

Gunmen kill Lagos NURTW organising secretary

By Isaac Olamikan,

The Organising Secretary of the National Union of Road Transport Workers, Lagos State Council, Toba Ajiboye, popularly known as Ijaya, has died after he was shot by yet-to-be-identified gunmen in Lagos.

Ajiboye was said to have come

under attack on Sunday night while returning home from his childhood neighbourhood in Fadeyi.

According to reports, the assailants intercepted his vehicle around the Ikorodu Road axis and opened fire, leaving the car riddled with bullet holes.

Photos and videos circulating on social media after the incident showed his white vehicle with multiple bullet

holes on the windscreen and other parts of the body.

Initial reports indicated that Ajiboye and other occupants of the vehicle survived the attack after sustaining gunshot wounds. However, subsequent reports claimed that the union official later died from his injuries.

Reacting to the incident, Lagos NURTW Chairman, Alhaji Mustapha

Adekunle, popularly known as Sego, expressed grief over Ajiboye's death, describing him as a loyal ally and trusted friend.

In a tribute posted on his Facebook page on Tuesday, Sego said he was devastated by the loss, noting that Ajiboye's commitment and dedication to the union and their political structure would be greatly missed.

"The news of the sudden passing of Comrade Toba Ajiboye has left me deeply saddened and heartbroken. It is difficult to come to terms with the loss of such a loyal, dependable, and committed ally," he wrote.

Sego described the late union leader as "more than an ally," saying he remained a pillar of TeamSego and SegoNation.

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Tinubu vows renewed clamp down on quack engineers



18,510 Nigerians To Benefit From FG's Renewed Hope Vocational Skills Training Nationwide - Doro



Police confirm arrest of 'fake' agency DG Adeyemi in Osun



OSUN 2026: ODA Convenes Election Integrity Summit, Rallies INEC, Candidates and Key Stakeholders Behind Peace Charter

Honourable Minister Of Foreign Affairs Arrives In Portugal For The 2026 Eurafrican Forum



Front, members of the high table at the event. Middle in ash agbada, is the Honourable Minister of Humanitarian Affairs and Poverty Reduction. Dr. Bernard M Doro by his right is the UN Resident Humanitarian Coordinator, Mohammed Malik Fall and to the left is the Director General, NEMA, Mrs Zubaida Umar along with others during the opening ceremony.

Spain beat France 2-0, seal place in World Cup final

NEWS

Tinubu vows renewed clamp down on quack engineers

...pledges full support for COREN, insists on quality for legacy projects

President Bola Ahmed Tinubu has said his administration will not compromise on engineering standards, stressing that public safety must guide every infrastructure project in the country. Politics

The President who was represented by the Minister of Works, Engr. David Umahi, said this during the opening of the 34th COREN Engineering Assembly, in Abuja, on Tuesday.

The Assembly had as its theme: "Advancing Public Safety in Nigeria through Strategic Engineering Regulatory Enforcement and a Tiered Sanctioning Regime."

Tinubu described the theme as apt, saying engineering remains critical to

national development.

The president said, "No road, bridge, or building is more valuable than human life."

He added that regulations are not designed to witch-hunt professionals but to protect Nigerians and restore confidence in the profession.

Tinubu reassured that his administration is determined to complete the four Legacy Road Projects across the six geopolitical zones under the Renewed Hope Agenda. He said the projects will boost the economy, improve connectivity and drive sustainable growth.

In his address, Engr. Umahi commended COREN for the theme, noting that engineering is one profession where errors can be fatal.

He said, "Unlike other professions, when a building collapses or a bridge fails, there is no appeal. That is why we

must enforce standards strictly and sanction those who cut corners."

The Minister charged site engineers to remain professional and resist pressure from contractors. He urged COREN to strengthen its disciplinary processes to weed out unqualified practitioners.

Umahi also highlighted the progress on the Legacy Projects, saying they are meant to improve integration, security, job creation and investment across the country.



The Permanent Secretary, Federal Ministry of Works, Mr. Rafiu Adeladan, who presented the keynote, said infrastructure is central to the Renewed Hope Agenda. He called on engineers to uphold ethics, competence and due process.

Chairman of the occasion, Alhaji Aliko Dangote, represented by Prof. Hassan Umaru, said quality control and strict compliance were key to the success of the Dangote Refinery. He urged

COREN to sustain regulatory enforcement.

COREN President, Engr. Prof. Sadiq Zubair Abubakar, said the Council has deployed digital verification systems to check fraud and improve compliance. He added that industrial training before NYSC will remain mandatory for engineering graduates.

Also present were the Minister of Innovation, Science and Technology, Dr. Bosun Tijjani; Plateau State Governor, Barr. Caleb Mutfwang; and APC National Chairman, Prof. Nentawe Yilwatda, who all commended COREN and the Ministry of Works for their efforts.

Police confirm arrest of 'fake' agency DG Adeyemi in Osun

The self-acclaimed Director-General of the controversial Presidential Foreign Investment Promotion Council, Adeniyi Adeyemi, has been arrested by the Nigeria Police Force in Osun few hours after a Federal High Court in Abuja issued a bench warrant for his arrest.

In an exclusive interview with PUNCH Online on Tuesday, the spokesperson of the Osun Police Command, Abiodun Ojelabi told our correspondent that Adeniyi was arrested in his hideout in Osun by the Intelligence Response Team from Abuja. He is likely to be transferred to Abuja later today.

"Yes, it is confirmed. The Intelligence Response Team from Abuja arrested him here in Osun," Ojelabi said.

A video of the arrest showed Adeyemi dressed in a light blue traditional outfit while surrounded by security operatives.

In the footage, he appeared serious and visibly concerned as he responded

ed to questions from officers.

When asked to identify himself, Adeyemi initially declined to give a direct response.

"I've mentioned it, sir," he said.

The officers insisted that he state his name again.

"Mention it for us, please. What is your name? What is your name?" one of the officers asked.

Adeyemi replied, "I've said it several times."

His arrest came hours after Justice Mohammed Umar of the Federal High Court in Abuja ordered his arrest follow-

ing his failure to appear for arraignment over alleged conspiracy, forgery and impersonation.

PUNCH Online had earlier reported that the judge granted an oral application by the prosecution after Adeyemi failed to appear in court to take his plea on an eight-count charge filed by the Nigeria Police Force.

The prosecution alleged that Adeyemi operated the purported Presidential Foreign Investment Promotion Council, an organisation the Presidency has maintained does not exist.

Justice Umar, while ruling on the prosecution's application, dismissed arguments by Adeyemi's lawyer that his client stayed away because he feared for his life.

According to the court, the defendant would be compelled to appear and face trial.

The judge subsequently adjourned the matter until September 30, 2026, for arraignment.

Adeyemi's arrest comes barely a day after he publicly denied reports that he was

evading security agencies.

Speaking during an interview on Channels Television on Monday, he had insisted he was not hiding.

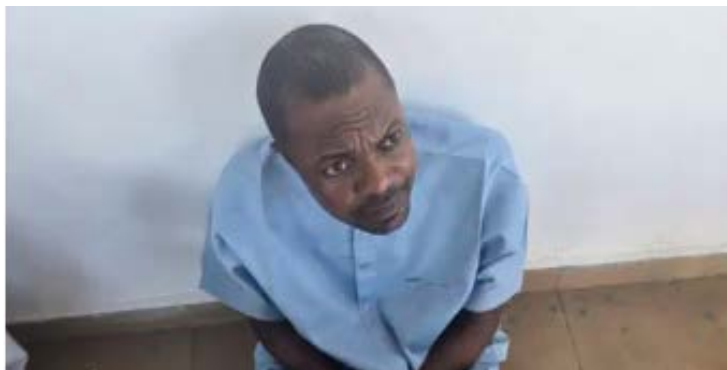
"I'm ready to show my face. I'm not hiding. I'm only fearing for my life because I have it on good authority that my life is in danger."

