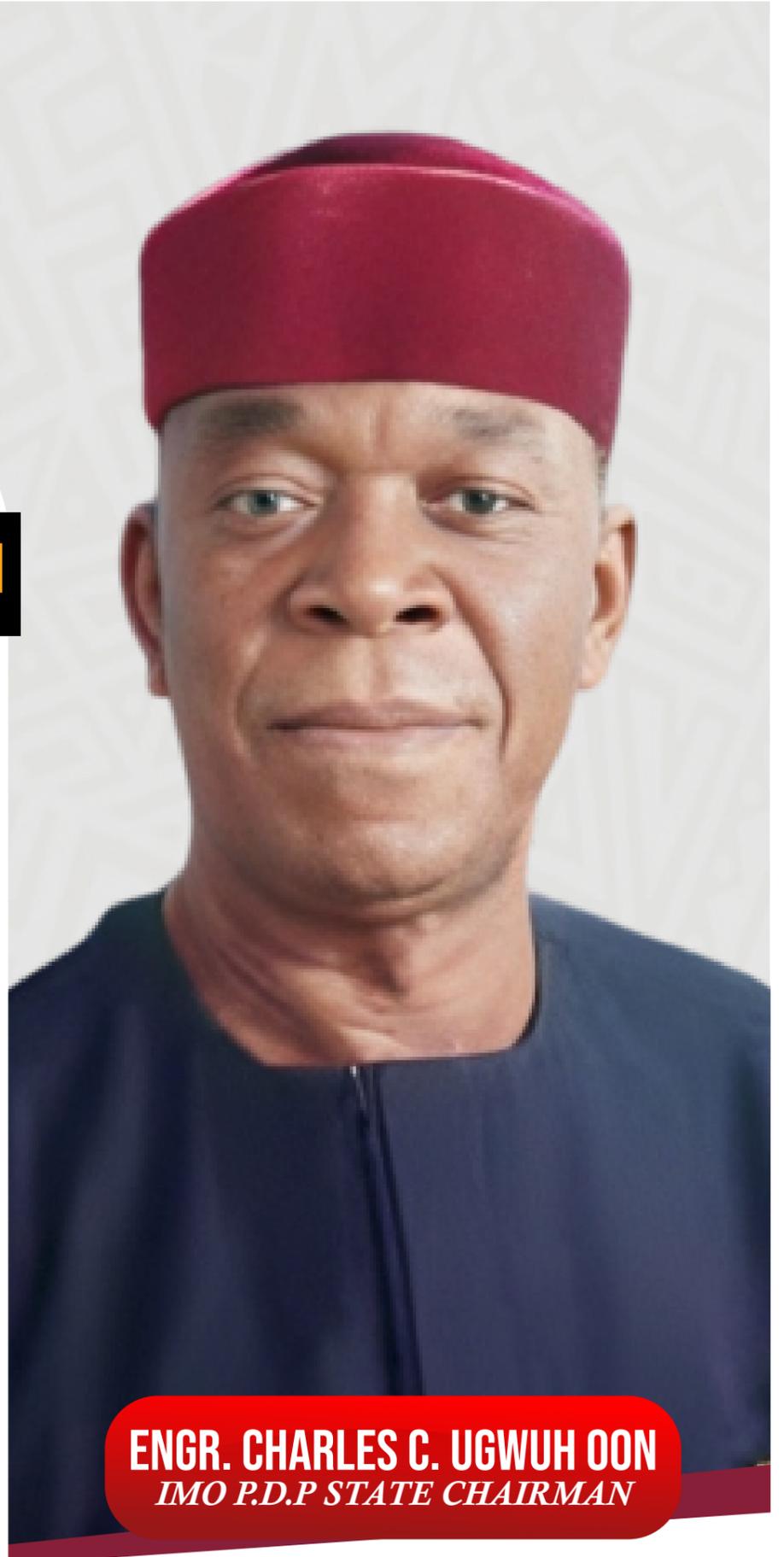
An accomplished engineer who worked assiduously to meritoriously climb the jagged steps and phases of life, ultimately measuring effectively as a happily married man blessed with children.

Enterprising, ingenious and disciplined, Ugwu is a man of many parts. An illustrious industrialist, Ugwu amazingly reached the apogee of his career when he emerged the chairman of Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN).

A visionary leader who is poised for the growth and development of his people, thus, he was the PDP governorship candidate in Imo State in the 2007 election. In view of his huge contributions to commerce, trade and industry, he was made a minister in that direction. And just in the current circumstances, he has been the chairman, Imo State PDP, thus, he is called the stabilizer and central pillar of the major opposition party in the state.

Ugwu is simple, straight forward and soft spoken. He promotes constitutionalism and encourages democratic processes.

As the Great Engineer of our time turns 81 today, we, the Imo PDP Critical Stakeholders, wish you a resounding happy birthday and more fruitful years ahead.



ENGR. CHARLES C. UGWU OON
IMO P.D.P STATE CHAIRMAN

Signed:
Comrade Kenneth Akunnakwe
For & on behalf of Imo PDP
Critical Stakeholders