"There have been several attempts on my life."

He also repeated his allegation that he paid ₦400 million through an intermediary to secure his appointment as Director-General of the disputed council and called for an independent investigation into the controversy.

The police had accused Adeyemi of forging several official documents, including a purported presidential appointment letter allegedly signed by the Chief of Staff to the President, Femi Gbajabiamila, as well as other government documents used to present the council as a legitimate federal agency.

Investigators also alleged that Adeyemi falsely presented himself as the Director-General of the council and operated from an office within the Federal Secretariat Complex in Abuja.



A'Court reserves judgment in ADC, four parties' deregistration appeals

The Court of Appeal in Abuja on Tuesday reserved judgment in separate appeals challenging the Federal High Court's decision ordering the deregistration of the African Democratic Congress and four other political parties.

A three-member panel led by Justice Abba Bello Mohammed fixed judgment for a date to be communicated to the parties after counsel adopted their respective briefs of argument.

The appellants are the African Democratic Congress, the Action Peoples Party, the Action Alliance, the Accord Party and the Zenith Labour Party.

Counsel for the Accord Party,

Musibau Adetunbi (SAN), urged the appellate court to allow the appeal and set aside the judgment of the Federal High Court, describing it as a nullity.

He argued that the trial judge, Justice Peter Lifu, erred in law by reaching findings and conclusions allegedly unsupported by law.

Adetunbi further faulted the judgment on several grounds and urged the court to nullify it in the interest of justice.

The appeals stem from the judgment delivered by Justice Lifu in suit marked **FHC/ABJ/CS/2637/2026**, in which he ordered the Independent National Electoral Commission to

deregister the five political parties for allegedly failing to satisfy the constitutional requirements for retaining their registration.

The judge also restrained INEC from recognising the affected parties, accepting nominations from them or allowing them to participate in the 2027 general elections.

He further barred the parties from holding themselves out as registered political parties, having found merit in the suit instituted by the National Forum of Former Legislators.

The group, through its counsel, Rabo Mohammed, had argued that INEC was under a constitutional ob-

ligation, pursuant to Section 225A of the 1999 Constitution (as amended), the Electoral Act and the commission's regulations, to deregister political parties that failed to meet the prescribed electoral performance thresholds.

According to the plaintiffs, the affected parties failed to secure at least 25 per cent of votes in a state during a presidential election or win any elective office at the federal, state or local government levels in the 2023 general elections and subsequent by-elections.

They maintained that the parties' continued registration was unconstitutional.



How to apply for free CAC registration under FG's 250,000 MSME programme

The Federal Government has opened applications for the free registration of 250,000 Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises under the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria-Corporate Affairs Commission formalisation programme.

The initiative, approved by President Bola Tinubu, is designed to remove the cost of business registration for eligible nano, micro and small businesses, enabling more entrepreneurs to join Nigeria's formal economy.

Successful applicants will receive free Business Name registration through the Corporate Affairs Commission, with the Federal Government covering the statutory registration fees.

The programme was announced by the Presidency during the 8th National MSME Awards held at the State House, Abuja, on June 27.

Beyond free registration, beneficiaries will



also receive technical training, business development support and access to opportunities aimed at improving business sustainability and growth.

How to apply

Business owners interested in the programme are required to:

1. Visit the official SMEDAN portal at portal.smedan.gov.ng
2. Create an account using their person-

al details, including name, email address, phone number and password.

3. Complete the MSME registration form with accurate business information.

4. Select "No" when asked whether the business already has a CAC registration number.

5. Review the information provided and submit the application.

6. Wait for confirmation from SMEDAN if the application is successful.

Businesses already registered on the SMEDAN database but without CAC registration may automatically qualify for the programme.

Applicants approved under the scheme will be contacted with the next steps for their free CAC Business Name registration.

The initiative follows a Memorandum of Understanding signed between the Corporate Affairs Commission and SMEDAN to formalise 250,000 nano, micro and small enterprises nationwide.

In 2026, Tinubu formally approved the free formalisation and corporate registration of 250,000 Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises, MSMEs, across the country.

It was announced at the State House in Abuja during the 8th National MSME Awards 2026.

According to the presidency, the move is aimed at removing financial difficulty for nano, micro, and small scale entrepreneurs, effectively integrating them into Nigeria's formal banking and regulatory ecosystem.

PHOTO STORY



NEWS

OSUN 2026: ODA Convenes Election Integrity Summit, Rallies INEC, Candidates and Key Stakeholders Behind Peace Charter

Non-partisan diaspora body to convene INEC, security chiefs, candidates and civil society for landmark accountability summit ahead of August governorship polls

OSOGBO, NIGERIA — 8 July 2026 — The Osun Development Association (ODA) has finalised arrangements to host the Osun 2026 Democratic Governance, Peace and Electoral Integrity Summit, a high-level civic intervention designed to steer the state's political discourse toward issue-based campaigning and away from rising tension ahead of the August governorship election.

The Summit will hold on Thursday, 16 July 2026, at the Aurora Event Centre, Plot 6, New GRA, Osogbo, beginning at 10:00 a.m. prompt, under the theme "Speak, Choose, Hold Accountable: Citizens at the Centre of Osun's Democracy."

Convened by ODA's Leadership and Governance Committee (LEAD-GOV), the Summit is a non-partisan response from the state's elite diaspora and domestic civic community to recent reports of political violence, destruction of campaign materials, and personality-driven friction across Osun State.

"Osun State is at a critical democratic crossroads," said Dr Tunji Olugbodi, Chairman of ODA's LEAD-GOV Committee. "We believe our state can, and must, set a national benchmark for peaceful, credible, and development-driven elections. This Summit moves citizens from the periphery to the very centre of the democratic process, demanding institutional accountability from all political actors."

The Summit will bring together a broad coalition of institutional stakeholders under a single framework, including:

- The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC)
- State Command heads of security agencies
- Registered political parties and their respective governorship candidates



- The Osun State Chapter of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) and Muslim Ummah leadership
- Traditional rulers, civil society organisations (CSOs), and professional bodies
- Youth and women's advocacy groups, and the independent media corps

A centrepiece of the Summit will be the formal unveiling and signing of three institutional outputs designed to outlast the election cycle:

- The Osun 2026 Peace Charter a binding, public commitment by all political parties and candidates to non-violence and issue-led campaigning.
- The Governance Accountability Charter a comprehensive, crowdsourced document setting out citizen

expectations for the incoming administration.

- The Summit Communiqué a policy document outlining frameworks for pre- and post-election stability, to be circulated nationwide.

To ensure compliance beyond the election, ODA working in alignment with the Transition Monitoring Group (TMG) will deploy a dedicated post-Summit monitoring and evaluation framework to track commitments made at the event over the three months following the August governorship election.

Dr Segun Aina, OFR, Chairman of ODA, noted that the collective participation of faith leaders, traditional institutions, and the independent press will supply the moral authority and public oversight required to preserve peace in the state.

Members of the press, civil society representatives, and invited corporate delegates are requested to complete accreditation with

the LEAD-GOV Committee Secretariat on or before Friday, 10 July 2026, to secure entry passes and media protocols.

About the Osun Development Association (ODA)

The Osun Development Association (ODA) is a premier non-partisan diaspora and domestic civic development organisation dedicated to the socio-economic advancement, good governance, and democratic sustainability of Osun State.

Media Contact

Mr Chris Adetayo

Asst. Publicity Secretary

Osun Development Association (ODA)

Phone: +234 806 752 4235

Email: osundev2@gmail.com

Spain beat France 2-0, seal place in World Cup final

TSpain booked their place in the 2026 FIFA World Cup final with a 2-0 victory over France in Tuesday's semi-final in Arlington, Texas.

Mikel Oyarzabal opened the scoring from the penalty spot after Lucas Digne fouled Lamine Yamal, before Pedro Porro doubled La Roja's advantage in the second half following a flowing move orchestrated by Dani Olmo.

Oyarzabal converted from the spot in the 22nd minute after referee Ivan Barton awarded Spain a penalty for Digne's challenge on Yamal.

Punch Online reports that this is Oyarzabal's fifth goal of the tournament and the first time either side had trailed during their World Cup campaign.

Spain then tightened their grip on the contest when Porro finished off a slick passing move in the 58th minute to leave France chasing the game.

The victory sends Spain into Sunday's World Cup final, where they will face the winners of Wednesday's second semi-final between England and Argentina.

France, who were seeking a third consecutive World Cup final appearance, struggled to break down Spain's disciplined defence as Luis de la Fuente's side maintained their impressive run to the tournament's showpiece match.

Spain outplay France, says FIFA

A post match report obtained from the FIFA website after the game reported that La Roja outplayed France.

"Spain frustrated France at one end and punished them at the other to deservedly win their FIFA World Cup 2026™ semi-final at Dallas Stadium.

"La Roja limited Les Bleus' chances though some flawless defending, and scored thorough Mikel Oyarzabal and Pedro Porro.

"Spain will now face the England-Argentina victors at New York New Jersey Stadium on Sunday. They emerged triumphant in their only previous appearance in the fixture, Andres Iniesta sinking the Netherlands at Soccer City in 2010.

"France started as the slight favourites and, though Kylian Mbappe threatened on the break, Lamine Yamal gave Luis de la Fuente's side the game's first big chance.

"The winger, a day after his 19th birthday, got to the ball before Lucas Digne and was clipped inside the box. Oyarzabal struck the resulting penalty past spot-kick-saving specialist Mike Maignan," the report read.

Tension remain high in the game even in the final minutes of the seven minutes extra time. However, the game had been sealed in the 58th minute by Tottenham defender Pedro Porro.

The post match report stated, "The advantage was amplified when Porro played a palatial one-two with Dani Olmo, taking the return impeccably and burying the ball in the bottom corner.

"France, with Desire Doue and Rayan Cherki on, pushed to get back into a game, but goalkeeper Unai Simon acted astutely as a sweeper-keeper and Marc Cucurella made an excellent challenge on Mbappe."

Meanwhile, Mbappe could still pick something from the tournament the football body teased.

"The final whistle sparked ecstasy for the Spaniards and agony for the French. Didier Deschamps' team will have a shot at bronze on Saturday, when Mbappe could boost his hopes for another adidas Golden Boot," it concluded.



NEWS

Nigeria And Tunisia Pledge To Deepen Bilateral Cooperation



The Honourable Minister of Foreign Affairs, Her Excellency Ambassador Bianca Odumegwu-Ojukwu, has reaffirmed Nigeria's commitment to strengthening bilateral relations with the Republic of Tunisia through enhanced cooperation in trade, investment, education, defence, technology, and people-to-people exchanges.

The Honourable Minister made this known during a meeting with the Ambassador of the Republic of Tunisia to Nigeria, His Excellency Mohsen Antit, on Monday, 6 July 2026.

Congratulating the Honourable Minister on her appointment, Ambassador Antit conveyed the warm greetings of the Government of Tunisia and expressed his country's desire to deepen its longstanding cordial relations with Nigeria. He proposed the revitalisation of the Nigeria-Tunisia Joint Commission as a strategic platform for expanding bilateral cooperation across critical sectors.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs, in her remarks, welcomed the proposal, describing the Joint Commission as an important mechanism for promoting trade, investment, and economic collaboration between the two countries. She emphasised the need to identify practical avenues for cooperation between Nigerian and Tunisian entrepreneurs, particularly through capacity-building initiatives and partnerships in business and tourism.

The Tunisian Ambassador disclosed ongoing efforts to improve air connectivity between both countries through proposed flight routes linking Tunis, Cotonou, and Abuja. The discussions also explored opportunities for expanding bilateral cooperation through the conclusion of agreements on visa-free travel for holders of diplomatic passports, defence cooperation, and other areas of mutual interest. The Ambassador further invited the Honourable Minister to undertake an official visit to Tunisia to explore the country's growing tourism sector.

Highlighting opportunities in education and technology, Ambassador Antit disclosed that Tunisia annually offers six fully funded scholarships to Nigerian students but noted that the opportunities had remained largely



underutilized. He also proposed the establishment of drone manufacturing facilities in Bauchi State as part of efforts to strengthen technological and industrial cooperation. The Honourable

Minister assured the Ambassador that the Ministry would engage relevant stakeholders, including the Federal Ministry of Education, to improve awareness and utilization of the

scholarship programme.

On regional peace and security, the Honourable Minister sought Tunisia's experience in addressing the proliferation of small arms and light weapons from Libya. The Ambassador explained that Tunisia had adopted a multi-layered border security system comprising five levels of security checks to curb illicit arms trafficking.

Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening Nigeria-Tunisia relations through the early convening of the Joint Commission and the conclusion of pending bilateral agreements in key areas, including double taxation avoidance, defence cooperation, livestock development, legal and judicial cooperation, education, business promotion, technology transfer, and visa-free arrangements for holders of diplomatic passports. They also pledged to sustain high-level engagements in pursuit of their shared bilateral objectives.



Police Command Commences Investigation Into Death Of A Young Man In Misau LGA

The attention of the Bauchi State Police Command has been drawn to a report making the rounds on social media alleging that operatives at a Police Outpost under Misau Division, Misau LGA assaulted a young man who was being interrogated over a case under investigation.

It was further alleged that the victim, Abdullahi Adamu, 20-years-old, of Sebare Village, Hardawa District, was admitted at the Federal Medical Centre (FMC) Misau, and was later referred to the Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University Teaching Hospital (ATBUTH) Bauchi for further treatment, where he was confirmed dead on Sunday, 12/07/2026 while receiving treatment.

The Commissioner of Police, CP Sani-Omolori Aliyu, mni, psc (+) has

expressed concern over the allegation and wishes to state that the Command takes issues of professionalism, respect for human rights, and due process very seriously.

In line with this, the Commissioner has immediately ordered a full-scale investigation into the circumstances surrounding the incident. The Command is committed to ensuring that justice is served and that appropriate disciplinary and legal actions will be taken against any personnel found culpable in accordance with the provisions of the law.

The Command extends its condolences to the family of the deceased and prays for the repose of his soul.

Members of the public with useful information that can aid the investigation are encouraged to come forward to the Command.



NTDA PARTNERS RINGO SPORT CLUB ON NISPRISPORT 2026

The Director General of the Nigerian Tourism Development Authority (NTDA), Dr. Olayiwola Awakan has thrown the weight of the Authority behind the hosting of a one-week intensive training programme for the Nigerian service personnel by the Ringo Sport Club, named, Nigerian Service Personnel Ringo Sport Training Programme (NISPRISPORT) 2026 with support funding of major aspects of the training exercise.

Dr. Awakan who disclosed this during a visit on him at the Abuja headquarter of NTDA by Malam Ahmed Mohammed Sule, National President of the Ringo Sport Club, noted that sports tourism is a huge investment hub that has become a global economic industry whose global market is valued at over \$1.3 trillion by the year 2032 and that Nigeria cannot afford to be left out of benefiting from the immense economic values the sector holds.

Scheduled to hold at the Indoor Sport Hall, Package 'B' of the MKO Abiola National Stadium Abuja from Monday 3rd to Friday 7th August, 2026, NISPRISPORT is a high-impact preparatory training designed exclusively for the Service Personnel with the ultimate objective to assemble and train future champions in Inter-Service, National and International Ringo Sport Tournaments.

Speaking further, Dr. Awakan who said the Authority is ready to partner with the Nigerian sports sector so as to explore the untapped economic potentials inherent in it and for the socio-economic benefits of the country, added

that the Ringo Sport Club is bringing back a very unique sport game into the country that was once a pride of the country and that Nigerians should be proud to accept and accommodate the game for its physical health benefits, peace building via sports competitions and economic exploration that the ringo sport offers.

In his response, Malam Ahmed noted with appreciation the kind gesture of the NTDA under the stewardship of Dr. Awakan to support the NISPRISPORT event which he described as a historic and first-of-its-kind participation of athletes of the Nigerian Service Personnel where the finest will test their mettle in skill acquisition as players of both national and global champions in discipline, agility and control of ringo sportsmanship.

Malam Ahmed noted that, having watched members of the Ringo Sport Club played exciting ringo sport matches during HENPAM-RIST 2026, where participants won trophies and medals, the service personnel became interested and

requested that they be trained to master the skills of the ringo sport, hence the current plans to host the NISPRISPORT 2026 training program.

He disclosed that a number of the service personnel establishments have been invited for participation in the one-week training program among which are the Nigerian Customs Service, Nigerian Immigration Service, Directorate of State Security Services, Nigerian National Intelligence Agency, Federal Road Safety Corps, Federal Fire Service and the Nigerian Drugs Law Enforcement Agency among others, adding that the responses from the invited establishments has been very impressive.

The ringo or ringtennis is a sport played on a rectangular court with a raised net similar to volley-ball or badminton, individual players or teams stand on opposite sides of the net and throw the ringo ring, a small rubber ring, back and forth, without letting it hit the ground and which also has to pass over the net to the opposite team on the other side of the court.

The game of ringo has evolved into an enjoyable form of entertainment and a wonderful recreational sport which could be trained by anyone, regardless of seasons and other conditions.

The Ringo Sport Club is a premier sports club dedicated to promoting the once sprawling sport of ringo in Nigeria in the 70s as well as general sports development and the fostering of cross-sectoral collaborations. Under the leadership of Mal Ahmed Mohammed Sule, the club has pioneered initiatives that bridge sports tourism and national development.



•Dr. Olayiwola Awakan
Director General, NTDA

Phone Scam:- Police Arrest Two Suspects For Defrauding Customers With Dummy Phones



Operatives of the Adama State Police Command have arrested two suspects for allegedly defrauding unsuspecting customers by selling them dummy phones instead of original working devices.

The suspects, Audu Abubakar and Nasiru Hassan, both residents of Bauchi Street, Yola North LGA, were apprehended following complaints from victims who discovered that the phones purchased were non-functional replicas.

Items recovered from the sus-

pects include a number of dummy phones and other exhibits.

The Commissioner of Police, CP Kabiru Umar Hassan, fdc, has directed that the suspects be thoroughly investigated and charged to court upon completion of investigation.

The Command urges members of the public to be vigilant and patronize only accredited phone dealers. Customers are advised to test devices thoroughly and demand receipts before making payment.



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10 × 5	25.4 × 21.61	216,300	352,260	Back Page Strip (3×6)	556,200
10 × 4	25.4 × 16.58	190,550	304,880	Front Page Strip (4×6)	1,133,000
10 × 3	25.4 × 13.33	169,950	221,450	Back Page Strip (4×6)	772,500
9 × 6	22.86 × 21.67	215,270	345,050	Front Page Solus	597,400
9 × 5	22.86 × 21.61	173,555	292,005	Back Page Solus	329,600
9 × 4	22.86 × 16.58	167,890	260,590	Centerspread	1,802,500
9 × 3	22.86 × 13.33	175,100	226,600	Double Spread	1,339,000
8 × 5	20.32 × 21.61	166,860	226,600	Page 2	885,800
8 × 4	20.32 × 16.58	123,600	206,000	Page 3	885,800
8 × 3	20.32 × 13.33	113,300	154,500	Page 5	782,800
7 × 4	17.78 × 16.58	103,000	180,250	Full Wrap Around	30,900,000
Quarter Page	19.68 × 14.22	154,500	185,400	Half Wrap Around	12,360,000
6 × 3	15.24 × 13.33	66,950	123,600		
6 × 2	15.24 × 8.38	46,350	86,520		
4 × 2	10.16 × 8.38	28,840	57,680		
3 × 2	7.62 × 8.38	21,630	43,260		
2 × 2	5.08 × 8.38	14,420	28,840		
1 × 1	2.54 × 2.54	4,120	7,210		

STRIP INSIDE PAGE (FINAL)

SIZE	B&W (N)	COLOUR (N)
3 × 6	133,900	236,900
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NEWS

Egyptian envoy meets Marwa, seeks collaboration with Nigeria on drug war



• *We're excited to sign MoU with Egypt on intelligence sharing, joint operations, others, says NDLEA boss*

The National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) has expressed its preparedness to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with its Egyptian counterpart to facilitate intelligence sharing, joint operations and training as part of ongoing efforts to curb the scourge of substance abuse and illicit drug trafficking in Nigeria and Egypt.

Chairman/Chief Executive Officer of NDLEA, Brig Gen Mohamed Buba Marwa (Rtd) expressed the agency's readiness to partner with the Arab country when the Egyptian Ambassador, Mohammed Fouad, paid him a courtesy visit in Abuja on Tuesday 14th July 2026.

While stating that the bilateral relationship between Nigeria and Egypt has been very cordial over the years, Marwa noted the global drug challenge has made it imperative for the two countries to build on that relationship by joining forces to fight a common challenge.

According to him, "the drug problem is a global challenge. Nowhere is untouched. The drug menace is everywhere in the world and it is for this reason that we have this kind of collaboration. We collaborate with the US Drug Enforcement Administration, the International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Bureau of the US, the National Crime Agency of the UK, the UK Border Force, the French Police, the German Criminal Police, our counterparts in Narcotics Control Bureau of India, Home Office International Operations of the



UK and many more.

"We are therefore very excited that we're going to collaborate with Egypt through an MoU. We've had recent headaches, I think because of the pressure from elsewhere, so the drug cartels are trying to find other alternatives in Africa but we have to stay united and push them out of our continent."

He cited the recent successes by NDLEA in that regard. "They are coming this way from Mexico, and just about two months ago, we were able to take down, a methamphetamine lab, that was worth \$362 million. The Mexicans themselves were manufacturing it in Nigeria, in the deep jungle, but we're able to take it down. And we've also dismantled an-

other meth lab run by some other Mexicans in a different state recently. So, I'm quite happy that Nigeria and Egypt have been working on an MoU to further our cooperation in this very important area. I think signing the MoU will pave the way for a more institutional cooperation between our competent agencies combating narcotics."

Speaking earlier, the Egyptian ambassador noted the importance of cooperation between both countries to tackle a common challenge. "Overall, I

think it's important for Egypt and Nigeria to enhance our bilateral cooperation in this area. Egypt and Nigeria being the two prominent African countries, should be able to address the challenge of combating narcotics from a continental perspective, which I think is impacting societies all over the continent.

"So, I'm on this visit to discuss with you what we can do together in terms of combating illicit trade and trafficking narcotics and to learn more about your priorities as an agency and how bilateral cooperation with Egypt can help and support the outstanding job that you're carrying out here in Nigeria in combating narcotics", the envoy stated



How the Landlords' Economy is Pricing Nigerians Out of Home

BY BLAISE UDUNZE

It is considered that in every organized society, the home is supposed to be a place of security. It should be where families find peace after a hard day's work, where children grow, where dreams are nurtured, and where the pressures of life temporarily fade away. This narrative comes with keen interest, having witnessed that for millions of Nigerians, home has become the country's newest economic battlefield. This is fast becoming the experience for the vast majority of Nigerians.

Across the length and breadth of Nigeria, citizens are deeply lamenting the skyrocketing rent. Regrettably, this has become one of the fastest-rising costs of living. An unexpected trend which has become a huge concern is that currently apartments that were rented for N700,000 or N1 million just a few years ago are now advertised for N3 million, N5 million or even higher. Amidst this bizarre development, do you know that they are often without significant improvements to the property itself? One key troubling development is that recent estimates suggest that house rents in many Nigerian cities have surged by between 100 and 300 percent over the last two years, a pace that far exceeds the country's official inflation rate and has placed unprecedented pressure on households already struggling with rising food, transportation and energy costs.

Landlords, through estate agents, increasingly demand one or two years' rent upfront. Tenants are expected to pay 10 percent of the principal rent toward agency fees, legal fees, agreement charges, caution deposits, and, in most cases, the service charge (which appears to be higher), security levies, and utility-related costs before receiving the keys. In many cases, these additional charges add hundreds of thousands or even millions of naira to the advertised rent, making the total cost of securing accommodation far beyond the reach of average-income earners. Equally disturbing is the unchecked exploitation by agent marauders, who prey on desperate house seekers by imposing outrageous and often illegal fees that further deepen Nigeria's housing crisis. What should ordinarily be a routine life event has become a financial ordeal.

Nigeria's housing crisis is no longer simply a property story. It has evolved into an economic emergency with profound implications for families, businesses, public health and national development.

The Federal Government's National Housing Data Technical Committee estimates that Nigeria faces a housing deficit of approximately 15 million homes. At the same time, millions of existing houses are considered structurally inadequate and lack access to essential infrastructure. If this figure is something to consider, anyone would know that these figures reveal two overlapping crises. First, this shows that millions of Nigerians cannot find decent accommodation, whilst millions more live in overcrowded, unsafe or poorly serviced housing.

At the same time, Nigeria's population continues to expand rapidly, with cities absorbing hundreds of thousands of new residents every year.

One of the challenges is that urbanisation has consistently outpaced housing development, widening the gap between supply and demand while predictably, rents continue to rise and affordability continues to decline.

Remarkably, housing experts generally recommend that households should spend no more than 30 percent of their income on accommodation. For many Nigerian families, that recommendation has become almost impossible to achieve.

Teachers, nurses, journalists, police officers, civil servants, young bankers, entrepreneurs, artisans and other middle-income earners increasingly devote more than half of their annual income to rent alone. For many, housing has become the single largest financial obligation, leaving very little for every other necessity of life.

After paying landlords, food budgets shrink. Healthcare is postponed. Children are transferred to less expensive schools. Retirement savings disappear. Business investments are suspended. Vacations become unimaginable luxuries. The rent bill has become the first expense families think about and the last financial burden they can escape.

The effects extend far beyond individual households. This is totally outrageous, as financial analysts have long observed that when accommodation consumes a disproportionate share of disposable income, consumer spending across the economy inevitably weakens.

Families postpone replacing household appliances. Vehicle purchases are delayed. Furniture sales decline. Restaurants receive fewer customers. Clothing retailers experience lower patronage. Small businesses lose purchasing power from consumers whose earnings are now tied up in rent. The result is a vicious economic cycle in which rising housing costs suppress consumption, reduce business activity and ultimately slow economic growth.

Behind every rent increase lies a deeply personal story. Consider a fictional but representative family whose experience mirrors that of countless Nigerians. The aspect of receiving notice that the annual rent for their modest two-bedroom apartment would rise from N1.2 million to N3 million comes with uneasiness. At this point, the Blessings' family had spent months desperately searching for an alternative.

Unable to afford the increase and harassment from the landlord, they eventually relocated nearly 30 kilometres away from their former neighbourhood. The consequences were immediate. Their children had to change schools. The family's daily commuting time doubled. Transportation costs rose sharply. Family time disappeared.

The father now leaves home before sunrise and returns late at night. The mother spends more each month commuting than she once spent on groceries. Their financial burden has not disappeared. It has merely shifted from rent to transportation and also deals with other issues like epileptic power supply and flooding, especially during this rainy season.

Unfortunately, such stories are no longer exceptional. They have become increasingly common across Nigeria's major cities. Perhaps no demographic feels this pressure more acutely than young professionals.

Come to think of graduates entering the workforce quickly discover that entry-level salaries cannot support decent accommodation close to their workplaces. You would also see many remaining with their parents far longer than anticipated. Other effects include seeing them share apartments with several unrelated adults to reduce costs whilst some endure daily commutes lasting three or four hours because affordable housing exists only in distant suburbs.

The fact is that the consequences extend beyond inconvenience because long commuting hours reduce productivity, increase fatigue, heighten stress levels and significantly diminish quality of life. Another aspect of this and which is discouraging is that for many talented young Nigerians, financial independence, home ownership and family formation are becoming increasingly distant aspirations. Several interconnected forces explain why rents continue to climb so aggressively.

Inflation has significantly increased the cost of cement, steel, roofing sheets and virtually every construction material required to build houses. The depreciation of the naira has made imported building materials substantially more expensive. No doubt, from recent findings, there are clear indications that there is a significant increase in the prices of building materials. Let us see the period between 2024 to 2026, Cement: N6,500 - N13,000; blocks: N600 - N1100; 30T of sand: N165,000 - N250,000; 30T of granite: N530,000 - N780,000; rebars (iron) ton: N850,000 - N1,150,000 amongst others. To be fair, it is a known fact that high interest rates have increased borrowing costs for developers, while land acquisition remains prohibitively expensive in many urban centres. The very question at heart is, how has this recent development significantly impacted the apartments built five years ago and beyond?

The constant fear of eviction, the uncertainty surrounding annual rent reviews and the enormous pressure of raising large lump sums every one or two years create persistent psychological stress.

Think of the impact of parents' worry about disrupting their children's education. Young couples postpone marriage because they cannot afford accommodation. Family disagreements increasingly revolve around financial pressures. Consider the part of many Nigerians who quietly or secretly or unknowingly battle anxiety, emotional exhaustion and depression arising from the struggle to secure decent housing.

None of these psychological costs clearly appear in official economic statistics, but the truth is that they profoundly affect productivity, family stability and overall well-being. It is equally obvious that the crisis is also affecting employers and businesses.

Workers forced to travel long distances arrive at work exhausted. Traffic congestion consumes valuable productive hours each day. It turns out that companies increasingly struggle to retain staff who relocate in search of affordable accommodation. Also, know that many employers face mounting pressure to increase housing allowances simply to remain competitive.

All these call for a balancing as employees demand higher wages to offset escalating living costs, further increasing operating expenses for businesses already contending with inflation, unstable exchange rates and rising energy prices.

Housing affordability is therefore no longer merely a social concern. It has become a business and national competitiveness issue.

Though Nigeria is not alone in confronting housing affordability challenges, its recent trend calls for attention. Across Africa, rapid urbanisation continues to outpace housing supply.

For this reason, Kenya has introduced ambitious affordable

housing programmes aimed at expanding supply, although implementation challenges remain; this can't be compared to Nigeria's current situation. Ghana is not left out of the equation as it continues to battle a significant housing deficit. Ghana is also grappling with the irony of completed homes that remain unaffordable for many citizens. South Africa, despite possessing a relatively more developed mortgage market, continues to experience severe affordability pressures in cities such as Johannesburg and Cape Town.

Nigeria's situation, however, is intensified by its enormous population, rapid urban expansion, limited mortgage penetration and one of Africa's largest housing deficits.

Nigeria has witnessed successive governments introducing affordable housing initiatives, mortgage schemes and public-private partnerships which fails before implementation. While these programmes represent positive intentions, delivery has consistently fallen far behind growing demand.

Housing experts argue that meaningful reform requires far more than constructing a limited number of housing estates.

Nigeria must simplify land acquisition processes, reduce infrastructure costs, expand mortgage accessibility, improve planning approvals, encourage private-sector investment in affordable housing and strengthen incentives for developers willing to build homes for middle- and low-income earners.

Improving housing data is important, but accurate statistics alone cannot reduce rents. Effective implementation remains the country's greatest policy challenge.

Let's consider some of these salient points proffered by urban planners who insist that Nigeria's housing crisis cannot be solved exclusively through market forces. According to them, governments at all levels must invest strategically in infrastructure and create financing mechanisms that reduce development costs. To further help reduce the housing gap, they encourage the construction of affordable rental housing rather than focusing disproportionately on luxury developments.

The truth is that if housing continues to consume an ever-growing share of household income, consumer spending, investment and long-term economic growth will ever remain constrained. Another key barrier that must be addressed quickly, as highlighted by researchers, are inflation, limited housing finance, weak regulatory enforcement and inconsistent policy implementation, which happen to be major bottlenecks to affordable housing delivery.

One key question that yearns for answers is whether it is not obvious to the government and other stakeholders that housing is far more than concrete walls, roofing sheets and painted ceilings? The fact is that shelter as the meaning implies, shapes educational outcomes, influences public health, determines productivity, strengthens families, supports social mobility and contributes directly to national competitiveness.

At this stage, it is a complete shame and at the same time an irony that a nation where hardworking teachers, nurses, journalists, entrepreneurs, artisans, security personnel and civil servants cannot comfortably afford decent shelter risks weakening its middle class, widening inequality and undermining sustainable economic growth.

If the truth must be told, Nigeria's rent crisis is therefore not merely about landlords and tenants. For a fact, it is about the future of work, family stability, economic opportunity and social justice. Clearly, it is about whether millions of hardworking citizens can enjoy the dignity that comes with secure and affordable housing.

The mistake all along, which must be eschewed, is that a country's progress is being measured solely by the number of luxury estates it builds or the height of its skyscrapers. More importantly, it should also be measured by whether ordinary citizens can afford a safe place to call home without sacrificing their children's education, healthcare, savings or future aspirations.

If this is not adequately addressed, this rent trap will persist until affordable housing becomes a genuine national priority backed by bold reforms and sustained implementation; millions of Nigerians will continue facing an impossible choice, which would invariably lead them to surrender their financial future to keep a roof over their heads or abandon the comfort, security and dignity that every family deserves.

Concerned stakeholders shouldn't continue to believe that the true cost of Nigeria's rent crisis is therefore measured only in naira. It is measured in postponed dreams, delayed marriages, fractured families, declining productivity, abandoned ambitions, struggling businesses and the quiet erosion of hope among citizens who work tirelessly every day but find the simple promise of a decent home slipping further beyond their reach.

•Blaise, a journalist and PR professional, writes from Lagos and can be reached via: blaise.udunze@gmail.com

NEWS

Honourable Minister Of Foreign Affairs Arrives In Portugal For The 2026 Eurafrikan Forum



The Honourable Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Ambassador Bianca Odumegwu-Ojukwu, has arrived in Lisbon, Portugal, to participate in the 2026 EurAfrican Forum, scheduled to hold from 15–16 July 2026 at the Nova School of Business and Economics.

The EurAfrican Forum brings together Heads of State, Ministers, policymakers, business leaders, development partners, academics, and private sector stakeholders from Africa and Europe to deliberate on strategic issues shaping cooperation between the two continents. The 2026 edition will focus on human capital, trade and investment, energy, infrastructure, geopolitics, innovation, and technology.

As part of the

Forum, Ambassador Odumegwu-Ojukwu is scheduled to deliver the opening address during the high-level Geopolitics session on 16 July 2026, themed: "How Will Africa and Europe Navigate Global Geopolitical Turmoil?" The session will examine evolving global geopolitical dynamics and opportunities for strengthening Africa–Europe cooperation in advancing peace,

security, sustainable development, and shared prosperity.

On the margins of the Forum, the Honourable Minister is expected to hold bilateral engagements with senior government officials, development partners, and business leaders aimed at advancing Nigeria's foreign policy objectives, promoting economic diplomacy, attracting investment, and deepening strate-

gic partnerships with Portugal and other participating countries.

Nigeria's participation at the Forum underscores the Federal Government's commitment to strengthening mutually beneficial partnerships with Europe and fostering dialogue on global challenges that impact Africa's development, security, and economic transformation.



NEWS

AIG Zone 13 Paid A Familiarization / Operational Tour Visit To Enugu State Command Headquarters, Enugu

The Assistant Inspector General of Police in charge of Zone 13 Ukpo Dunukofia, AIG Godwin Iguh Eze, Psc(+) on 8th July 2026 paid a familiarization/operational tour visit to Enugu State Command Headquarters, Enugu. The AIG was accompanied by members of his management team.

The visit was aimed at familiarizing with the Officers and men of Enugu state command and at the same time building operational capacity with the Command. The event was held at the senior police officers' mess along Agbani road Enugu.

During the visit, the commissioner of Police Enugu state command, CP Mamman Bitrus Giwa, psc, mspsp welcomed the AIG to Enugu state Command on behalf of Officers and Men of the Command. The CP expressed gratitude for the AIG's visit affirming that it shows true leadership, effective supervision and commitment to the overall security of the nation.

The CP also informed the AIG of the Command's achievements, challenges and efficient police service delivery.

In his response, AIG Godwin commended the CP for the achievements of the command so far and also for improving operational performance and efficiency which has made Enugu state Command relatively calm aiding the members of the public to go about their normal activities without fear.

The AIG also encouraged the CP to achieve more

height and feat in making sure Enugu remains a conducive state for residing, business, learning, work and other lawful activities.

The AIG also reiterated and affirmed that the zonal Command remains committed to assist the command and also remains committed to protection of Lives and Properties.

The occasion was concluded with Group photographs comprising the AIG, CP and members of the Command management team. The AIG also signed the command visitor's register.

The Zone 13 Command under the leadership of AIG Godwin Iguh Eze, Psc(+) supervises both Anambra and Enugu command respectively.



NEWS

Kano Police Command Arrests Suspected Bandit, Recovers Ak-47 Magazine, 109 Rounds Of Ammunition, Suspected Military Uniforms In Bichi LGA

The Kano State Police Command, under the leadership of the Commissioner of Police, CP Ibrahim Adamu Bakori, PhD, has recorded a significant breakthrough in the fight against banditry following the arrest of a suspected bandit and recovery of dangerous exhibits in Bichi Local Government Area.

On Saturday, 12th July, 2026 at about 1800hrs, operatives of Bichi Division acted promptly on credible information from a good Samaritan regarding a person seen wearing a suspected military uniform at Rimaye Village, Bichi LGA.

Upon arrival, the Police team, in collaboration with members of the Rimawa Community, intercepted the suspect, identified as Mohammed Isah Haruna, 'M', 28 years old, of Dan Dinshe Yamma Quarters, Dala LGA, Kano State.

During a search, the following exhibits were recovered in his bag:

i. One (1) AK-47 Magazine loaded with 30 rounds of live ammunition

ii. Seventy-nine (79) rounds of AK-47 live ammunition

iii. Two (2) sets of suspected Military Uniforms

iv. Three (3) Military Caps

v. One (1) suspected Fake Military ID Card

vi. One (1) National ID Card, One (1) NIN Slip, One (1) Voter's Card

vii. Four (4) ATM Cards

viii. One (1) Pair of Desert Boots. During interrogation, the suspect

confessed to being in the area for the purpose of onward delivery and supply of the recovered items to bandits operating in the bush.

The Commissioner of Police, CP Ibrahim Adamu Bakori, PhD, commended the Rimawa Community for their vigilance and for promptly reporting to the Police.

"This arrest underscores the importance of community partnership in policing. We appreciate the Rimawa Community and all good people of Kano for their support. Security is a collective responsibility," CP Bakori stated.

The suspect is currently in custody. Discreet investigation has commenced to apprehend other suspects and dismantle the criminal networks. The case will be charged to court upon completion of investigation.

In line with the directives of the Inspector-General of Police, IGP Olatunji Rilwan Disu, psc(+), NPM, the Command remains committed to sustaining intelligence-led and community-centric policing across the 44 Local Government Areas of Kano State.

Members of the public are urged to continue to provide credible information to the Police. In case of emergencies or to report suspicious activities, the command can be contacted via: 08032419755, 08123821575, 09029292926.



FG, UN, Partners, Begin Humanitarian Transition Workshop to Strengthen National Ownership of Humanitarian Response

The Federal Government of Nigeria, in collaboration with the United Nations and Development Partners has commenced a two-day Humanitarian Transition Workshop aimed at Developing a Nationally led, Sustainable, and Resilient Humanitarian Coordination System for the Country.

Declaring the workshop open at the United Nations House, Central Business District, Abuja, the Honourable Minister of Humanitarian Affairs and Poverty Reduction, Dr. Bernard M. Doro, stated that, the global humanitarian system is undergoing a profound reset due to declining international humanitarian financing, necessitating stronger national ownership and sustainable domestic solutions.

The Minister noted that Nigeria's transition is not a withdrawal from international partnership but

a deliberate shift towards a government-led humanitarian coordination system anchored on the One Humanitarian, One Poverty Response System (OHOPRS).

According to him, the initiative seeks to end fragmentation, eliminate duplication, and ensure coordinated, accountable, and efficient deployment of both domestic and external resources.

Dr. Doro emphasized the need for increased domestic resource mobilisation, stronger federal and state budgetary commitments, private sector participation, diaspora engagement, and strengthened collaboration with development partners to build a humanitarian system capable of withstanding external funding fluctuations.

Speaking at the event, the United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Nigeria, Mohammed Malik Fall, reaffirmed the

UN's commitment to supporting Nigeria's transition towards a nationally owned humanitarian response system.

He stressed that, the transition is about transforming the way humanitarian support is delivered and ensuring that National Institutions increasingly lead coordination, planning, and implementation while maintaining support for vulnerable populations.

The Director, Nigeria INGO Forum, Mr. Ndubuisi Emeka Anyanwu underscored the importance of inclusive partnerships, noting that, National and International NGOs must remain integral to planning and decision-making processes. He stressed that the success of the transition should ultimately be measured by improvements in the lives of affected populations.

Director-General of the National Emergency Management Agency

(NEMA), Mrs. Zubaida Umar and the Statistician-General of the Federation, Prince Adeyemi Adeniran amongst many other Humanitarian donors delivered Goodwill messages and pledged their supports on the transition process.

Participants at the workshop are expected to develop practical recommendations and a joint action plan that will guide Nigeria's humanitarian transition over the coming months, strengthen national coordination structures, and support the development of the 2027 Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan within the OHOPRS framework.

The workshop reflects the Federal Government's commitment to building a humanitarian system that is nationally led, locally grounded, sustainably financed, and capable of delivering lasting solutions to vulnerable Nigerians.

NEWS



Minister Of State For Foreign Affairs Receives Special Envoy Of President Tshisekedi Of The Democratic Republic Of Congo

The Special Envoy, who was accompanied by the Ambassador of the Democratic Republic of Congo to Nigeria, Mrs. Pascaline Gerengbo Yakivu, delivered a special message from President Tshisekedi to His Excellency President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, GCFR, and extended an invitation to Nigeria to participate in the forthcoming United Nations Security Council High-Level Open Debate on Peace, Security, Stability and Development scheduled to hold on 22 July 2026 in New York.

The Envoy noted that the debate would provide an important platform for Africa to advance common positions on peace, security, stability and sustainable development, while demonstrating African leadership in addressing the continent's challenges. He emphasised that the Democratic Republic of the Congo attaches great importance to Nigeria's participation, particularly in view of Nigeria's leadership role on the African continent.

Responding, Ambassador Enikanolaiye conveyed the warm greetings of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, GCFR, to President Félix Tshisekedi and congratulated the Democratic Republic of the Congo on its election as a non-

permanent member of the United Nations Security Council. He expressed confidence that the DRC would effectively champion issues of strategic importance to Africa during its tenure on the Council. The Honourable Minister of State commended the initiative to convene a high-level debate on the nexus between peace, security, stability and development, stressing that sustainable development can only be achieved in an atmosphere of peace and stability. He reaffirmed Nigeria's commitment to supporting African-led initiatives aimed at resolving conflicts and promoting lasting peace across the continent.

Ambassador Enikanolaiye also conveyed the sympathy of President Tinubu and the Government and people of Nigeria to the Government and people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo over the ongoing Ebola outbreak in parts of the country. He commended the Congolese Government for the measures already taken to contain the outbreak and prevent its further spread. The Honourable Minister of State informed the delegation that Nigeria had activated appropriate prepared-

ness measures, including the establishment of a Presidential Task Force on Ebola Virus Disease, to strengthen the country's prevention and response mechanisms. He expressed confidence that the collaborative efforts of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the international community would successfully contain the outbreak.

In response to the invitation to the United Nations Security Council debate, Ambassador Enikanolaiye assured the delegation that Nigeria would participate actively in the event, noting that the level of representation would be communicated following the conclusion of necessary consultations. The Honourable Minister of State further requested that the Democratic Republic of the Congo provide the concept note and other relevant background documents to facilitate Nigeria's effective participation in the debate. He also reaffirmed Nigeria's solidarity with the Demo-

cratic Republic of the Congo in its pursuit of peace and stability, particularly in the eastern part of the country, and reiterated Nigeria's support for African-led and home-grown solutions to the continent's security challenges.

The meeting also provided an opportunity to discuss outstanding bilateral issues, including certain consular and government property matters involving Nigeria in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Both sides agreed to strengthen diplomatic consultations to facilitate their amicable resolution.

The meeting concluded with both countries reaffirming their commitment to deepening bilateral relations, promoting regional peace and security, and advancing closer cooperation within the African continent.



NEWS

18,510 Nigerians to Benefit from FG's Renewed Hope Vocational Skills Training Nationwide – Doro



The Honourable Minister of Humanitarian Affairs and Poverty Reduction, Dr. Bernard M. Doro, has described the Federal Government's Renewed Hope Vocational and Skills Training Programme (VSTP) as a strategic investment in Nigeria's human capital, reaffirming the Tinubu Administration's commitment to empowering Nigerians with practical skills that create sustainable livelihoods.

This was contained in a statement issued by the Minister's Senior Technical Adviser on Information Systems and Data Analysis, Dr. Abimbola Fasanu, following the official flag-off of the programme in Abuja.

Speaking at the launch of the programme at the Government Technical College, Area 3, Garki, Abuja, Dr. Doro said the initiative represents a major shift in the Federal Government's approach to poverty reduction by placing greater emphasis on skills acquisition, entrepreneurship, and economic self-reliance.

> "This programme is more than a training exercise; it is a strategic investment in Nigeria's future. Under the Renewed Hope Agenda of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, we are moving from palliatives to pathways by equipping Nigerians with practical skills that create opportunities, restore dignity, and build lasting prosperity," the Minister said.

The programme, a flagship initiative of the National Social Investment Programme Agency (NSIPA), will equip 18,510 beneficiaries across the 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) with practical vocational and entrepreneurial skills designed to improve employability and expand opportunities for self-employment.

Dr. Doro explained that the initiative forms part of the Ministry's broader reform agenda under the One Humanitarian-One Poverty Response System (OHOPRS), which seeks to eliminate fragmented interventions by integrating humani-



tarian assistance, social protection, and poverty reduction into a single coordinated national framework.

According to him, the Vocational and Skills Training Programme has been deliberately linked to the National Social Investment architecture to ensure that beneficiaries do not stop at skills acquisition but are connected to entrepreneurship opportunities, cooperative structures, and poverty graduation pathways that promote long-term economic independence.

The intensive two-week programme combines technical vocational training with entrepreneurship development, while every participant will receive a starter pack aligned with his or her chosen trade to facilitate immediate business start-up upon graduation.

Beneficiaries will receive training in 14 high-demand vo-

catational trades, including Automobile Technology, Agric-Tech, Baking and Confectionery, Carpentry, Cooks and Catering, Electrical Installation, House-keeping, Jewellery and Bead Making, Masonry, Plumbing, Welding, Sewing and Fashion Design, Grinding Operations, and Vulcanising.

Dr. Doro stressed that the true measure of the programme's success would not be the number of certificates awarded but the number of sustainable livelihoods created.

> "Our vision is to see today's trainee become tomorrow's entrepreneur, employer, and contributor to national development. This is how we will build resilience, reduce poverty, and create inclusive economic growth for Nigerians."

The Minister commended the National Social Investment Programme Agency (NSIPA), training providers, development partners, and private sector organisations supporting the initiative, urging them to ensure quality delivery, effective monitoring, and sustained post-training support for beneficiaries.

He reaffirmed that the Ministry would continue to champion reforms that empower vulnerable Nigerians through coordinated interventions, practical skills development, and sustainable livelihood opportunities in line with President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's Renewed Hope Agenda.



L- R; Ifeyinwa Osime, Chairman, Access Bank; Ofovwe Aig-Imoukhuede, Co-Founder, Aig-Imoukhuede Foundation; Aigboje Aig-Imoukhuede, Chairman, Access Holdings; Adolfo Cambiaso, a professional polo player; Dibbo Umaru Badda

NEWS

18th Regular Course of the Nigerian Foreign Service Academy Honours Ambassador Ahmed Olatunji Sulu-Gambari on Appointment as Nigeria's Ambassador to Malaysia

Members of the 18th Regular Course of the Foreign Service Academy (FSA), Abuja, on Wednesday, 8 July 2026, hosted a send-off dinner in honour of Ambassador Ahmed Olatunji Sulu-Gambari, Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to Malaysia, with concurrent accreditation to Brunei Darussalam, in recognition of his appointment and distinguished service to the Nigerian Foreign Service.

Held at Ibeto Hotels, Abuja, the event brought together serving and retired diplomats, senior government officials, colleagues, family members and friends who gathered to celebrate Ambassador Sulu-Gambari's elevation and wish him a successful diplomatic assignment.

Delivering the welcome remarks on behalf of members of the 18th Regular Course of the Foreign Service Academy, Ambassador Ben Okoyen, former Nigerian Ambassador to Cuba, congratulated Ambassador Sulu-Gambari on his well-deserved appointment and described him as an accomplished, dedicated and exemplary diplomat whose professionalism, humility and commitment to national service have earned him the confidence of the Federal Government. He noted that

the gathering reflected the strong bond of camaraderie within the Nigerian Foreign Service and expressed confidence that the Ambassador would further strengthen Nigeria's relations with Malaysia and Brunei Darussalam while projecting the country's foreign policy objectives with distinction.

In his response, Ambassador Sulu-Gambari expressed profound appreciation to the President and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, GCFR, for the confidence reposed in him through his appointment. He also thanked the leadership of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, including the Honourable Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Honourable Minister of State

for Foreign Affairs, the Permanent Secretary, and senior colleagues for their guidance, mentorship and unwavering support throughout his diplomatic career. He reaffirmed his commitment to diligently promote Nigeria's national interest, strengthen bilateral relations with Malaysia and Brunei Darussalam, and discharge his responsibilities with dedication, professionalism and integrity.

Delivering a goodwill message, Ambassador Saidu Dahiru Mohammed, Nigeria's High Commissioner-designate to India, congratulated Ambassador Sulu-Gambari on his appointment, describing it as a rare privilege and a testament to years of faithful and exemplary service in the Nigerian Foreign Service. He encouraged the Ambassador-designate to continue serving Nigeria with distinction and prayed for a successful and impactful tour of duty.

The ceremony featured goodwill messages, presentation of a commemorative plaque, special recognitions, group photographs and a reception attended by senior diplomats, officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, representatives of government institutions, members of the 18th Regular Course of the Foreign Service Academy, and family members of the celebrant.



Nigerian army in joint operation neutralize terrorists, rescue kidnap victims in edo state

The Nigerian Army has, in a well-coordinated joint operation with the Nigeria Police Force and local vigilante groups, successfully rescued three kidnapped victims, neutralized two terrorists and recovered arms and other items during a decisive operation in Edo State.

The operation was initiated following a report of a kidnap incident at Ambrose Alli University on 13 July 2026. Acting promptly on credible intelligence, troops in close synergy with personnel of the Nigeria Police Force and local vigilantes, launched a coordinated pursuit of the fleeing criminals into their hideout in Esan Local Government Area of Edo State.

Upon making contact, the joint security team engaged the criminals in a fierce firefight, leading to the neutralization of two terrorists. The sustained offensive pressure compelled the remaining members of the gang to abandon their captives and flee the scene. Consequently, three abducted victims were rescued unhurt.

Items recovered during the operation include three AK-47 rifles, thirty-nine rounds of 7.62mm Special ammunition, three mobile phones and two power banks. The recovered items are currently in custody, while efforts are ongoing to track and apprehend the fleeing members of the criminal syndicate.

The Nigerian Army remains resolute in its commitment to working closely with sister security agencies and relevant stakeholders to decisively deal with criminal elements and ensure the protection of lives and property across the country. The Public are therefore urged to support these operations with credible information about criminal hideouts and collaborators.

